

# The SRV JOURNAL

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# The SRV JOURNAL

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## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

WE BELIEVE THAT SOCIAL ROLE VALORIZATION (SRV), when well applied, has potential to help societally devalued people to gain greater access to the good things of life & to be spared at least some negative effects of social devaluation.

Toward this end, the purposes of this journal include: 1) disseminating information about SRV; 2) informing readers of the relevance of SRV in addressing the devaluation of people in society generally & in human services particularly; 3) fostering, extending & deepening dialogue about, & understanding of, SRV; & 4) encouraging the application of SRV as well as SRV-related research.

We intend the information provided in this journal to be of use to: family, friends, advocates, direct care workers, managers, trainers, educators, researchers & others in relationship with or serving formally or informally upon devalued people in order to provide more valued life conditions as well as more relevant & coherent service.

*The SRV Journal* is published under the auspices of the SRV Implementation Project (SRVIP). The mission of the SRVIP is to: confront social devaluation in all its forms, including the deathmaking of vulnerable people; support positive action consistent with SRV; & promote the work of the formulator of SRV, Prof. Wolf Wolfensberger.<sup>†</sup>

## EDITORIAL POLICY

INFORMED & OPEN DISCUSSIONS OF SRV, & even constructive debates about it, help to promote its dissemination & application. We encourage people with a range of experience with SRV to submit items for consideration of publication. We hope those with much experience in teaching or implementing SRV, as well as those just beginning to learn about it, will contribute to the *Journal*.

We encourage readers & writers in a variety of roles & from a variety of human service backgrounds to subscribe & to contribute. We expect that writers who submit items will have at least a basic understanding of SRV, gained for example by attendance at a multi-day SRV workshop (see this issue's training calendar), by studying relevant resources (see the next page of this journal), or both.

We are particularly interested in receiving submissions from family members, friends & servers of devalued people who are trying to put the ideas of SRV into practice, even if they do not consider themselves as 'writers.' Members of our editorial boards will be available to help contributors with articles accepted for publication. The journal has a peer review section.

## INFORMATION FOR SUBMISSIONS

WE WELCOME WELL-REASONED, CLEARLY-WRITTEN submissions. Language used should be clear & descriptive. We encourage the use of ordinary grammar & vocabulary that a typical reader would understand. The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* is one easily available general style guide. Academic authors should follow the standards of their field. We will not accept items simultaneously submitted elsewhere for publication or previously electronically posted or distributed.

Submissions are reviewed by members of the editorial board, the editorial advisory board, or external referees. Our double-blind peer review policy is available on request.

Examples of submission topics include but are not limited to: SRV as relevant to a variety of human services; descriptions & analyses of social devaluation & wounding; descriptions & analyses of the impact(s) of valued roles; illustrations of particular SRV themes; research into & development of SRV theory & its themes; critique of SRV; analysis of new developments from an SRV perspective; success stories, as well as struggles & lessons learned, in trying to implement SRV; interviews; reflection & opinion pieces; news analyses from an SRV perspective; book or movie reviews & notices from an SRV perspective.

## SEND CORRESPONDENCE TO

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## TYPEFACE

Main text is set in Adobe Garamond Pro and headlines in Myriad Pro, both designed by Robert Slimbach.

# A Brief Description of Social Role Valorization

## From the Editor

As THIS IS A Social Role Valorization (SRV) journal, we feel it important to print in every issue a few brief descriptions of our understanding of what SRV is. This by no means replaces more thorough explanations of SRV, but does set a helpful framework for the content of this journal.

The following is taken from: Wolfensberger, W. (1998). *A brief introduction to Social Role Valorization: A high-order concept for addressing the plight of societally devalued people, and for structuring human services* (3rd ed.). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership & Change Agency, p. 58.

*... in order for people to be treated well by others, it is very important that they be seen as occupying valued roles, because otherwise, things are apt to go ill with them. Further, the greater the number of valued roles a person, group or class occupies, or the more valued the roles that such a party occupies, the more likely it is that the party will be accorded those good things of life that others are in a position to accord, or to withhold.*

The following is taken from: SRV Council [North American Social Role Valorization Development, Training & Safeguarding Council] (2004). A proposed definition of Social Role Valorization, with various background materials and elaborations. *SRV-VRS: The International Social Role Valorization Journal/La Revue Internationale de la Valorisation des Rôles Sociaux*, 5(1&2), p. 85.

*SRV is a systematic way of dealing with the facts of social perception and evaluation, so as to enhance the roles of people who are apt to be devalued, by upgrading their competencies and social image in the eyes of others.*

The following is taken from: Wolfensberger, W. (2000). A brief overview of Social Role Valorization. *Mental Retardation*, 38(2), p. 105.

*The key premise of SRV is that people's welfare depends extensively on the social roles they occupy: People who fill roles that are positively valued by others will generally be afforded by the latter the good things of life, but people who fill roles that are*

*devalued by others will typically get badly treated by them. This implies that in the case of people whose life situations are very bad, and whose bad situations are bound up with occupancy of devalued roles, then if the social roles they are seen as occupying can somehow be upgraded in the eyes of perceivers, their life conditions will usually improve, and often dramatically so.*

## RESOURCE LIST

- **A brief introduction to Social Role Valorization**, 3rd (rev.) ed. Wolf Wolfensberger. (1998). (Available from the Training Institute at 315.473.2978)
- **PASSING: A tool for analyzing service quality according to Social Role Valorization criteria. Ratings manual**, 3rd (rev.) ed. Wolf Wolfensberger & Susan Thomas. (2007). (Available from the Training Institute at 315.473.2978)
- **A quarter-century of normalization and Social Role Valorization: Evolution and impact**. Ed. by Robert Flynn & Ray Lemay. (1999). Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press. (Available from the Training Institute at 315.473.2978)
- **Social Role Valorization and the English experience**. David Race. (1999). London: Whiting & Birch.
- **A brief overview of Social Role Valorization**. Wolf Wolfensberger. (2000). *Mental Retardation*, 38(2), 105-123.
- **An overview of Social Role Valorization theory**. Joe Osburn. (2006). *The SRV Journal*, 1(1), 4-13.
- **Some of the universal 'good things of life' which the implementation of Social Role Valorization can be expected to make more accessible to devalued people**. Wolf Wolfensberger, Susan Thomas & Guy Caruso. (1996). *SRV/VRS: The International Social Role Valorization Journal/La Revue Internationale de la Valorisation des Rôles Sociaux*, 2(2), 12-14.
- **A Social Role Valorization web page** can be accessed at: <http://www.socialrolevalorization.com/>

# FROM THE EDITOR

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## PASSING OF DR. WOLF WOLFENSBERGER (1934-2011)

We are sad to report that Wolf Wolfensberger, PhD, 76, of Syracuse, New York (US) died on 27 February 2011, the feast day of St. Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows, at St. Joseph's Hospital. Our prayers, hearts and condolences go out to all of his family, loved ones, colleagues, students and friends who are mourning his loss.

Starting on p. 8, we print two eulogies given at Dr. Wolfensberger's funeral, as well as a number of written reflections sent to us. Our deep gratitude to all those who shared their reflections with us.

# SRV FOCUS QUESTION

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IN EACH ISSUE, we publish a focus question & invite you our readers to submit a 200-300 word response to the question. Commentaries on the question, if accepted, will be published in the following issue. General advice: write clearly; focus on 1 or 2 most important points; share your opinion, backed up by evidence &/or logical argument; incorporate SRV language & concepts.

All submissions will be reviewed for suitability for publication & are subject to editing; authors will have final approval. Please email your response to [journal@srvip.org](mailto:journal@srvip.org).

## QUESTION

*The concept of the 'culturally valued analog' (Wolfensberger & Thomas, 2007, 30-31) provides a robust vision for people serving others in need, in that it asks: what is the societally valued parallel to what we are trying to accomplish and how can we help the people we serve to get there? The culturally valued analog of home for example can guide most residential services.*

*Based on the culturally valued analog of home, we can profitably reflect on questions such as: What is home, in this particular society at this particular time? What are the positive expectations and images surrounding 'home'? What valued social roles do people typically have at home? How visible are these valued roles, and to whom? What possessions typically communicate and support home? What interpersonal interactions normatively occur at home? What are some of the responsibilities associated with home? What feelings and emotions do we associate with home? What are some of the valued settings, valued in the eyes of the larger society and/or particular culture, that we associate with home? And so on. (Note the overlap between the culturally valued analog and the 'good things of life'.)*

*Given the larger culture and even local society we are in, what are the variations we see surrounding the culturally valued analog of home? What are the limits to these variations, i.e., how far can home change before it begins to lose its 'home-ness,' before it loses the very aspects that make it one of the 'good things of life'? How can these limits then guide our actions in service to vulnerable people? Where can we compromise for a certain period of time if need be, and where will we not compromise?*

**REFERENCE:** Wolfensberger, W. & Thomas, S. (2007). *PASSING: A tool for analyzing service quality according to Social Role Valorization criteria. Ratings manual* (3rd rev. ed.). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership & Change Agency.

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# LETTERS

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TO THE EDITOR:

I ENJOYED YOUR REVIEW of our book (Nzira & Williams, 'Anti-oppressive Practice,' review published in December 2010 [5(2), 56-58]). Many thanks. The review reads as thought-provoking and positive. The only thing I would take slight issue with is your comment about 'anti-oppression' involving a negative goal. I take your point that linguistically it seems to do this, but philosophically our book is fundamentally about a positive approach to ensuring people do not experience oppression. In the past there have been approaches that teach people to be sort of 'police' or 'inspectors' of other people's oppressive behaviour, whereas our approach is to teach people to take responsibility for their own actions that positively prevent oppressive experiences. The inclusion of large parts of SRV illustrate that this is a positive not a negative goal.

With very best wishes,  
Paul Williams  
UK

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## Invitation to Write Book, Film & Article Reviews

### From the Editor

I ENCOURAGE OUR READERS to submit reviews to *The SRV Journal* of current films, books and articles. For people who are studying SRV, looking for everyday examples can help deepen one's understanding. For people who are teaching SRV, learning from and using contemporary examples from the media in one's teaching can be very instructive for audiences. For people who are implementing SRV, contemporary examples can provide fruitful ideas to learn from. Some books and articles mention SRV specifically; others do not but are still relevant to SRV. Both are good subjects for reviewing. We have written guidelines for writing book and film reviews. If you would like to get a copy of either set of guidelines, please let me know at:

Marc Tumeinski  
*The SRV Journal*, 74 Elm Street, Worcester, MA 01609 USA  
508.752.3670; journal@srvip.org; www.srvip.org

Thank you.

Announcing the Fifth International Conference on Social Role Valorization

# Getting the Good Life: From Ideas to Actions

## *Social Role Valorization*

### *as a Framework for Transforming Lives*

#### **Where and When**

Hellenic Club in Canberra, Australia from 21– 23 September 2011

#### **Purpose of the Conference**

The conference will address the question of what it takes to secure ‘The Good Life’ for those people who live lives apart from society. Delegates and presenters will explore strategies and approaches that provide a genuine alternative to the continuing reliance on human service approaches—especially ones that bring much formality and bureaucracy—and consider the compelling outcomes of a service that is truly beneficial.

#### **Conference Themes**

The conference will address social marginalization through:

- *Meaningful and Sustainable Relationships*: What is the glue that makes relationships sustainable; how might reciprocity be obtained; how do people identify with each other when a party is devalued?
- *Belonging*: When do people really belong; what brings sufficient safety and security; what is it that people become connected to so that belonging is a legitimate experience?
- *Contribution*: When are people free to contribute; what does it take for observers to recognise the contributions of a devalued party; when do the contributions of severely impaired people become recognised?

#### **Registration**

Full conference registration information available at  
[http://www.imaginebetter.co.nz/srvconf\\_intro.php](http://www.imaginebetter.co.nz/srvconf_intro.php)

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**CONFIRMED LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL KEYNOTE SPEAKERS INCLUDE:**

*Susan Thomas* holds degrees in psychology and special education, and has been an associate of Dr. Wolfensberger at the Syracuse University Training Institute (US) for many years. She is author of several articles on Normalization and Social Role Valorization and is co-author, with Dr. Wolfensberger, of *PASSING* and other publications. Ms. Thomas has also worked for many years in voluntary, informal service to people with disabilities, and poor and homeless people.

*Ray Lemay* holds a M.Sc. in the Education of Emotionally Disturbed Children and is the Executive Director of Integra pour enfants et adultes de Prescott-Russell/Integra Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell in Plantagenet, ON, Canada, a multi-service organization with over 450 employees. He has authored articles and books on resilience, normalization, Social Role Valorization and management.

*Janet Klees* has been coordinator with the family-governed Deohaeko Support Network (Canada) for the past 15 years and has been deeply affected by the lives of the people that she has come to know. Janet is the author of two books directly rooted in the Deohaeko experience as well as numerous other reports, documents, tools and writings. Janet works closely with other Scarborough, Ontario families, and several family groups and projects across the Durham Region.

*Debbie Killroy* was imprisoned for drug trafficking in 1989 for six years. After her 1992 release, she established Sisters Inside which advocates for the human rights of women in the criminal justice system. Debbie undertook a Social Work degree, was awarded an OAM for services to the community in 2003 and the National Human Rights Medal in 2004. Debbie was the first person in Australia with serious criminal convictions to be admitted by the Supreme Court of Queensland to practice law.

*George Durner* is a graduate of the University of Loyola in New Orleans, Louisiana (US). Today, he lives with his wife, Danielle, in a L'Arche community in France and is coordinator of training for the International Federation of L'Arche communities, founded by Jean Vanier. From 1986 to 1989, George worked for the Georgia Advocacy Office in Atlanta, Georgia, and was responsible for the Citizen Advocacy program offices throughout the state.

*Mike Rungie* comes with 30 years perspective in the application of SRV. His particular interest has been in the bettering of human services and how to make services more able to support people to be citizens and have good lives. In his CEO role at the ACH Group and more broadly, Mike continually challenges people to be innovative in their thinking around what constitutes the good life, especially in regard to vulnerable older people.

*Michael Kendrick* will offer his thoughts on the day's proceedings. Dr. Kendrick is an independent consultant in human services and community work with a focus on both national and international work in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. In his work he has occupied a variety of roles, including being the Assistant Commissioner for Program Development with the Massachusetts (US) government, the Director of the Institute for Leadership and Community Development, and the Director of the Safeguards Project.

# MEMORIALS

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## Eulogy spoken by Margaret Wolfensberger

GOOD MORNING. I am Margaret Wolfensberger Sager, the oldest child of Wolf and Nancy. On behalf of my mother and sister and brother I want to thank everyone for coming today, especially those who have travelled from great distances, including our dear friends, Oxana and Marika Metiuk, who surprised Mom last night by appearing from England, and my father's goddaughter, Paula Spera Burton, who also surprised us by travelling from Memphis. Dad credited Paula's father, Paul Spera, for teaching him how to be an American.

I also want to give our heartfelt thanks to those who came to the vigil service at All Saints last night. So many people, including my sister and brother, made beautiful remarks and told so many wonderful stories. We would also like to thank Ray Lemay for his beautiful remarks just now. Merci.

It is hard to put into words our gratitude to the All Saints Gospel Choir, of which my mother is a member, for the beautiful singing that they provided to us today and last night at the vigil service, and also for their and Father Daley's support generally.

Finally, I am particularly thankful that my children were able to be witnesses to the remarks about their Opa last night and today. My father was so pleased that my son, Tate, could read the Brahms Requiem in German today. My father had Tate practice with him a few weeks ago. Dad would have also been so pleased that Jennifer shared his sister's letter with us today.

As noted at the end of the pamphlet, we invite you to a reception after Mass at the Century Club. There are sheets with directions to the Club at the entrance of the church and I apologize that they are printed on fresh un-recycled paper and do not feature freshman Psych I term papers on the back.

You know that this means that you will need to reuse those sheets.

In 1957 when my father attended Peabody College (which is now part of Vanderbilt) he met and became friends with two other students, Jimmy Mann and Rolando Santos. By every indication these three men could not have been more different from one another. Jimmy was the good ole boy from Mississippi, Rollie was a Fulbright Scholar from the Philippines and Dad, of course, was the still freshly minted German immigrant. They did not have a dollar among them. They became fast albeit unlikely friends and their wives also became great friends. These friendships—and marriages—have lasted a lifetime. When two of them got together, they always delighted in telephoning the third—and reversing the charges.

Jimmy and Kitty will meet us in Indiana for Dad's burial this coming week. Rollie and Karen, who live in California, could not make it today but Rollie sent us a lovely letter—most of which I could not repeat in church. But Rollie, who is also my godfather, wanted me to read some excerpts from his letter. I really had to pick through the rollicking naughty vignettes recalled to great effect by Uncle Rollie.

It goes without saying that if the Cathedral lent itself to overhead projector use, I would be projecting the 10 most salient points of the letter on an overhead. But I will soldier on without that necessary tool.

*Dear Nancy and family ... I met Wolf 54 years ago (!) and can remember the many happy and, sometimes, exasperating times we had together. The first time we met was at a Newman Club meeting off Vanderbilt campus. We somehow found common ground that ... sparked a friendship that, eventually, lasted almost a lifetime ... A*



*few months later, after finding out that I didn't know how to drive, he decided to give me driving lessons on Murfreesboro Highway. He was so frustrated with my ineptness that he thought it would be safer for us and for others to go off the highway and resume the lessons in a nearby cemetery. I lost control of the car and ran over a couple of headstones and almost killed a couple making out behind one of the headstones! I could have sent the couple straight to hell not having given them time for repentance! After a few more minutes of futile driving instruction, Wolf gave up. He said, "Rollie, you are a verbal genius but a mechanical moron!" That did it! I never tried driving again for the rest of my life, convinced that I was indeed a mechanical moron! ... Wolf, for all these and many more memories, thank you ... I really share your sorrow and Karen and I send you our deepest condolences. Rollie*

Now I will turn to some personal reflections.

It was rarely dull in our household growing up. Both of my parents provided a type of excitement. On a family outing, my father would often say "wherever I go, excitement attends." And he was right. I always felt that I had the best of so many worlds growing up. Although Mom and Dad shared a German heritage, they came together in 1959 with very different life stories. Throughout their marriage they valued and honored the other's back story and made both of their stories and their story together our story as well. Our parents gave us an expansive variety of all things, which in turn opens so many doors to us every day. Although a common thing today, we grew up very much aware of the bigger world we live in. Because we had so many visitors from all over the world staying at our house, I used to make the comment that I grew up in the International House of Pancakes. We have been so very fortunate, and due to our

parents we realize and appreciate how fortunate we are.

Was WW an easy-going father? Of course not. But, really, how much fun is easy? I could go on for hours, but today I have chosen as my primary theme my IN BOX.

How many other kids have an IN BOX at home? It really was not until a few years ago that I realized that it was not typical to have an IN BOX at your parents' home. The other day it dawned on me that my IN BOX is now empty and that I will really, really miss my IN BOX. I know that many of you had an IN BOX with Dad, or at the least received from him clippings and articles and cartoons that he wanted to share with you.

As an adult, checking my IN BOX on visits home, I marveled at how much effort my Dad expended on our IN BOXes. Not only did certain items in our IN BOXes reference our inside jokes, but they were evidence of so many other things. For starters, I knew that when Dad read something, and tagged it for me and possibly for my siblings, that Dad was thinking of us. It was like a special secret conversation.

There were recurring themes in the IN BOX. Some of those themes were common to all three of us children, and—as in the case of my siblings' respective boxes—some were particular to me and often to a specific phase of my life. There were occasionally items marked for discussion, and ranked P1, P2 and P3. I often wish that I had saved in chronological order all the cartoons Dad put in my IN BOX. They would in many respects represent the story of my life—told in wry and funny ways.

I THOUGHT THAT I WOULD share eight of the primary recurring themes from our IN BOXes:

1. *Cats*: In case you are wondering, Dad included the reference to "cats and song" in his obituary. My favorite recent cat clipping was a man's eulogy for his recently departed cat. My father never stopped missing our beloved Siamese Gustav and then Felix.

2. *Food and Drink*: Last night at the vigil service, Paul beautifully addressed Dad's love of food in particular, and I cannot really add much to that. However, I will say that my mother delighted in cooking for our father. He was always an appreciative food audience—but, of course, as a result of my mother's outstanding cooking, he and we became quite spoiled about food.

3. *Manners and Comportment*: We needed it. And then my children needed it. And we all still need it. In fact, it did not escape our notice that sometimes even Dad needed it too. As a pre-teen I started collecting books on this topic. I note that Dad has squirreled away suitcases of books for each of us so that we will have birthday and especially Christmas gifts from him for years to come. As my husband noted so well last night, my father absolutely loved Christmas.

4. *Many Tips on an Enormous Spectrum of Topics*: And yes, some of those clippings later appeared in Dad's newsletter TIPS. Sometimes the clippings would prove his advice. For example, one should not wear high-heel shoes or, worse yet, backless shoes—because in an emergency you could not run for your life. In case you are wondering, a remarkable number of newspaper photographs of various disasters will show empty shoes on the roadside and perhaps even the hapless victim, often a woman, running shoeless over glass and bodies.

5. *Word Play*: Of course. Clippings often included annotations with words invented by our father.

6. *Tools to Help Us Live by the Concept of Decision Theory*: Decision Theory was often featured (and propounded) by means of lists and various approaches to help one think ahead and plan for all contingencies ... Because we know that what can go wrong often will go wrong, and so we must be prepared. Working on the various arrangements this week, I often said to myself: "decision theory dictates that I add a few more back-ups or have a

few more copies." But then I would find back-ups in the files Dad created for us for the necessary activities of this week.

7. *Travel Tips*: Dad travelled the globe. I believe that my parents' trips were the consistent high points of their marriage after we were grown. I loved travelling with Dad. Dad was the hardest working person I have ever known. So it was terrific to get Dad away from home and away from work. He was fun, prepared (of course) and he always had a plan—and a few back-up plans as well. Of course, during our trips his boundless energy and curiosity would often wear us out, but then again he was always willing to stop for a meal or ice cream or tea and dessert to keep us going. In 2004, my daughter Jennifer and I had a wonderful time in Switzerland and Germany with Mom, Dad and Aunt Hady for the Hitz family reunion. We were joined at various times by Dad's brother, Hanno, and his wife, Gisela, and Hanno's son, Hanno, Jr., and his wife and son. That trip is a jewel of a memory.

8. Finally, a recurring theme was *How to Be Prepared for When the End Comes*. "When the end comes" ... What kind of end? Perhaps war, including even nuclear war, or a natural disaster. Did you know that a Grundig radio operates on tubes, unlike a transistor radio, and therefore can be used even in the event of a nuclear attack? We have two of them. One here and one at the farm in Indiana. And speaking of which, we had a family plan in such event to rendezvous at the farm in Indiana, realizing that we may have to get there in terrific difficulty, but knowing that due to all the information from Dad and his clippings, and all the lists that he had given us, that we would hopefully be sufficiently prepared to make and survive the arduous journey. You can imagine that when we were children, all this talk about "When the End Comes" caused a little eye rolling. However, given our father's experiences in WW II Germany, we knew that he had witnessed events that did not make even a nuclear

attack seem impossible or even anything other than probable.

I was much older before I realized that the other 'end' that Dad was often addressing was death. Many clippings in the IN BOX reinforced Dad's admonitions to live life in a state of grace and peace with God—because you never knew when the end would come. He worried about our souls. Regrettably, we have often given him reasons to worry.

So it is only fitting that now that Dad has entered the portals of heaven, we will take him to our safe house at the farm to be buried in Indiana. Certainly Dad did not view death as the end, but for those of us left behind it is indeed a type of end. The farm is where Mom and Dad met and fell in love, and it is from that point that my mother met the great love of her life and my Dad met the woman who made it possible for him to accomplish the good that he was able to effect professionally and at the same time to have a loving and devoted family.

We pray for his soul.

Thank you.

• • •

### **Eulogy spoken by Ray Lemay (Canada)**

I WILL NOT BE USING OVERHEADS—but I do have my 3X5 index cards. Dr. Wolfensberger tried to teach me many things, but I should warn you that I missed the 4 day workshop on brevity.

I should start this eulogy by telling you the end of this story, because I think it is the first thing we should know about Wolf Wolfensberger's life. Dr. Wolfensberger often started with first principles that often illuminate the purpose of the thing. And this is the sum of it: There is a heaven and Wolf is now there.

I know this because over the past few days, I've heard the rumblings of heavenly reform. This reform will now have apprentice angels follow an

elaborate training ladder of very in-depth workshops. And all of this will lead to a new level in the hierarchy of angels; just below archangel, and just above guardian angel, there will in the future be change agent angels.

I've also heard that there have been rumblings of very recent innovations beyond the Pearly Gates. Angels are complaining about overly busy overheads and the use of 3X5 index cards. However, with Wolf there, I'm confident they are safe from PowerPoint for a while yet.

WOLF WOLFENSBERGER has now been taken from us, and we already miss him dearly. But then, his passing is not surprising, for he has lived an incredibly full life; he was a man for all seasons, and he lived fully through all those seasons. He was a man of his times, but also a man for all times.

Wolf lived in a unique and inspired way that few of us would have the temerity to follow.

As most of you know, the idea of social roles was central to Dr. Wolfensberger's teaching and his Social Role Valorization (SRV) theory (Wolfensberger, 1998). The roles that we are given and choose to play—teacher, father, policeman, book-lover, neighbour, and so on—affect in a crucial way how other people will relate to us and what they will do for us, or even against us. Let us for a moment consider the roles that Wolf Wolfensberger was given and chose to play as best he could. And this is but a very incomplete list, I'm quite sure you could think of many others:

War survivor, refugee, foster child, immigrant, student, scientist, researcher, scholar, learned man;

Author: 47 books, 63 chapters and partial monographs, 231 articles, 27 reviews and 6 poems. And innumerable manuscripts; 2 books that are just recently ready for publication;

Reformer, prophet, historian, benefactor (often in secret), hiker, cat lover, song lover, beer lover, chocolate lover, poet, protector;

Collector of books, antiques, post cards, stamps, human service buttons and pins, toy ambulances, and much else;

Psychologist, philosopher, thinker, advocate, spokesman, historian, leader, humanist, mentor, pedagogue, real chess master, last real German professor, change agent, friend, father, husband . . .

That is quite a list of roles and how busy he must have been.

Not surprisingly, very early on, Wolf made it a habit to get up early and he worked long days and weekends. Indeed Nancy tells me that he efficiently used all the time he had at hand and never wasted a minute.

Despite these very diverse occupations, interests and passions, Wolf remained quite single-minded and focused on a few big things that he thought needed to be said and needed to be done, and sometimes at great cost to himself and to his family.

How does one become Wolf Wolfensberger? What is the story behind the man that makes his productivity and such a contribution possible? I can think of four things about Wolf that round out the picture and tell us about how Wolf could be Wolf.

### 1: Childhood

WOLF'S WAS AN EVENTFUL LIFE right from the start. His formative years were Nazi Germany, the Second World War, a family shattered by world events, and young Wolf, ten, refugee and fostered by the Muellers, a German family in the Alsace. About a year after having been placed with the Muellers for his safety, Wolf's sister, Marian, made her way through great adversity to tell Wolf and their nearby brother, Hanno, to come back home. Wolf then made his way back to Mannheim in 1944 to find what was left of his family. So imagine for a moment: you are that 10 year old, it's 1944, you are in war-torn, rural France. One morning you leave on foot, to cross about 100 miles as the crow flies. Your purpose: to find your family. What has become of your mother, father, brother, sister, grandparents and family? I for one can imagine being terrified.

It is only in 1963, almost 20 years later, when Wolf and Nancy were back in Europe, and Wolf

decided to knock on the door of that farmhouse in Alsace France, that Herr Mueller discovered that young Wolf had survived his trek back home. The Muellers had never received the letters that Wolf had sent them to confirm his survival. Herr Mueller cried with joy, and the family celebrated the return of the prodigal foster son. And it is also in 1963 that Wolf saw again his brother Hanno, now deceased, for the first time in 13 years.

Wolf rarely spoke of these times but how could they not be formative?

In 2003, at the Third International SRV Conference in Calgary, Wolf took Bob Flynn and I aside to gently chide us for our naive optimism about resilience theory (Flynn, 2003; Lemay, 2003). He said to us: "You can survive and even overcome trauma and tragedy, but it marks you for life." Certainly the school of life prepared Wolf for adversity and it also, I suspect, taught him to be sceptical of the designs and plans of man, however seemingly benign.

And then there is the 16 year old penniless German boy who in 1950 immigrated to the US with his mother and settled in Memphis, Tennessee. He finished his high school and went on to do a degree in philosophy. He paid his way through school by working as a "control chemist" testing food preservatives—a job he liked—and many of the compounds he worked with, he later discovered, were carcinogenic. Wolf then went to Peabody to do his PhD in Psychology in the first ever Mental Retardation program.

Here is how later he described his PhD years (Wolfensberger, 2008). These are words that should serve to reassure every mediocre student in this church and of course should be posted in the admission departments of universities. This is Wolf writing:

*I was not a particularly good student at Peabody, and was not grade-avid as some students were . . . if I did not like a subject matter or a textbook, my motivation flagged. I was also impatient with any*

*course work of which I could not see the relevance to my envisioned future work ...*

*At the 2004 Peabody reunion, my advisor [Rue Cromwell] admitted that the faculty would not have rated me as one of their more promising students. However, I stayed in the field, was indefatigable in addressing real-life challenges there, and worked full-time even after my supposed retirement, the same as my friend and mentor Gunnar Dybwad had done. Also, I formed extensive informal personal involvements with retarded people, some lasting for decades until death parted us. All this bears out the well-known pitfalls of predicting career outcomes (p. 77).*

## 2. Family: His Rootedness

I THINK WE CAN ALL GUESS how the experiences of childhood and youth contributed to making Wolf Wolf. But there is another ingredient, a second ingredient if you will, that I think bears reviewing and that completes the picture of the change agent he would become. Without this ingredient, the rest would have been very difficult if not impossible. This ingredient came about because Wolf was then in the role of impecunious student who was trying to sell his typewriter. We are in 1959, Wolf is doing a Practicum at Muscatatuck State School in Indiana, and an employee there knows a young woman who is looking to buy a typewriter. Wolf wanted \$50 for the typewriter, a hefty sum back then. A young woman comes to see the typewriter and decides to buy it.

I don't know if he got \$50 for the typewriter, but Wolf did get the girl, and that is how Wolf met the beautiful Nancy Artz, and they were married February 13, 1960. Nancy and Wolf just recently celebrated 51 years of matrimony. He got the typewriter back and a superb typist in the bargain; not to mention partner, and love of his life. And of course he then firmly established his roots in this land.

And then there were the travels and the moves and the kids: Margaret, now a lawyer; Joan, a PhD in Health Care Delivery; and Paul, keeping

up the Hitz and Wolfensberger family tradition of engineering. Nancy and the kids were the first to be recruited in Wolf's crusade against institutions, and for community services, normalization and later Social Role Valorization. Nancy was typist, manager, collaborator, organizer, caterer and hostess, and she essentially insured over these many years and incredibly productive career that things got done and all went well. These are behind the scenes roles, but they were and are essential. Change agency requires such support.

The kids were the official keepers of all the collections, organizing the post cards, degumming stamps, keeping the 1000s of books in subject and alphabetical order, doing photocopies, folding, collating and stapling. A death by a thousand paper cuts, remembers Margaret. They remember well the 3X5 index cards that Dad would give them with their daily chores and activities to do. Margaret remembers being at the NIMR building in Toronto at 5 am with her dad, to help with the coloring of overheads and everything else that needed to be done.

And then there were the innumerable Wolfshops: bringing all the materials, books, overheads, slides, flyers. Tens of thousands attended these events. Setting up the thousand or so wine and cheeses. And then the hospitality at the Wolfensberger home. Hundreds have stayed with the Wolfensbergers, and Nancy's food was always remarkably hearty and delicious.

Wolf teaches an important lesson of parenting: Doing things with the kids doesn't mean you can't have them doing things for you and the cause. And Wolf of course was way ahead of his times: this was a decade before George Vaillant's (Vaillant & Vaillant, 2001) groundbreaking Harvard study showed that the only childhood activity that predicted future adult outcomes (in this case positive mental health) was parents who had their children do chores. I think that 3X5 index cards are optional.

Thus here are roles that contribute to being an effective change agent and are certainly not inimical to it:

- Son, nephew, uncle, brother;
- Proud member of the Hitz and Wolfensberger clans, Swiss German families with many engineers and other accomplished folk. Wolf, who was very interested in genealogy, presented at a recent conference in Washington to a Hitz-Wolfensberger family reunion;
  - Husband;
  - Father;
  - Father-in-law;
  - Grandfather to Tate, Jennifer and Hadley.

This was change agency 101: Don't do it alone: involve the family, and treat people to lavish hospitality.

### 3. How to Play the Roles of Leader, Colleague & Friend

WOLF WAS THE CHAMPION of many unpopular causes. But he was not a lone Wolf. Change occurs through people, and change agency is about bringing people along. There was the family of course. And his close collaborators at the Training Institute, Susan Thomas and Carol Flowers, who have steadfastly continued the work these many years. But over the decades Wolf has worked with many other leaders to help create opportunities for positive change. I hope you will forgive me if I do not recite the list of friends and colleagues; there are too many to mention here and a great risk of forgetting many others.

Leaders being leaders tend to want to lead, but surprisingly, there was a common cause that brought these people together. Single-handedly would be unfair to Wolf—he always had partners, collaborators, friends and allies. There were other professionals, students, parents, parent associations, SRV trainers, people with developmental handicaps—a wide network that Wolf supported, and people who supported him. And because what he advocated was serious, important, indeed life-and-death important, there were bound to be differences of opinion and even adversaries.

One great role that Wolf played I think with relish was the role of mentor. This went with peda-

gogue, teacher, trainer, maître à penser, a bit of the German professor, and wise counsellor. He took people under his wing and then gave them the benefit of his time and knowledge. He was incredibly kind and generous.

He took an interest in many here in this church and many who are not able to be here. He touched us with his wisdom, clear-sightedness, passion and friendship. He cultivated acquaintanceships, and was generous with his mentoring to students and protégés. He had a paradoxical capacity for deep friendship, despite (or perhaps because of?) a no less deep personal sense of privacy and reserve.

Just a few weeks ago, I got yet another package of materials which he'd cut out that he thought would be of interest to me. Over the years, we've had many a conversation, he has given me much advice, and he and Nancy have lavished on Lynne, the kids and I much welcoming hospitality. I can still see Wolf on a hot summer day many years ago, in his back yard regaling my then young children with his German-American accented French rendition of *La Cigale et la Fourmi*. My kids loved him and thought I had been very lucky to have had such a funny professor.

It is quite true that Wolf could be a lightning rod when he took up controversial issues: language and political correctness, recently the dire financial situation that human services are soon going to find themselves in, and of course abortion and deathmaking. He stood up and said what he thought needed saying. He risked his credibility, professional reputation and even relationships. He risked being alone on issues, but his integrity and authentic commitment to the truth would not allow Wolf to waiver. But sometimes it had to feel like that 100 mile trek to Mannheim all over again.

And even on issues where there were potential allies, it seemed like it was never good enough. Defeating the institutions was only a first step. Community services, always at risk of perpetuating institutional modalities, now had to take up the challenge of valued social participation and opening up access to the good things in life.

He saw and denounced addled ideas, and muddled practices that he estimated would lead to grief for vulnerable people. There was no satisfying the man. But then we all know that there is much out there that should dissatisfy and worry us all.

The situation of people with developmental disabilities has surely improved over Wolf's lifetime and he deserves much of the credit for making a difference. A few days ago, our colleague and friend, Darcy Elks, shared with me that her daughter, now a young woman, had recently graduated from high school and gone to her senior prom at an exclusive country club. This country club it so happens is but five miles from the now closed large state institution. My friend noted a great irony in this proximity because 30 years ago, her daughter, who has a developmental disability, would quite likely have been at that State School (Elks, 2011). A lot of people were involved in closing that institution and other institutions and for helping allow individuals with handicaps to live in the community, but Wolf certainly was at the forefront of those battles. And it is not only in New York state or even the US but throughout much of the Western world that this revolution has occurred. I've heard Wolf give credit to others. But no Wolf, a lot of this was because of you. And I'm sure you can all hear Wolf simply respond that there is yet much to do.

Teacher, trainer, learned man, mentor, friend.

The change agent should never be alone, and Wolf strived to be surrounded by allies, colleagues and friends.

#### 4. Faith

AND NOW FINALLY the fourth ingredient: just a few words about the religious and spiritual foundations of his life.

For Wolf to be Wolf and to engage in these great causes, he needed his family, his friends and colleagues, and finally his faith. Wolf was convinced that he was never alone.

"Be not afraid!" Wolf was quite taken with this oft-repeated sentence in the Gospels, and that was

one of the major themes of John Paul II's papacy. "Be not afraid!"

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Wolf was born a Catholic in a family with a Jewish and Catholic heritage. He was always devout and pious, and in the 1970s, through the influence of his own readings, prayer and meetings with Jean Vanier and William Stringfellow, he explored and developed a more profound spirituality (Bersani, 2001). Wolf helped found and actively participated in the Syracuse l'Arche community and it was also at this time that he started actively participating in the Unity Kitchen Community, a Catholic Worker initiative that provides hospitality to homeless individuals in Syracuse.

His increasing spirituality and belief in God led him to abandon anything resembling "ordinary hope" in human affairs. All of this I believe further radicalized his efforts to stand in solidarity with people who were poor, lowly and excluded from the good life, particularly people with handicaps. Wolf came to see more clearly the great evils that confront us but are often hidden away and made subtle by all manner of subterfuge. His position on language and political correctness stem from his view that language has been subverted to hide from us what is going on, to make critical discourse ever more difficult. His open practice of religion and his positions on controversial issues were fearless, or just as likely, he put on a brave front as he risked much. He did not do it for effect or to be effective. He did it because it was the right thing to do.

In his teaching of the history of human services, Wolf made much of the Gospel passage in Matthew chapter 25 where service to the hidden Christ inspired much of primitive human service well into modern times.

In this passage, Christ thus tells a parable on the last judgment:

*Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.'*

*Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?'*

*And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me' (Matthew 25: 34-40).*

Believer, Christian, pious man, faithful servant, child of God.

And that is how Wolf was Wolf: steeled by his childhood experiences, surrounded by family, friends and allies, and with his faith in God, he could be fearless in serving the hidden Christ.

“Be not afraid,” said Christ.

And we are here today to remember a life well and fully lived, to cherish his love and friendship, to ponder the example he has given us, and to take up with passion the important cause of serving people who are devalued.

And a final word from the Gospel that Wolf often had occasion to read and that applies so well to Wolf on this day:

“Well done thou good and faithful servant ... Now enter into thy Master’s joy” (Matthew 25:23). And pray for us all.

Thank you.

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#### Mitchel Peters (Australia)

*What we do for ourselves dies with us ... what we do for others remains and is immortal.*

*- Albert Pike, 19th-century American soldier, lawyer and author*

ADELAIDE, AUSTRALIA, 1992: that was the place and the time when I first met Wolf Wolfensberger. Dr. Wolfensberger and his co-presenters, Susan Thomas and A.J. Hildebrand (a Citizen Advocacy co-ordinator) were presenting a series of events, two of which I was fortunate to attend. The two events were a five-day Social Advocacies workshop and a two-day Citizen



Advocacy workshop. These events represented an exclamation mark in the trajectory of my understanding of advocacy, and especially Citizen Advocacy.

Seeing Dr. Wolfensberger in action, so to speak, left an indelible impression on me. He was idiosyncratic, impassioned, inspiring—and much, much more. The depth, breadth and clarity of his knowledge and analysis was astonishing. Yet, despite his gifts, he seemed humble, not hubristic. Most obvious of all was his patent and palpable commitment to marginalised and vulnerable people in our society.

I met Dr. Wolfensberger for the second and last time in Brisbane, Australia in 1997, at a marathon seven-day Social Advocacies event. It was great to see him again—his charisma and conviction undiminished. Subsequently, I maintained sporadic contact with Dr. Wolfensberger, corresponding with him typically about matters pertaining to Citizen Advocacy and/or Social Role Valorization. He never failed to reply to my queries and advice-seeking, and his responses were characteristically insightful and incisive, often accompanied by a word of encouragement. Around 2002, I was privileged to co-author with him a lengthy article in which we updated some aspects of the operation of the Citizen Advocacy office, which was published in the journal *Citizen Advocacy Forum*. Although my contribution was modest, Dr. Wolfensberger was very generous in his appraisal, communicating that he was pleased with the collaboration and its end product.

The Chinese Communist leader, Chou Enlai, was once reportedly asked what the impact of the French Revolution was on world affairs. Mindful that the event had occurred more than 150 years earlier, he replied famously (and some would say, sagaciously): “It’s too soon to tell.” The too-soon assessment cannot be made about the “revolution” that Dr. Wolfensberger fomented: a revolution of the hearts, minds and actions of so many that has discernible present-day impacts, and which is likely to have long-lasting implications. There

may not be anything comparable to strident revolutionaries storming the Bastille, but many of the citadels of imperialistic entities will continue to feel the reverberations that are the result of his teachings and actions.

I cannot claim to have known Dr. Wolfensberger well. However, I can justly claim that my association with him has enriched and enlightened me. For that and more, I will always be profoundly indebted to him.

Gratias tibi ago, Dr Wolfensberger.

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**Nancy McNamara**  
**Past President, BDACI (Canada)**

I, FOR ONE, WILL NOT SOON FORGET Wolf’s wide, warm smile, especially apparent when he was engaged informally with parents one-on-one or in small groups. He never forgot a face or a name and his own face would light up when he saw a familiar friend, colleague or parent—a memory those of us who were lucky enough to know him will forever cherish.

There is no doubt of Wolf’s monumental contributions to and influence of the Community Living movement throughout Canada, and in Ontario, especially with the closure of our three largest institutions for people with disabilities. Figuratively and quite literally, he pulled open the doors and revealed the inhumanity done to the vulnerable of this world. For this, he was regarded as an icon, a champion and a giant among forward-thinking minds in the disability field. Further, with his conviction that giving the vulnerable valued social roles would give them access to the “good things in life,” he improved the lives of many formerly institutionalized people.

Wolf’s impact was felt no more deeply than by us at Brockville & District Association for Community Involvement (BDACI), where he was also regarded as an inspiration and a friend. In fact, his work in Normalization, Social Role Valorization and Citizen Advocacy was fundamental in

the development of our Association and is embodied in our mission statement and our goals, guiding both our everyday human service practices and our advocacy work. It is no secret that he and BDACI had a special relationship, fostered through the Thousand Islands ComServ Project. There is a strong emphasis on training and education in SRV and PASSING, and related workshops and presentations. Financial support is provided to parents, core staff and support workers to attend these throughout Ontario and elsewhere. They are looked forward to with great anticipation and enthusiasm, especially when Wolf himself was participating. Parents will always treasure the special memory of his attendance at BDACI's Annual General Meeting in 2009 as our special guest speaker, and where I was honoured to present him with our President's Award.

Rest assured, Wolf's ground-breaking and visionary work will continue to be studied, preached and practiced throughout the world by his followers, human service workers and families. As a parent, I will always think of him with fondness and admiration, as a kind, gentle and compassionate scholarly man who inspired many of us and gave us hope for better futures for our children with intellectual disabilities.

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### **Ruth Abrahams (UK)**

I FIRST HEARD ABOUT Wolf Wolfensberger when I became interested in the advocacy movement in the late 80's. My friend Maggie Adams and I were trying to start a Citizen Advocacy group in Newcastle, having realised that not every service user could advocate for themselves. The workshop in Lytham St. Annes was advertised and the organisation that I was involved with at the time (Skills for People) agreed to pay for me to go to the conference.

It was a privilege to hear Wolf Wolfensberger speak at Lytham St. Annes in the late 80's. My

immediate reaction, as a disabled person, was that he had an extraordinary insight into how people like me were treated. I remember him chastising his audience for not listening to him, and I also remember beginning the workshop at the back of the audience and, by the end, sitting at the front listening most intently. That was the beginning of a long relationship which became friendship. I remember going to Australia and taking part in his workshops there, and, not long afterwards, the small study group that had formed after a 'Sanctity of Life' workshop in Manchester (which he described as the most attentive audience he had presented to) managed to persuade him to bring this workshop here again and to let us do some of the presenting.

So it began: the trips to the UK and the opportunity to meet not only Wolf, but Nancy as well. Although we worked hard, we also had a lot of fun. I expect Nancy will remember our day at Durham Cathedral and having Sunday lunch at the Gosforth Park, and Wolf wanting a taste of everything. It was such a pleasure when Wolf and Nancy came to my parents' house and had a meal with us. I can remember my mother trying to get Wolf to eat poached herring. He gave it a go—even though fish was not his favourite. Somewhere along the line he gave me the nickname 'the Queen'—I always hoped that it was a joke. There was the race every year at Christmas to see which of us telephoned first with seasonal greetings.

I believe that the legacy of his work, his writing and his training courses will probably now be truly understood, as from my point of view he was a great teacher with enormous insight and a fantastic way of looking at a problem from a worldview perspective, suggesting methods of counteracting some very negative methodologies and ideologies. I will miss him greatly; it was always good to know that I could pick up the phone and talk to him about any issue.

*RUTH ABRAHAMS is a disability activist in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England & was one of the people involved in bringing Professor Wolfensberger to the UK in the 1990s.*

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### Jacques Pelletier (Canada)

#### How Wolf Wolfensberger's Ideas Were Stronger Than Words in French Canada & Québec

IN 1988, THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF QUÉBEC unanimously adopted a motion presented by the Minister of Health and Social Services, the Honorable Thérèse Lavoie-Roux (1928-2009), proclaiming that “the integration of persons with mental retardation was a human and social imperative” in Québec. A publication entitled *L'intégration des personnes qui présentent une déficience intellectuelle: Un impératif humain et social* (Gouvernement du Québec, MSSS, 1988) had just been published, in which the general principles of deinstitutionalization and social integration were determined. This was followed a year later in 1989 by a document specifying how deinstitutionalization and social integration were to be implemented. Wolf Wolfensberger's *The Principle of Normalization* as well as *PASS 3* were cited and referenced.

What followed this historic event, the closure of all public asylum based institutions within 12 years and the development of community-based services, was inspired in very large part by Wolf Wolfensberger. This was amazing in itself because there was a great divide between the French Canadian/Québécois cultures and Wolf's culture, especially his German roots. The saving grace was that he was an American, not an English Canadian, and that he was referred to in Québec as a Professor at Syracuse University (the “cuse” pronounced as in Zola's “J'accuse!”).

Still another amazing fact regarding WW's incredible influence in Québec and French Canada is that the first Wolfensberger text that was translated and published in French was *PASSING*, published in 1988 (it came out after the National Assembly motion) by my company Les Commu-

nications OPELL. It was only in 1997 that the (first) SRV monograph was translated and published in French by Éditions des Deux Continents in Geneva Switzerland with which I am associated.

This means that the incredible influence Wolf Wolfensberger exerted in Québec and in French Canada was essentially through word of mouth, story telling, vignettes, political speeches, sermons (...) and even songs, with the help of no more than 20 dedicated (but strategically placed) social change agents that participated in PASS sessions in English, not always understanding the finer points of Anglo Saxon and Wolfensberger vocabulary, a handicap that was probably not that bad in retrospect. I was one of them and we had early on our own way of translating Normalization by “Valorisation Sociale.” “Normalisation” was not the correct word in French for what Normalization stood for. Wolf did mention something to that effect when explaining the change from Normalization to SRV.

He was, by far, the most influential person in the evolution of services for disabled persons in Québec and French Canada, and yet he never spoke to us in French. Most of us had yet to read him in our language by the time the human and social imperative movement he inspired was well on its way to revolutionize our service systems and dramatically improve the lives of thousands.

That's how incredible his influence was.

Merci Wolf.

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### David Race (UK)

#### Wolf Wolfensberger & His Impact in the UK – A Personal View

IN AUGUST 2001, as I sat at Wolf Wolfensberger's kitchen table, another visiting academic made welcome by the ever hospitable Nancy, my wife called to tell me that my youngest son, who has Down's syndrome, had just obtained

six passes in the national examinations taken by all sixteen year old students in England. To his great delight, this was six more than his hero David Beckham.

That incident encapsulates in miniature Wolf Wolfensberger's effect in the UK. Whilst his writings had influenced academic thinking and government policies from before my own beginnings in the field in 1973, probably a much greater legacy is the inspiration that Wolfensberger has given to thousands of ordinary people, often via the leaders that were influenced by him, to act on the notion that people like my son should not be in institutions, but should have the opportunity to live full and ordinary lives.

The period before the early 1980s, when the organisation CMHERA first brought people over from the USA, had seen some normalization ideas in key government policy documents such as 'Better Services for the Mentally Handicapped' (DHSS, 1971). Government and academic papers do not always mean action, however, and the effort in the 1980s, more from the 'bottom up,' of the normalization and SRV teaching via PASS(ING) workshops, seems to have coincided with more change than the pronouncements of the 1970s. The 1980s saw instances of real development in learning disability services, but also coincided with the Thatcher government's creation of a 'welfare market' for all vulnerable groups. This mix led to some achievements, but also a sense of chaos and fragmentation in ideas and services.

Wolfenberger's own visits to the UK at this time focussed on his broader concerns. Disagreement with some of these ideas, or sometimes just with his teaching methods, led to a gradual tarring of SRV with the same negative brush. As the 1990s proceeded, therefore (though John O'Brien's work was still influential via his 'Framework for Accomplishment'), SRV teaching declined. So too did the resources within the increasingly fragmented service providers to fund values-based training.

The roots of change set in the 1970s and 1980s, however, went deep, and are what I believe were

a powerful force behind the New Labour government policy document, *Valuing People* (DOH, 2001). Certainly John O'Brien was heavily involved in the government guidelines on person-centred approaches that appeared a year later.

Wolfensberger himself had made his last speaking visit to the UK in 2000, with a series of one-day events in Newcastle, and again his UK reputation, rather than his ideas, preceded him, causing trouble for the organiser of the events. Since then, the main force of Wolfensberger's ideas in the new millennium seem to me to have been felt at the individual level, with which I began this piece. The so-called 'personalisation agenda,' again with powerful inputs from John O'Brien, has its roots in the notion of humanity with which I describe my son.

Ironically, in view of the disappearance of such workshops for the greater part of the 2000s, this is written during a PASSING workshop in March 2011. A new generation is being introduced to SRV, but we are finding that while services for people with learning disabilities, the main group impacted by Wolfensberger's ideas in the UK, have improved in their PASSING ratings, other services, especially for older people, remain at the institutional level. Given the universality of devaluation this should not surprise us, but the fact that there are a number of grounds for hope, especially for people like my son, rests to a not insignificant degree with the legacy of Wolf Wolfensberger.

DAVID RACE, PHD, is an Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the University of Salford, in Manchester, England, & Chair of Values Education & Research Association (VERA), a small network in the UK which undertakes SRV & related training & consultancy.

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**Bill Forman (Canada)**

LIKE SO MANY PROFESSIONALS in my field, I was influenced by the work of Wolf Wolfensberger long before I actually met him. It seemed that everywhere I turned, I ran into his writing and work. Sadly, some colleagues deemed both him and his work as passé. His writings sat ignored on the shelf as they adopted fad after passing fad. Others would claim originality of thought and method, when it was clear that both originated with Wolf.

I first encountered Wolf's ideas while teaching at a segregated school for children and adults with developmental delays. A PASSING evaluation was performed on the school, and a PASSING manual made available to us to prepare. I remember devouring it and relishing the crisp, clear analysis in it. I went on to read Wolf's 1972 *Normalization* text and found it equally compelling.

I did not actually take the PASSING course and the prerequisite SRV until a few years after. By that time, I was working in adult services, and had grown very troubled by my work, to the point of a kind of soul sickness. In spite of good intentions and sincere efforts, the lives of the people I served were tragically unfulfilled, and characterized by sadness, neglect, rejection and abuse. I vividly remember the moment, during the second site conciliation, when it 'all came together' for me. The gnawing feeling in the pit of my stomach was dissolved, replaced by a clarity of understanding I had sought, albeit fitfully, for years.

It was, however, a bittersweet liberation. While I had gained some modest apprehension of the dynamics of devaluation, it was accompanied by an appreciation of my own complicity, personally and professionally, in those destructive processes. Nonetheless, I was grateful for having the veil lifted from my eyes. It has grown back many times in the following years and still afflicts me, but the disciplines I have learned from Wolf, and his

many writings and teachings since, have always helped me to see more clearly.

Ever since that first workshop, I have continued to study and implement SRV in my work. I went on to teach SRV, and had the rare privilege to study and work directly with Wolf and other of his protégés. The study extended beyond SRV to matters of personal and social morality and the 'nature of human nature.' As with my first liberating experience with his work, each step afterward has deepened my understanding and helped me in practical and personal ways for which I am grateful beyond words.

Wolf was such an elegant writer, speaker, teacher and mentor. How I looked forward to the arrival of his TIPS newsletter in my mail, the appearance of his latest article, and especially the next opportunity to learn from him in person at the study groups I was so very privileged to be a part of. Not long before he passed away, I wrote to him to thank him for all of this, and to tell him how transformed I have been by his teaching. Hardly a week goes by that I do not call on something he said or wrote to help me approach an issue or challenge.

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**Lorna Hallahan**  
**Flinders University (Australia)**

**For Fresh Peaches: Reflecting on the  
 Good Life & Wolf Wolfensberger**

HOW COULD I EVER HAVE IMAGINED that I might have anything interesting or engaging to say on the subject of 'The Good Life'? Apart from the fact that the ancient Greeks were obsessed with this question (at least when they weren't busy snuffing any hope of it for their enemies), David Malouf has just made a pretty good fist of it in a recent *Quarterly Essay*. As I calmed myself however about this request, I realised that although it has all been said before, I haven't said it in quite this way. Perhaps it is important for all of us to

have a go at saying our own thing about the good life—to think through and explore the questions that rise in its shadow, for our own purposes, here and now. When we resort to familiar ideas we are not being inadequate. Aristotle himself would enjoin us to seek out the wisdom of past generations. It is the failure to try and wrestle our understandings of a good life which reeks of committed ignorance. So I will confidently draw on those who have asked this one before as I wend my way to some holding-for-now conclusions.

In this I start at ‘Haiku,’ a brief poem by Kevin Hart, and by which I live so much of my work:

*Each day we totter on planks  
we hope will become bridges.*

I like this because it locates our work in every day; it uses the word we and not I; it refers to tottering which seems just right for a one-legged woman; it acknowledges that in striving to build connections each of us brings planks (no one arrives empty handed) and that all our work is governed by a hope of that connection. (That took me close to 60 words to Hart’s 11!)

I have arrived with a few planks I will explore with you now.

My few words:

*Where desire holds hands with decency,  
there shall we find a good life.*

Desire is a laden word so often caught up with our sexuality or power or for some, oddly, motor vehicles. Here I am using it in a more general and less consuming, dominating or avaricious form. It is about: knowing what floats your boat, about having access to and use of sufficient external goods to make life easy and pleasurable, filled with friends, lovers, children and our parents, high quality food and drink, meaningful employment, times of relaxation and times of challenge ... free from oppression, from excessive struggle,

from hardship, from loneliness, the derision of our neighbours and the exploitation of employers. This perhaps equates most to the idea of the happy life, La Dolce Vita, the sweet life, the comfortable life.

I use the word desire because, if we are honest, we experience a sense that not all our needs and wants are met. We are set back by loss, or the failure of our plans, or cruel fate ... Many of us, living here in peaceful communities and consuming far too many calories, really live with a blend of contentment and craving. This existential state feels like desire.

I gave up wanting to be a nun at about 14 years, 2 months, 1 week and a couple of days, when a boy on a bicycle made my heart race and continued to everyday for a year before I spoke to him and discovered he was a thoughtless sort of fellow. Even with this early disappointment I never really took to the lessons of denial and detachment. So I am not going to lecture you about the horrors of materialism and loving unwisely. I love material things, the manifest world, I love comfort and I love it when my passions are reciprocated.

And that’s chiefly why I want a measure of realised desire for each of my fellow human beings. A realised desire that is also accompanied by an unfulfilled dream or five ... contentment and craving ... Of course, then, I think desire leads to morality.

I am persuaded by Aristotle on this one. Not the bit about having to be in the right social caste, a male, aged between 30 and 40 and without illness or impairment, neither a slave, nor a woman and so on. I think that leaving social goods exclusively to single elites undermines the other necessary element of my little model—things must be fair as well. Greed crushes the good. Generosity expands it.

Susan Haslip, summing up Aristotle’s work in *Quodlibet*, says: “The candidate for the good life, besides having the opportunity to act on the virtues, must have known what he was doing; chosen to act the way he did and chose it for its own

sake; and the act must come from a firm and unchangeable character.”

(As an aside: The firm and unchangeable character probably does not hold much academic appeal in these fluid post modern times, but I am bold enough to suggest that for most people our values hold fast for long periods in our lives. I know I do not yield cherished ideals to community education campaigns. I might realign my policy conclusions but I always do it within a framework of values I have sought to develop since childhood. Depending on where you sit that makes me either rigid or resilient!)

Aristotle’s term for this, *eudemonia*, has been explored by countless philosophers and theologians since that time. For now, let’s go with Martha Nussbaum’s definition. *Eudaimonia* is ‘activity according to excellence, living well and doing well.’ It is the doing well that we are looking at now, but I want to remind you that we cannot approach the question of doing well if we have no vision of living well. We need to know what we seek for others and for ourselves. That is desire.

Once again we are over endowed with resources on how to approach the question of doing well, or indeed doing things in a good and proper manner. This can unsettle those of us concerned with the fates of our fellow citizens rendered vulnerable to social disparagement by the frailties of their fellows unable to accept human fragility. The consensus seems to be that these people need desire little of the good life; they are after all the victims of cruel fate. A view that: ‘nobody can live well, like that.’

Next week marks the 35th anniversary of the amputation of my leg. Not long after this I was with my mother who had gone into the hairdresser’s salon to see if my wig was ready to be fitted. (No, they didn’t shave my head when they amputated my leg, I was having chemotherapy.) I was waiting on a bus seat outside. Mother still recalls the feeling of hopeless rage she felt when she returned to find me in conversation with a woman who was declaring: ‘you know if I was you

I would kill myself. This is no way for a young girl to live.’ I was very shaken.

Only two months ago a fervent young waiter who had just discovered an evangelical version of Christianity informed me that ‘God doesn’t want me to live like that.’ Fortunately I have toughened up over those years. I recognise that the countless people who have said to me that they can’t stand the thought of having to live like that, that they know, perhaps unconsciously, of the history and current reality of social rejection of the disabled. I have deliberately, as a form of moral development practice, taught myself to step over the shame that shears my soul at these moments and to try to open their eyes to a bigger view of life like this. To keep them there for a few seconds longer and to demand their attention.

This of course was Wolf’s starting point, well-meaning people are troubled by fragility and are prepared to go to extraordinary lengths to remove it from their presence and consciousness. When you think about what the state has thrown at us over the last 170 years, you can see that enormous effort and resources have gone into keeping us in our place, which of course is a long way from the place of intact others. Astonishing really.

When we say that we seek a good life—desire fulfilled and refuelled—for the socially disparaged, we start to do the improper—we are not doing what is good and proper but what we believe is good, and is consequently improper. And I think that Wolf did this with such tenacity and rigour. He was sooo thorough!

I came to his work through advocacy, not through services, normalisation and SRV. Perhaps one of the most divisive arguments played out in the Australian disability advocacy sector over the past 25 years related to his view that advocacy must come at cost. To me and my comrades, it made sense that advocacy can be costly. That is a description of what we had already learned. But that it must come at cost was challenging. It added a moral expectation into our work and it unsettled many people in our scene when we

started talking about it. It sat right up there with his suggestion that we should explore anticipatory suffering. We should know what is likely to be ahead if we are to commit to a path to change the conditions of life for one person or many. I think that he was right, for in a deep and lasting sense, all of us need to know the pain of the humiliation offered by a smug society and we cannot know it unless we stand beside and perhaps hold the one who does. All of us need to know the pain of rejection, of our desires and of our person, and we cannot know that until our advocacy meets powerful barriers and the strong social forces of rejection. And we must have some idea about how we will react.

We also know that where we have reached the good life—living well with desires fulfilled and expanded—we will have to yield some things in order to bring the socially disparaged back into our lives. This is part of cost. It's comfortable with the socially undesirable hygienically kept away from us.

And those of us who have touched into the worlds of social disparagement and humiliation, no matter how little, will need to risk some trust in a world that can seem so hostile. This is the cost for us.

Our services and our communities continue to humiliate those who must rely upon them, so advocates will always need to accept the cost of naming that truth.

This is the element of decency, developed beautifully in the work of Israeli philosopher, Avashai Margalit, in *The Decent Society*. He captures in depth the costs of humiliation, for persons and for societies. He argues that affording people their dignity is more important than attending to justice. I think that Wolf would have agreed.

Much as I welcome (even joyfully welcome) the turn to rights in our policy discussions, I know, from my own direct experience, from my professional experience as a social worker for 30 years and from my work as a scholar, that the shame that arises from an indecent society prepared to

tolerate a dominant myth that some people are unworthy to live among us, is the deepest affliction and the most profound barrier to living a good life.

The mystic philosopher/activist Simone Weil, who wrote so eloquently about affliction as physical pain, social rejection and a soul lacerated by shame, tells us two things about dealing with it. I am sure we would brainstorm many more. But these are hers. First, she tells us that: Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity. Attending to another is a gift of the self and that is always costly even when it brings great rewards. It is this form of attention when I try to engage those who would fill in the confronting gap or declare my situation intolerable.

Second, Weil says that we must speak only words of beauty to the afflicted. Here I think of hope, justice, peace, dignity, self, trust and love. Where do we hear these words in human services? Not really the lexicon of assessment and planning tools and yet so easily distorted into 'service is love; complaints mechanisms are justice, and pleading for your carers to kill you is dignity.' I could go on.

These are two pathways into decency. (There are many more, two will do for now.)

I said at the beginning that desire and decency must hold hands to bring about a good life. This holding hands I see in the way that Marcel Merleau-Ponty describes it: 'each hand is both touching, active, sensing the other hand and also being touched, passive, being sensed by the other hand.' An existential reminder that desire and decency are enmeshed in every dimension, transferring power and support to each other. They are not feet taking alternating steps at a time (an old metaphor for the binary), but they are in intimate, cooperative bond. Sometimes in deep knowledge of each other, at other times, toiling away in their own sphere.

Yet, when our hands spend too much time stirring their own pots, desire and decency lose the moderating effect on each other. Excessive moral rigour is judgmental and joyless. Excessive pleasure and contentment seeking causes us to be-



come bloated and insensitive. The recognition of the necessity to dream of and in part attain living well provides the impetus to our moral imagination that will not let us live in comfort when those removed from us live with shame, despair, oppression and poverty. Our living well both inspires and condemns us. Our doing well both deprives us and enriches us.

Where desire holds hands with decency, there shall we find a good life.

When the writer Alice Walker was reflecting on the nuclear threat during the 1980s, she was tempted to say, 'we black people have been forced to live in the darkest corners of the globe, if our oppressors were to blast the whole thing away it would be a sort of justice.' She concludes, however, that our goal is to share the earth as unashamed friends and that: 'Life is better than death, I believe, if only because it is less boring, and because it has fresh peaches in it.'

### Benediction

SO, AS WE BID HIM FAREWELL and take up the vision and the moral rigour of our late comrade Wolf; as we all work to share this earth as unashamed friends; let's ensure that we take the time to grow and enjoy the fresh peaches and that we never back away from giving a slice to our most unattended-to neighbour.

Or as Hannah Arendt says: 'Dedicate yourself to the good you deserve and desire for yourself. Give yourself peace of mind. You deserve to be happy. You deserve delight.'

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**Michael Steer**

### **Wolfensberger: Tales from the Twilight Zone**

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Thanks to the generosity of Ray Lemay, we are reprinting the following article, first published in SRV/VRS: The International Social Role Valorization Journal/La Revue Internationale de la Valorisation des Rôles Sociaux*, 2(2), 12–14.

\* \* \*

NOTE: *Wolf Wolfensberger had occasion to review this text before we decided to publish. His only comment was cryptic: "Si non e vero, e ben trovato!" (loosely: If its not true, it is nonetheless well invented.)*

THERE CAN HAVE BEEN few more stimulating places in the world to have studied than Syracuse University during the early-mid-1970s. At that time, some of our field's immortal names daily haunted the stacks of the university's magnificent Bird Library: Burton Blatt, Dean of the School of Education, author of *Christmas in Purgatory* and *Exodus from Pandemonium*; Thomas Szasz, the 'Rambo' of the (then) infant anti-psychiatry movement; Sol Gordon, the sensational sexologist; David Krathwohl, co-author of *Bloom's Taxonomy*; Dan Sage of 'Sage and Burello'; Biklen, Bogdan and

Taylor at the internationally renowned Center on Human Policy, and of course the highly controversial Wolf Wolfensberger.

As a faceless and overly obsequious Canadian graduate student, I first 'experienced' (as the scent sales ladies say) Wolf at a tutorial organised by the Faculty to expose unstructured and unwashed post-adolescent thought processes to new ideas and famous (sometimes infamous) 'names.'

Syracuse was good at arranging lots of such (semi-idolatrous) occasions for its grad students. In my view it was a particular strength of an otherwise very strong, highly student-focussed program.

### The Young Wolf

AT FIRST ENCOUNTER, Wolf was much younger than I had expected him to be. In appearance he reminded me of the TV pictures I had seen of Oppenheimer, the nuclear scientist. His rather ascetic, haunted face, esoteric vocabulary, somewhat guttural accent and indeed his entire manner were all entirely appropriate to the tutorial and to a prestigious academic with his name and reputation. There were perhaps eight students and Professor Dan Sage (my program advisor) at the event, sitting in crescent formation, with an intense Wolf facing them, armed only with a notepad, pencil, enormous energy and a truly formidable mind. Wolf led off and battle ensued.

As an Anglo-Saxon, schooled during the Second World War to dread our Continental relatives, I recall having felt overwhelmed with Wolf's 'German-ness.' Most of the sparring between those in the group who had previously managed or been employed in institutional settings and Wolf, who in an absolute and unambiguous fashion stripped all dignity from their past careers, went completely over my head. After all I had been Principal of a residential school for blind children for the preceding five years and he obviously hadn't meant his incredibly pointed comments to refer to me!

The jousting continued for over an hour and on the way back from Huntington Hall, stumbling

across 'the Beach' (a small piece of lawn, littered on sunny days with the bodies of undergraduate basking shark) to the security of the Special Education Division, I recall thinking appreciatively 'Wow.' As many American graduate students will affirm, a 'Wow' scores well on most Likert-type scales of appreciation.

### Oh Granny, What Big Teeth You Have

THEN THE PASS WORKSHOPS started and so did the rumours. In those days PASS was only in its second edition. Faculty and students in the Special Education Division heard on the whisper grapevine that the PASS 2 conciliation sessions were so protracted and Wolf's expectations so demanding that some participants had become physically sick from exertion at various high or low points in the interminable events. Some it was said had enjoyed seizures induced by paroxysms of rage and there might even have been a few student deaths from unknown but dreadful causes.

The news was intoxicating to Dan my program advisor, whose images of a successful professional preparation program corresponded with certain humiliation scenes from 'An Officer and a Gentleman.' Into everyone's life a little rain must inevitably fall and despite my heart-rending entreaties, I was duly registered in two of Wolf's sequential units, from which few (if any), it was said, had ever emerged with a grade, let alone a passing grade. And grades were of course, for potential human service administrators, one of the few tangible reasons for submitting to the anguish of graduate school in those days, perhaps still.

The classes were wonderful. Wolf of course was a brilliant lecturer and the extent of his preparation was a lesson in the seriousness I had long been searching for in most things to do with the human services. Expectation was extraordinarily high and the peer competition sometimes daunting, but always appropriately fierce. There was a paper to be completed each week and a formidable reading list with spot quizzes which the un-

prepared might fail and have the failure count as part of the final all-important grade.

The papers were returned each week covered with red-penned, highly detailed comments, sometimes more red ink than original submission. The experience was at once enormously instructive and absolutely horrifying. Sometimes, the final comment would be a definitive RE-SUBMIT which meant next week, two papers should be submitted and if, perish the thought, with the same result, compound interest so that the final week's submission might, in theory at least, result in each class member submitting a dozen or so reworked papers. But this was only part of the tribulation.

For the first time in my life, I had to sit still for lengthy periods of time, listen hard and think quickly. Above all, I knew that I had to be prepared, stay very organised, read aggressively for retention and with alacrity. The course load was a particularly heavy one, since like most of my peers, I was also enrolled in four other classes during the semester, including one in advanced statistics and techniques of research; both 'guillotine' courses with (all importantly) high failure rates.

The best classes were the Sunday marathons which Wolf gave as make-ups for some of the regularly scheduled classes he missed because of his gigantic public speaking commitment. We would meet on campus at 8.00 or 9.00 am and go hard all day and into the early evening, with Wolf's wife Nancy bringing in vast quantities of pizza for lunch.

Wolf would take about an hour to warm up and then go into high gear for the remainder of the day. At one of the sessions I recall Wolf having concluded a teaching module that had been brimming with arcane content and had asked for questions about the concepts on the overhead transparency, which like the eye of the Cyclops had been a dominating feature of the presentation. A hirsute young person sitting in front of me asked if Wolf would explain the final issue of an unbelievably dense and lengthy list. Wolf's quick response was

'Mr. Blackman, your understanding of this issue would depend upon your complete conceptualization of the desiderata—I will move on.' I recall again thinking 'Wow'—and moving on.

### Invincibility

ON ANOTHER OCCASION, Wolf dwelt at length on the notion of 'Invincibility.' The focus of the lecture was on institutions, their longevity and the notion that in our battle to do away with them, we might never, ever win. The institution preservation movement, with its stranglehold at that time on AAMD, seemed invincible. Some things, like the poor and institutions, would (we all believed) always be with us.

To illustrate his point, Wolf told the story of how as a boy he had stood beside the bridge in his native village in Germany watching, as part of a crowd, the returning German Army flushed with the success of its invasion of France. They poured across the village bridge hour after hour, day after day in their trucks or tanks and wearing their helmets, flying their Nazi eagle standards, singing their victory songs to the hysterical cheers of the crowds. 'And as the hours and days passed,' said Wolf, 'the thought suddenly became clear to me—It's true—It's true. OUR SIDE IS INVINCIBLE! I felt like standing at attention,' said Wolf, 'And shouting with the crowd SEIG HEIL!' And to illustrate his point he did just that, as the classroom door opened and the Dean escorted a small group of wide-eyed visitors into the room. Wolf chose to ignore them, but it was indeed a moment to savour. The point of the story was, of course, that some three years after the incident, the supposedly invincible Third Reich was in ruins. Quite suddenly, the worm has turned and the conqueror was no longer invincible.

On another occasion, Wolf informed us that the class would be unable to meet during the following week because he had an engagement out of state, so that we needed to arrange a mutually convenient date and time to hold a make-up session. After five or six minutes of searching our

diaries for a suitable space, we concluded that our individual schedules clashed and that there was not possibility of consensus. Wolf's response was that in that event we should meet at 4 o'clock on Monday next—to which someone responded 'But Wolf, I can't come then, I have another class at 4 o'clock on Monday.' 'You have a class at 4.00 am next Monday,' said Wolf. 'I am increasingly impressed with this University. It seems to be taking the task of educating you very seriously. I am trrrruly impressed. If this is indeed the case I will excuse you from attending my class!'

### The Wolf Awakens

IN MY FINAL YEAR at Syracuse, I was part of a small faculty team chaired by Dr. Jim Winschel whose job was to prepare the Special Education Division's annual budget submission to the State. It was an exacting task which had to be completed outside of regular class time, generally on weekends and holidays. As the budget submission deadline approached, I was left with having to quickly package the Training Institute's budget for presentation, but had little data. It was a late Sunday evening and a spectacular up-state New York thunder and lightning storm was raging. I phoned Wolf's home. Nancy answered and said that Wolf had only just returned from the airport and was in fact upstairs in the 'Wolf Den' resting, but since the matter was an urgent one I should drive over and she would interrupt his tormented dreams.

When I arrived at the house, the storm was at its height, rain sheeted down and the sky boomed with thunder and periodically crackled with lightning. Nancy answered the door and escorted me up the stairs to the fabled Wolf Den. I entered. It was a long, corridor-like room papered with tiger-striped wallpaper. There was a desk, chair and bookcase, and a picture of Whistler's sombre mother on one wall. The room was lit with a neo-Gothic lancet window I recall; and I imagined entire shelves of mysterious leather-bound and chained arcana further back in the shadows. At

the far end of the room lying on a camp bed was the fabled Wolf covered from toe to chin with a white sheet. As I slowly approached him, the lightning crackled across the sky and through the Gothic Window everything was thrown into bright relief. Wolf turned his eyes slowly towards me, bared his teeth in a smile and I once again thought 'Wow.'

### The Debt to Wolf

AS AN AVID READER of Richard Scheerenberger's two lengthy catalogues of the heroes of our field, I sometime ago concluded that it would be difficult to find another name in the entire history of service provision to people with intellectual or developmental disabilities in this, or in any other era, who had made a greater contribution to public policy world-wide, than has Wolf Wolfensberger.

It is difficult to convey to the post PASS-PASSING reader the extraordinary impact of concepts, for example, "age-appropriateness" and the two juxtapositions (deviancy image and deviancy program) or indeed the developmental model which have these days become ordinary, widely accepted (if sometimes misapplied) professional terms.

Wolf's impact on the field in the early-mid 70s was absolutely phenomenal and today, so many of the seeds that were sown in those years (sometimes at great personal cost) have borne fruit.

I wish I could adequately describe the intensity of the personal thrill I experienced at an early training event when the "model coherency" concept became suddenly clear to me. It was akin to "pure" excitement. I wish I could adequately convey the feelings I experienced at a very early PASSING event here in Australia some years later, when the difference between "normalisation" and "Social Role Valorisation" suddenly became transparent to me.

I wish I could convey the sense of power that derives from visiting a traditional program for people with disabilities and in a very short time, being able, with reasonable accuracy, to synthesise data from direct observation into a coherent

format, so that helpful suggestions can be made to decision-makers on how the current situation might be improved. These feelings are all a small part of the personal debt I owe Wolf.

Wolf's influence can be seen in a variety of human-service programs world-wide—from Aden

to Zanzibar (as we used to say when the British Empire was in its declining years) and these “tales from the Twilight Zone” might best be appreciated as a small tribute to the human face of one of the few really great teachers, scholars and thinkers of our time.

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### LEARNING TO TEACH SOCIAL ROLE VALORIZATION (SRV)

SOCIAL ROLE VALORIZATION, when well applied, has potential to help societally devalued people to gain greater access to the good things of life and to be spared at least some of the negative effects of social devaluation. This is one of the reasons why it is important for people to learn to teach SRV, so that its ideas and strategies are known and available to the right people in the right places who can apply it well. Unless people continue to learn to be SRV trainers, the teaching and dissemination of SRV will cease. Many SRV trainers for example could teach lots of people how to **implement** SRV, but not how to **teach** it to others. At a certain point there might be implementation of aspects of SRV, but the knowledge of SRV itself might not be passed on to others, such as the next generation of human service workers. Teaching about SRV, and learning to teach SRV, can be done in many ways, depending in part on one's abilities, interests, resources and so on.

The North American SRV Development, Training & Safeguarding Council has developed a specific model for teaching people to competently do two things: (a) teach Social Role Valorization; and (b) teach other people to teach SRV. The Council named this a “Trainer Formation Model.” A description of the Trainer Formation Model is available if you are interested ([http://www.srvip.org/about\\_mission.php](http://www.srvip.org/about_mission.php)); also see the article referenced below.

To find out more about studying SRV and learning to teach it, please contact Jo Massarelli at *The SRV Implementation Project*, 74 Elm Street, Worcester, MA 01609 USA; 508.752.3670; [jo@srvip.org](mailto:jo@srvip.org). She will be able to help you or to put you in touch with someone more local to your geographic area who can be of help.

#### RESOURCE

SRV Development, Training & Safeguarding Council (2006). A Brief Overview of the North American SRV Council's Trainer Formation Model (November 2005). *The SRV Journal* 1(1), 58-62.

*Announcing the publication and 'appearance' of*

## **APPEAR:**

# OBSERVING, RECORDING & ADDRESSING PERSONAL PHYSICAL APPEARANCE BY MEANS OF THE APPEAR TOOL

*a publication by Wolf Wolfensberger*

PERSONAL APPEARANCE (INCLUDING SO-CALLED 'SELF-PRESENTATION') is certainly one of the most immediate, and often also one of the most powerful, influences on how a person will be perceived and interpreted by others, and in turn, on how others will respond to and treat the person. Personal appearance is also one of the domains of social imagery, which is a big component of Social Role Valorization (SRV): the more observers positively value a person's appearance, the more likely they are to afford that person opportunities to fill valued roles, and thereby access to the good things in life. Unfortunately, the appearance of many members of societally marginal or devalued classes is far from enhancing, or is even outright repellent to many people, and increases the risk that bad things get done to them, or that good things are withheld from them.

This 2009 book explains all this. APPEAR is an acronym for **A Personal Physical Appearance Evaluation And Record**. It documents the powerful influence of personal appearance on attitudes, social valuation and social interactions. The book explains the many components of personal appearance and the ways in which these features can be changed for better or worse. It also includes a very detailed checklist, called the APPEAR tool, which identifies over **200 separate elements** of personal physical appearance, so that one can review a person's appearance features from head to toe, noting which are positive, which are neutral, which are negative—all this with a view to perhaps trying to improve selected aspects of a person's appearance about which something can actually be done. The book also explains how such an appearance review, or appearance 'audit,' would be done.

The book contains a sample APPEAR checklist at the back, and comes with three separate (free) checklist booklets ready for use in conducting an individual appearance audit. Additional checklists may be ordered separately (see order form on next page).

Reading the book, and especially using the APPEAR tool, can be useful as a consciousness-raiser about the importance of appearance, and in pointing out areas for possible appearance improvement. An appearance audit using APPEAR can be conducted by a person's service workers, advocates, family members and even by some people for themselves. It could be very useful in individual service and futures-planning sessions, and in getting a person ready for a new activity, role or engagement (for instance, before entering school or going on a job interview).

Studying and applying the APPEAR tool can also be a very useful follow-up to Introductory SRV training, as it deepens one's understanding of image and appearance issues.

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# A Brief History of the Evolution of Normalization into Social Role Valorization, With Emphasis on Social Roles

Wolf Wolfensberger<sup>†</sup> (edited by Susan Thomas)

*EDITOR'S NOTE: This manuscript is one of very many that the author left unfinished upon his death in February 2011. However, he had written on the topic in various forms, and given presentations on it, starting in the early 1990s. In fact, he presented one quite lengthy exposition of the history of the normalization movement at the first Normalization and Social Role Valorization conference in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada in May 1994. That presentation was later published (Wolfensberger, 1999) in the book of proceedings of that conference, edited by Bob Flynn and Raymond Lemay (1999).*

*This manuscript however focuses specifically on the change from normalization to SRV, and on the 'role' that the concept of social roles played in this change.*

**I**N JUNE 1993, at a meeting of the Social Role Valorization (SRV) Development, Training and Safeguarding Council<sup>1</sup> held near Ottawa, Ontario, I was asked by the members of that Council to explain how the idea of the centrality of social roles became clear to me. The ad hoc presentation that I gave then is offered here in edited and elaborated form, because it sheds light on the history of normalization and SRV that have played such a prominent role in the field of mental retardation in recent decades (e.g., Heller, Spooner, Enright, Haney & Schilit, 1991), and to some degree in human services generally.

In several publications (e.g., Wolfensberger, 1980b, 1983b, 1984, 1985), I had written that I

had been dissatisfied with the term normalization from an early date, but that I had been waiting until I discovered what I thought was a decisively superior alternative before proposing a new term. However, in none of these earlier publications did I provide a lengthy explanation of how the concept of roles had always played a very central part in normalization, nor of how I came to perceive that valued social roles were crucial to being accorded the good things in life by one's society. I hope to remedy that shortcoming in this article. This explanation constitutes a contribution to the history of normalization and SRV that should be of interest to a wider audience. I am of course aware that memory plays tricks, and that my reconstruction might therefore contain errors.

It is important to understand that one's mind has to be prepared for new ideas and concepts, as I have elaborated in a little article on how to improve one's writing productivity and quality (Wolfensberger, 1994). The evolution of SRV underlines this, because it had a long history of preparation, as explained below.

I think I first ran across the concept of roles between 1955-57 while I was a clinical psychology student, when Moreno's (1946) psychodrama therapy (later renamed sociodrama) involving role-playing was a popular craze in the mental field. Then, for a course during my doctoral studies in 1958 or 1959, I had to study George Kelly's (1955) personal construct theory and the



psychotherapy based on it, in which roles and role change played an important part. (A book-length work on Kelly's personal construct theory has been produced by Neimeyer and Neimeyer, 1990). In 1964, when I started work as a "mental retardation research scientist" at the Nebraska Psychiatric Institute, I began working with a sociologist, Richard Kurtz, who impressed on me the importance of social roles, especially in relation to patienthood and deviancy.

Considering the amount of work on roles that had been done in, and was available to, sociology by the late 1960s, that field could have gotten a great deal of practicality out of the construct. But since it prided itself on its scientific identity, it had a long history of not wanting to be confused with social work—at least so I kept being told. Because extending these insights into practicality might have led to such confusion, sociologists largely stayed at the academic, theoretical level, which was probably one of several reasons why social work ended up finding other alliances, including alliances with medicine, psychiatry and clinical psychology, and little practical use emerged from all the work on the role concept. For instance, one of the few practical elaborations of role theory was—as one was told ad nauseam—the delineation of the sick role in terms of its two responsibilities (wanting to get well, and seeking help to that end) and two privileges (being excused from typical responsibilities, and being entitled to help), and these dated back at least as far as Parsons (Parsons, 1951; Parsons & Fox, 1958).

In 1966, David Vail's book *Dehumanization and the Institutional Career* came out (Vail, 1966) in which he sketched several of what I would later describe as the common, historically recurring deviancy roles, namely those of subhuman, trivium, and "other." He showed how such role perceptions of residents of mental institutions were expressed in, and could be read from, the physical and social institutional environment. One of the two chapters which I wrote for the 1969 book *Changing Patterns in Residential Services for the Mentally Re-*

*tarded* (Kugel & Wolfensberger, 1969), sponsored and published by the President's Commission on Mental Retardation, drew upon Vail but went beyond him in delineating seven major deviancy roles (sick person, subhuman, menace, object of pity, burden of charity, holy innocent, object of merriment and ridicule), and how these would be expressed in human service environments (Wolfensberger, 1969). This chapter was reprinted in the second edition of *Changing Patterns* (Wolfensberger, 1976), and was also reprinted as a monograph (Wolfensberger, 1974, 1975; the latter edition with photographic illustrations). In my 1972 book on *The Principle of Normalization in Human Services* (Wolfensberger 1972), I added a description of an eighth role, that of the eternal child. In a later chapter (Wolfensberger, 1977) for Bednar's (1977) book for architects on barrier-free environments, I further spelled out how role expectancies for service clients could be expressed in—and read from—the physical environment of service settings. This chapter was also reprinted as a separate monograph by the Atlanta Association for Retarded Citizens in 1978 (Wolfensberger, 1978), and in 1995 by the Training Institute that I founded and directed (Wolfensberger, 1995c).

However, in the above-mentioned 1969 chapter, I had already spelled out the power of role expectancies, and did so more extensively and repeatedly in the 1972 normalization text. In fact, in the latter I emphasized the power of not only negative role expectancies but also of positive ones. Also, for years during the late 1960s and early 1970s, I campaigned on behalf of three "answers" to the various historic negative roles: seeing and treating the individual as a human being, a citizen and a developing organism. I spoke on these points extensively, but in print I focused mostly on the third one, starting in the above-mentioned chapter (Wolfensberger, 1969) where I sketched the role of the person as a developing organism in connection with the "developmental model"—a term which became popular thereafter. This was recapitulated at greater length in vari-

ous sections of my normalization text (Wolfensberger, 1972).

Normalization came on the scene with Nirje's (1969) chapter in *Changing Patterns*. In fact, contrary to some people's claims, there was no earlier clear, explicit and elaborated formulation of it (as explained at greater length in Wolfensberger, 1980a, 1980b, 1996, 1999). Nirje even coined the term "the principle of normalization." Though the term "normalization" had face appeal, from the start there was one perversion or misunderstanding of it right after another, but I am not sure now how early I realized the problems that attended the use of this term. I do remember my ambivalence when, early on, I would run across people who expressed enthusiasm about normalization, but gave it a very different meaning than either Nirje or I gave it. In 1972, *The Principle of Normalization in Human Services* came out (Wolfensberger, 1972), though most of it had been written between 1968-1970. From about 1970 on, I also started keeping a file on all the misunderstandings and misapplications of normalization, addressed a few in the 1972 text, and eventually wrote them up in a chapter (Wolfensberger, 1980) for the 1980 Flynn and Nitsch book on normalization (Flynn & Nitsch, 1980), largely in response to my having had to fight misconceptions about normalization all the time. (This file eventually grew to mammoth size.)

One of many problems was that my formulation of normalization (first published in Wolfensberger, 1970a, b) was substantially different from Nirje's (1969), and many people never understood that. Meanwhile, and for a variety of reasons, people were always requesting that a different term be used instead of normalization, and they suggested numerous such terms. Many of these ideas were outright harebrained, and based on misunderstandings of normalization. Others were merely problematic. At any rate, I decided that until something clearly and substantially superior came along, I would stick with "normalization," and that others should too, and to intro-

duce a new term would sow more confusion than it would clear up.

My ongoing teaching, training and dissemination of normalization played a great part in getting me to make elaborations and changes in the theory. Somewhere around 1975 or so, the normalization teaching done by myself and my associates changed to emphasizing social devaluation instead of deviancy. One reason for this was that there were problems with the term "deviancy." Many people thought it conveyed the message that deviant people were deviate (as in sexual deviate), rather than that deviancy was in the eyes of the beholder. Thus, we began to talk about devalued people, and about normalization as a response to devaluation, and especially to societal (i.e., systematic) devaluation, in contrast to merely idiosyncratic and sporadic personal devaluation. This led more easily to thinking of the opposite of devaluation—namely, valuing—than the term "deviancy" did.

Also, in late 1979, I involved several of my close associates who were engaged in normalization work in a discussion as to what they thought was the most important goal of normalization. While I left the issue unresolved, these discussions stimulated in me the idea (around 1980) that normalization might be taught better than we had been doing if its implications were divided into major "themes," i.e., leitmotifs, currents or strands which run through and recur in all or most of the many implications of normalization. Until then, the implications had been taught in terms of three or four levels of societal action options (the levels of the person, of primary social systems and intermediate social systems, and of all of society), and in terms of the two dimensions of interaction among people, and social interpretation, as explained in a historical treatise by Thomas (1999). I got Joe Osburn, Darcy Elks (then Miller), Susan Thomas (all of whom were then employed by the Institute I headed at Syracuse University) and a colleague, Michael Kendrick, to start work on developing seven such themes. One theme was about role

expectancies. However, it was not the key theme, nor was it meant at first to be a specific reply to devalued roles. From the time I started giving normalization workshops in 1969 or 1970, the power of role expectancies had been taught in connection with the concept of deviancy and the developmental model, i.e., the idea of the human as a developing organism, and all that this entailed. While the material on role expectancies evolved into one of the themes, it was merely meant to be—like all the other themes—a way of teaching the social science and the mechanisms behind many of the implications of normalization.

In May 1981, I received a request from the journal *Rehabilitation Psychology* (published by the Rehabilitation Psychology Division of the American Psychological Association) to write a brief article explaining normalization. I recruited Steve Tullman, then a graduate student in rehabilitation counseling at Syracuse University, to co-author the article. While working on that manuscript, it occurred to me that the construct of valued roles was a crucial element in normalization, and this insight was worked into that article (Wolfensberger & Tullman, 1982). A major source of this new insight was my realization that since devaluation was always attended by casting devalued people into devalued roles—including the historically recurring ones that I had started to sketch in 1969—then it followed that the opposite would be to preserve the valued roles of people at risk of devaluation, to restore valued roles that they had once possessed but had lost, or to craft new valued roles for those people already cast into devalued ones. The article with Tullman (Wolfensberger & Tullman, 1982) was thus the beginning of my reconceptualization of my earlier formulation of the normalization principle as Social Role Valorization.

Then in 1982, I was invited to do a presentation on normalization and the aged at a February 1983 conference in Paris, France. I asked a colleague, Jacques Pelletier, and one of my then students, Raymond Lemay (both Francophones from Canada), for help in translating my presentation

into French, and it was during this process that I learned that the French term *valorisation* had begun to be used in France, both for normalization itself and for closely related ideas. A version of this presentation was published (Wolfensberger, 1983a)—unfortunately altered almost beyond recognition, and without my approval, by copy editors. In this presentation, I stated clearly that the goal of normalization was to obtain valued roles for people (pp. 59, 61).

It was also during this time of transition (1980–1983) that the PASSING tool (Wolfensberger & Thomas, 1983) for evaluating human service quality against normalization criteria was being written, in part in order to replace the normalization portion of the earlier PASS evaluation tool (Wolfensberger & Glenn, 1973; 1975). As I began to gain insight into the centrality of valued roles, I also began to work this concept into the last drafts of PASSING. Indeed, shortly before PASSING was to go to the printer, we were still frantically making a last revision that reflected our most recent insights that highlighted the importance of the polarity of valued and devalued social roles. Unfortunately, by the time PASSING went to the printer in March 1983, I had formulated the idea but not yet the term Social Role Valorization. Thus, PASSING reflected SRV concepts, but still retained much normalization language.

It was only after the centrality of roles became clear to me that I began to fully see that if a person occupied valued roles, any impairments that this person might have would no longer be seen as so important, and would not necessarily be held against the person. In fact, an impairment or affliction of a prominent person who occupied a valued role might even acquire positive value in the eyes of beholders. This was an issue that normalization had not dealt with very well, and on which I first published in 1991 (Wolfensberger, 1991a, revised 1992).

As the idea of the importance of valued roles was further and further developed in my mind, I wrote an article and submitted it in 1983 to *Men-*

*tal Retardation*, which published it in the same year (Wolfensberger, 1983b). In it, I proposed that the principle of normalization be replaced by what I had daringly, and with fear and trembling, decided to call Social Role Valorization, or SRV. Unfortunately, the title of that article was ill-chosen, in that it suggested that SRV was just a new name for normalization rather than a different construct, although the article itself did make it clear that a new construct was being proposed. In August 1983, Jacques Pelletier, then the executive director of the National Institute on Mental Retardation (NIMR) in Canada, saw the 1983 *Mental Retardation* article, and judged that NIMR should print a version of it in its own journal, then also called *Mental Retardation*. Thus, in 1984, a shorter (and similar) article on the same topic was published in that Canadian journal (Wolfensberger, 1984). Again, in March 1985, a somewhat revised but slightly enlarged version of the 1983 article was published in an Australian journal (Wolfensberger, 1985), in response to a request I received in July 1984 from the publishers to write an article on what they called my “theory of social valorization.” Both of these latter articles were clear that what was entailed was more than just a change of name.

However, I did not publish again on SRV specifically until 1991, which came about as follows. A German psychologist who had studied in the US, Andreas König, asked in 1986 that I put together a description of SRV that he could translate into German and get published in Germany. I took some boiler-plate narrative from various of my previous SRV publications and current lectures, updated it, elaborated it, and produced a chapter-length manuscript. After doing all this work and sending it to König, he informed me that a new job made it impossible for him to do the translation. I was a bit put out by this after having done all the work, and let the manuscript sit for several years until Jacques Pelletier urged me to write an expanded explanation of SRV that could be translated into French. That is when I

revised the unpublished manuscript again, and both published it as a monograph in English (Wolfensberger, 1991a), and gave it to Pelletier who saw to it that it got translated not only into French, but also German and Italian (Wolfensberger, 1991b, c, d). Because the English version sold so well, I soon revised and enlarged it into a second edition (Wolfensberger, 1992). A further enlarged translation was later published in Japanese (Wolfensberger, 1995a), and a third edition—the most current edition—was published in 1998 (Wolfensberger, 1998).

It was after *Mental Retardation* published the 1983 article on SRV that first proposed a new idea together with a new name (Wolfensberger, 1983b) that the Training Institute that I directed began to conduct SRV rather than normalization training. This meant that the vast amount of training material that the Training Institute had developed over the years to teach normalization had to be fundamentally revised to reflect the new insights, not to mention the new terminology. The new material that highlighted the central importance of social roles was first presented in a training event held in January 1984.

It was in 1986 that people who had attended both earlier workshops on normalization and the new SRV workshop first told us that they too recognized that SRV was not just a new name, but such a new emphasis as to be a “new thing” altogether. As I kept revising my teaching materials on SRV, I developed much greater clarity about it in many ways, and also evolved an increasingly parsimonious formal definition of it. Early on, it was “the use of culturally normative, and optimally even culturally valued, means to enable (societally devalued) persons to achieve and maintain valued social roles” (Wolfensberger & Thomas, 1983, p. 18). It then became “the enablement, establishment, enhancement, maintenance, and/or defense of valued social roles for people—particularly for those at value risk—by using, as much as possible, culturally valued means.” In summer 1995, I concluded that the definition could be reduced

to “the application of what science has to tell us about the enablement, establishment, enhancement, maintenance, and/or defense of valued social roles for people,” since this really included everything else. However, for teaching purposes, in 1995 I expanded the seven core themes to ten: the dynamics of unconsciousness, particularly those involved in interpersonal devaluation and oppression, and other hidden aspects and functions of human services; the conservatism corollary, i.e., the importance of positive compensation for pre-existing disadvantage, including the application to devalued people of those feasible options that are most highly valued by society; the importance of interpersonal identification; the concept of what I called service model coherence, with its components of service relevance and service potency; the realities of social imagery, image transfer and generalization, and image enhancement; the power of mind-sets and expectancies; the importance of personal competency enhancement; the pedagogic power of imitation via modeling and interpersonal identification; the relevance of role expectancies and role circularity to deviancy-making and deviancy-unmaking; and personal social integration and valued societal participation in valued society.

Currently, introductory SRV workshops (rarely of less than three days’ duration) that qualify participants to advance later into a PASSING workshop (rarely of less than four-and-a-half days’ duration) are being taught in several countries.

Looking back, I can now summarize at least three important and very practical contributions that normalization and SRV have made to role theory.

1. Normalization first, and then SRV, systematically delineated the common, recurring, historic and indeed universal “deviancy roles” into which devalued people keep getting cast by those who devalue them, and indeed into which entire classes of people are commonly typed. While various of these roles had been mentioned earlier, (a) they had not been elaborated in as much detail; (b) their universality across time, culture and de-

valued groups had not been brought out equally clearly as being a common heritage of people devalued for all sorts of reasons; (c) they had not been all brought together before and related to each other; and (d) it had not been brought out how the services which devalued people are apt to receive have a tendency to actually embed these people in such devalued roles, both via the physical and other features of a service.

2. Additionally, it was a major contribution of normalization and SRV to spell out in detail just how role messages are conveyed to people: by the environments in which they are or get put, the people they are associated with, the activities they are permitted or even forced to do, the language associated to them, and all sorts of miscellaneous other imagery that gets associated to them. For instance, the PASSING service evaluation instrument identifies 17 aspects of physical settings, 13 aspects of groupings and relationships among people, six aspects of activities and other uses of time, and six miscellaneous other features of language, symbols and images that convey role messages to and about people. This systematic exposition and teaching enables those who want to change the role messages given to and about a person or group to structure the above role message carriers so as to convey the desired positive messages.

3. Normalization to some degree, but SRV even more so, have systematically explained how a physical or social condition that would otherwise be devalued can actually come to be positively valued—or at the very least overlooked, ignored, put up with or dismissed as unimportant—if it is associated with people who hold roles and play functions that are distinctly valued in that culture. For instance, madness, blindness, a lisp, having a goiter—all these things are or have been valued, less devalued or not devalued at all, in various cultures because people in highly valued roles in those cultures have had these conditions. This underlines the tremendous power of social roles to shape the perceptions, and subsequent interactions, of others. Yet this reality had not, to

my knowledge, been much noticed or extensively written up previously in the vast role literature, though much had been written about differences in cultural values.

The central hypothesis of SRV—i.e., that the more valued the roles are that people have, the more they are likely to be accorded the good things in life by others—is a testable hypothesis, but it apparently had not occurred to the sociologists to study this hypothesis empirically, at least not directly, though there has been a vast amount of indirect evidence for it. For instance, Goffman (1963) had pointed out that if what he called “stigmatized” persons can hide their stigma, or hide their history of once having been stigmatized (e.g., being an “ex-convict”), such persons may escape devalued status, may even become “valued,” but would probably always be more vulnerable (“at risk”) than a valued person without a previously devalued status.

Critics of SRV were not slow in claiming that SRV was in effect promising good things for people in valued roles, and that SRV was not valid because people in valued roles do not always get the good things in life (e.g., Elks, 1994). However, I never meant to convey that valued roles were a sure-fire guarantee that a person would receive the good things of life from others, but only that this was almost as high a likelihood as that devalued persons would be badly treated. After all, even valued people have bad things happen or done to them, and suffer in life. Even kings and queens have been put to death—sometimes very respectfully, so their valued roles were ultimately no protection against that. But former US President Nixon, though he was forced to resign in disgrace, was treated better than someone would have been who had not previously held his valued roles. In fact, he was repeatedly “rehabilitated,” which might not have been the case with someone who had not previously held highly valued roles.

Also, a valued role is more protective of a person to the degree that the person is known in that valued role—in other words, if the person in a

valued role is not anonymous to observers. As an example, though many Jews held valued roles in Germany, the Nazis still did awful things to them, but generally and mostly as long as the Jews could be “anonymized.” When a Jew was known as an individual, and as an incumbent of certain valued roles, it was a bit harder to do bad things to him or her; and in fact, this is one of the things that protected some of those Jews who were protected, and enabled some of these to emigrate to safety.

Further relevant to the issue is that whereas competent people can seize a valued role, so to speak, people impaired in competency are much more in need of having valued roles constructed (“crafted”) for them, or attributed to them.

Thus, I do not see valued roles as the ultimate end in itself, but only as a major means to what most people would agree as being the good things in life: security, safety; good health; a home, having friends, family, loved ones; belonging to an intimate group; being accepted, welcomed; having a say; freedom of movement; access to the places where ordinary everyday life is conducted; being able to participate; opportunities and expectancies to discover and develop one’s talents; having something to contribute that is considered important; work, especially the valued and adequately remunerated type; being treated fairly, justly, with respect; being dealt with honestly; being treated as an individual; etc., all as spelled out in an earlier article (Wolfensberger, Thomas & Caruso, 1996). There are other ways that might enable someone to obtain the good things of life. For instance, there are religious commands to do and be good towards others, and if people actually lived out these commands, then this would—at least in the opinion of many people—also result in some of the good things in the lives of these others. Even some schemes that are advanced as “competitors” or superior alternatives to SRV are apt to get people (at risk) some good things in life. However, each such scheme has its strengths, and its shortcomings or boundaries. What the boundaries of SRV are, considering that it is a social science scheme

rather than a religion or ideology, I explained the clearest I have ever done in print in 1995 (Wolfensberger, 1995b), though I had taught the same for years before that, and I have much more material on the issue that I use in my teaching, but that I have not yet published.

It is interesting to compare the universality of religious commands—such as mentioned above (e.g., to be and do good to others)—with efforts to role-valorize people. In our Western society, a major root of religious commands has been the belief that humans are made in the image and likeness of God, with a spark of the divine in each human being. From this spark of the divine derives the religious command that humans be treated in certain positive ways (e.g., with respect), because of their inherent dignity. But the reality of social roles is actually more universal than the prevalence of religious traditions that value persons qua persons. That is, not all cultures have religious traditions that command the valuing of human personhood and of each and every person, but they all do have valued roles. Whether having valued roles is a better protector of people than something else—such as religious tradition—depends heavily on the values of a culture in a given time and place. For instance, the way our own culture has gone, it is hardly practical or effective any more to emphasize to people that they should do certain good things because of the intrinsic value of the human—though I do believe this. This argument does not even work well with Christians and Jews anymore whose teaching this has traditionally been; because of the materialization of our culture and of their faiths, they may no longer be taught about it, or may be confused about it, or may not believe it even if they do know about it. As an example, personhood has been increasingly denied to all sorts of humans (starting with children in the womb), and every year, more people believe that humans who become dependent lose their dignity, and that for their dignity's sake, such dependent and/or enfeebled persons should be put to death, if need be by long and agonizing processes of dehydration and starvation.

However, SRV can help people to become “gooder” towards others (the word “better” would be misleading) even though SRV is on a vastly lower level than a religious command to value people. I also believe that when people attribute valued roles to others, they will tend to move closer towards valuing those others “as persons,” or for their own inherent worth. This is also a hypothesis that can probably be tested, at least up to a point. In fact, even mean people are apt to treat certain other people better if they see them in valued roles, while a religious command to value persons only has a chance of working with people who hold religious views that are concordant with such a command—and even with them, such a verbal or rhetorical imperative may not even work as well as the experience of seeing devalued persons in valued roles. In fact, the vast majority of people who—because of their higher-order belief(s)—do not believe in the intrinsic value of anyone will still normatively extend the good things of life to people whom they see in valued roles.

It is also important to distinguish among the person, and the person's role, identity and status. Further, Goffman (1963) distinguished between role and role performance, because different people carry out the same role differently, which raises the interesting question what it is that establishes the identity of any role across so many different people who fill it in so many different ways. He also said that if a person carries out the functions of a role, that role will usually be accorded to him or her. However, these and other elaborations are treated in some SRV teaching, and go beyond the scope of this article, which was only meant to document and explain the transition (as I remember it) from normalization to SRV. ☺

#### ENDNOTE

1. The Social Role Valorization (SRV) Development, Training and Safeguarding Council came into being through an evolutionary process, taking its present form in June 1992. As of the time of this article, it consists of 13 members and 10 correspondents, all of whom either conduct SRV training or play a major leadership role in its dissemination.

See Thomas (1994) for a description of the Council and its history. The Council meets for several days twice a year to discuss issues related to SRV training, and to developing and safeguarding the theory itself. The general purpose of the Council is to maintain and/or enhance the quality of SRV-related dissemination. This work might include issues of the conceptualization of SRV; the contents of teaching; teaching formats; SRV-related leadership; the organizational arrangements pertaining to SRV teaching, training and development; and how implementation relates to teaching and training. The primary locus of the Council's activity is North America, but it may offer membership, correspondent or observer status to persons from elsewhere who meet the respective criteria and are willing and able to function in these roles. The Council is also prepared to share fruits of its work with selected parties outside North America, and may deal with issues laid before it by such parties.

The Council can be contacted via Jack Yates, People Inc., 170 Pleasant St., Fall River, MA 02721, USA; phone 508/837-6902, ext. 120; fax 508/679-6211; email YatesSNS@aol.com.

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# On a Role

Marc Tumeinski

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Dr. Wolfensberger was the impetus for starting this regular column, as well as the column 'The Ring of Words: On Rhetoric, Writing & Social Role Valorization Dissemination.'* His example, teaching, deep generosity, trust, encouragement and even challenge have helped to shape my life as a learner and teacher. The best way I know to honor these gifts is to use them and share them with others as generously as he did with me and so many others.

MY PRIMARY REACTION upon attending my first Social Role Valorization workshop continues to help sustain my efforts to this day: the goal of SRV—to help socially devalued people to have greater access to the good things of life through valued roles—is a happy combination of an inspiring vision, one that is within my grasp to take up, and many practical strategies. I have also heard this response from so many who have studied SRV. The good things of life through valued roles provides a unifying goal, helping to guide how we can spend our time and use our abilities on behalf of those in most need, of those who are most devalued within and by their own society (cf. Wolfensberger, 1998, 44-49).

SRV encapsulates principles and strategies which are clear, practical and near-universal:

- Social roles are not obscure; rather, they are part of our own life experiences. Valued social roles do not require a PhD to understand or employ.

- Whether we are concerned about people with impairments, prisoners, poor people, ethnic minorities, etc., an appreciation of valued roles will be beneficial in guiding the kind of help we offer.

IN THE PREVIOUS COLUMN (December 2010), I mentioned the necessity of developing the mental habit of being able to think and plan in terms of social roles. This is true both of working toward valued roles as well as working to minimize devalued roles. Such mental habits can and should be developed not only on the personal level but within groups and organizations striving to help vulnerable people. In his teaching and writing, Dr. Wolfensberger stressed that SRV practitioners should strive to reflexively think in terms of roles not activities: someone is a runner, not just a person who likes running; a worker, not just someone doing a job; a student, not just doing homework; a parishioner, not just going to church (e.g., Wolfensberger, 1998, 99).

How might we build up this mental habit, individually and communally, of being able to think and plan in terms of social roles?

- *Get motivated.* Why are valued roles important? Not for their own sake but to help to minimize wounding in the lives of socially devalued people and to open the door to the 'good things of life,' the good things that society has to offer (Wolfensberger, Thomas & Caruso, 1996). This is not 'pie-in-the-

sky' or 'jam tomorrow' but what people of typical social status can reasonably expect. We can be motivated to help real people in real need. Is this my pressing motivation? Is this our shared motivation (e.g., within a family, group of friends and associates, formal human service program, etc.)?

Ask ourselves: Which 'good things of life' does the person/group now have greater access to since they acquired the role? Has the person/group's social status improved? If so, in whose eyes? What 'wounds' has the person been protected from?

- *Pay attention.* Work at remaining conscious of the power and relevance of social roles, as well as of the culturally-normative strategies that help to build and sustain valued roles. It is all too easy to lose sight of or to minimize the power of roles embedded in the larger society, and to be distracted by regulations, the lure of professionalism or pressing non-programmatic factors. Help others to pay attention. Ask others to help you stay focused on roles.

- *Practice, practice, practice.* Work at embedding the reality of social roles into our planning, writing, meetings, conversations. Are you going to attend or even facilitate a human service meeting? Discuss social roles. Writing a letter or a report? Make roles an essential focus of your writing.

- *Look for everyday connections.* What social roles do I hold? How did I get these roles and learn about them? What competencies and images come with my valued roles? What good things of life have my valued roles helped to bring to me? How did I find and then learn a job? How did I become a friend? How did I figure out the right way to act in a theater, museum or religious service? And so on.

Think also about the power of roles in the lives of my friends and family, people I know well. Walk into a public setting and look for the role cues. Who uses this setting? What roles are they likely in? What expectancies do I have of the people who use this setting? What responsibilities do they have, and what good things of life do they likely

have access to? And so on. Dr. Wolfensberger made it clear in his teaching and writing that roles is not an esoteric invention of an academic but part of the rich everyday fabric of our social lives.

Most of us have a variety of valued roles in different areas of our lives (e.g., work, home, community, leisure, etc.). Some of these roles may be linked in different ways, i.e., my work role led to a friend role led to a new leisure role led to a role as a community board member. Other of our valued roles may not be connected, i.e., perhaps I do not share any of my leisure roles with anyone from work or my neighborhood. What might contribute to these differences? Why have some of my roles been a springboard into new valued roles, and others have not? Can I learn something from this that will help me in my service to vulnerable people?

THE ABOVE SUGGESTIONS on beginning to build the (individual and communal) mental habit of thinking in terms of social roles are just a start. We encourage you to reflect on this question, and would be very interested in your suggestions and experiences. Send us a letter to the editor, vignette, perspective or short article on this topic. ☺

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# The Archiving of Historical Material at the Syracuse University Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership & Change Agency

SINCE VERY EARLY in his career, Professor Wolf Wolfensberger had kept (rather than discarded) all sorts of materials relevant to his work: conference programs; brochures and pamphlets; reports; plans and proposals; newsletters; journals; magazines; newspaper articles; video and audiotapes of presentations, classes and workshops; and books. As time went by, and as this collection grew ever larger, it began to be organized, e.g., into resource materials for classes he taught and workshops and presentations that he gave, into historical records on particular places such as countries, states and provinces. Also, many of the materials are organized by topic, such as things having to do with guidance of families of the handicapped, and materials on the history of institutions.

For the past almost two decades, a concerted effort has been made at the above Training Institute that Dr. Wolfensberger founded and directed to inventorize as many of these archival materials as possible, so as to have a record of what materials are in the collection, to make the material accessible to others, and for the future possibility of giving the collection to an appropriate holder, such as a library or a center of study in the field of impairment. This inventorizing involves making a written record of the items in the archive, and storing the record on computer discs. For instance, there might be a sheet that records the names and dates of all the plans and proposals in Dr. Wolfensberger's possession from a particular state for its

services to the handicapped. (We think that some states may not even have such a record of everything they had put out at different times about the current status of their services and what they hoped to see in the future, since some states issued plan after plan, year after year, even though few—or none—of these plans ever got implemented.)

With the assistance of a subsidy from the Annie Casey Foundation, we have been able to devote more staff time to the inventorizing project, and have made much progress especially in the inventorizing of the video and audiotapes. Some of these are very precious historically; for instance, one tape records the very beginnings of what eventually came to be called the “self-advocacy” movement in mental retardation, in which the Danish normalization inventor, Bengt Nirje, reported to the annual convention of mental retardation professionals—what was then called the American Association on Mental Deficiency—on the first conference of mentally retarded persons in Scandinavia, in 1970. At that gathering, the 50 retarded conference delegates issued a list of statements and demands of what they wanted in life and from their human services. (These demands were eventually incorporated into Chapter 13, by Nirje, in Dr. Wolfensberger's 1972 book *The Principle of Normalization in Human Services*).

While there is still much inventorizing to be done—as noted, Dr. Wolfensberger's collection of materials is vast—we have made much prog-

ress on this ongoing project. The collection is a true treasure trove, particularly of history-related materials and information, and includes much of what is called “fugitive literature,” i.e., items of which there may otherwise be no record, such as informational postcards, pamphlets and home-prepared or home-published booklets.

The eventual repository of all these materials is intended to be Syracuse University; it was Dr. Wolfensberger’s intent to have the materials in a place that will (a) recognize their value; (b)

be committed to preserving them as a coherent collection, and not disperse them; and (c) make them available to scholars and other interested parties to do research.

*We are indebted to Dr. Wolfensberger’s former student Sam Zamarripa, now a member of the Board of Trustees of Syracuse University and a member of the board of directors of the Annie Casey Foundation, for his help in obtaining for us the subsidy from the Casey Foundation.*

### A NOTE ON THE WORD ‘POLICY’

THE WORD ‘policy’ can leave a bad taste in some people’s mouths. Perhaps we have felt stymied by bad policies, either at work or in our communities, or have been frustrated at someone making policy who has not stepped within 100 miles of where the policy will be enacted.

Policy is something though that we will likely have to take account of and deal with if we are in any way involved in the lives of societally devalued people. We may try to respond adaptively to new policy, take advantage of good policy or even protect vulnerable people from bad policy. We may be responsible for helping to set policy within a program, agency, system or field. Whatever our role, we can recognize that policies are often an (at least partly unconscious) mix of programmatic and non-programmatic factors.

Some of this complexity is reflected in the senses and linguistic history of the word ‘policy.’ It has at least two overarching meanings:

(1) Its chief contemporary use is that of a course of action adopted or pursued by government authorities, rulers, legislators, ruling parties, decision makers, etc. Policy can also refer to any course of action deemed as advantageous or expedient.

This usage is related to the Latin word *politia*, referring to citizenship, government, constitution and/or polity.

(2) A second usage is obsolete today, but interesting nonetheless. Policy also used to mean a polishing or refining of manners, and thus came to indicate polish, refinement, elegance, culture and civilization. This meaning likely came from another Latin word, *politus*, meaning polished or refined. It is unfortunate that too many *politia* are not *politus* enough.

The word policy also had a period of overlap with the word ‘police.’ In early usage (e.g., 16th century), police was essentially used as an equivalent to policy, so for example, the phrase public police meant public policy. In 1714, Queen Anne appointed Commissioners of Police (i.e., policy) to broadly manage the internal affairs of Scotland, to set policy in other words. Over time, the term came to represent the power of the government to **enforce** policy and laws, and the sense of police as policy was lost.

*Source information from the Oxford English Dictionary*

# Some Effects of the Transition from Normalization to Social Role Valorization

Joe Osburn & Guy Caruso

**T**HE ORIGINAL NORMALIZATION CONCEPT founded by Niels Erik Bank-Mikkelsen as “letting the mentally retarded live as close to normal as possible” was established in Danish law in 1959 (Bank-Mikkelsen, 1980). It was later defined as the “normalization principle” by Bengt Nirje of Sweden (Nirje, 1969). Wolf Wolfensberger in North America reworked, systematized, sociologized and generalized the concept beyond mental retardation to virtually all types of human services (Wolfensberger, 1972), and eventually, in 1983, reconceptualized it as Social Role Valorization (Wolfensberger, 1983). Thus, both SRV and normalization in its most highly articulated form have the same major conceptualizer.

Others have written about the conceptual connection between normalization and Social Role Valorization (SRV), including the fact that SRV has roots in normalization as well as in the empiricism of fields such as sociology, psychology and education (e.g., Wolfensberger, 1984, 1985; Lemay, 1995; Osburn, 2006). Not often explained is some of the effects SRV had on normalization and, consequently, on many of its adherents. This paper is intended to describe some of these effects, at least in part. We begin with a bit of background relevant to both normalization and SRV.

## A General Comment on the Importance of Normalization & Social Role Valorization

**W**HILE THESE BODIES OF WORK are only two of Wolfensberger’s many contributions, they are particularly outstanding. If an award were given for the single most important intellectual development in the field of human service in the past one hundred years, normalization and SRV would have to be two of the top contenders. In fact, recognitions along these lines were given. In a poll of mental retardation leaders, Wolfensberger’s (1972) book on normalization was selected as the most influential book in the field since 1940 from among 11,330 books and articles, and his 1983 article introducing SRV (Wolfensberger, 1983) as the seventeenth most influential publication in the field (Heller, Spooner, Enright, Haney & Schilit, 1991). In 1999, Wolfensberger was selected by the National Historic Preservation Trust on Mental Retardation as one of 36 parties that had the most impact on mental retardation worldwide in the 20th century. Wolfensberger was identified in 2004 and again in 2008 in the ISI Web of Science database as the author of the most frequently-cited article in *Mental Retardation* (i.e., Wolfensberger, 1983), the journal of what was then the American Association on Mental Retardation, and is now the American Association on Intellectual and Devel-

opmental Disabilities.<sup>1</sup> In 2008, Wolfensberger's work on normalization and SRV was identified by *Exceptional Parent Magazine* as one of "the 7 wonders of the world of disabilities" (Hollingsworth & Apel, 2008). Besides these recognitions, much has also been written about: (a) the nature of SRV and its application to people who are socially and societally devalued due to impairment, age, poverty or other deviant conditions (see, for example, Wolfensberger, 1992, 1995, 1998, 2000, and especially, Wolfensberger & Thomas, 1983, 2007), (b) the importance of SRV (e.g., see Flynn & Lemay, 1999; Thomas, 1999; Kendrick, 1994), and (c) its relationship to normalization (e.g., see Lemay, 1995; Thomas, 1999; and Wolfensberger, 1983). What all of this partially—but clearly—at-tests is that a great many people have appreciated the importance of Wolfensberger's work. Many individuals and families are quite aware of how much they have benefitted from Wolfensberger's thinking and teaching, and some have even published testimonials to this effect (e.g., Duggan, 2010; Park, 1999).

Wolfensberger's *The Principle of Normalization in Human Services* (1972) and his companion work, the service quality evaluation tool *Program Analysis of Service Systems*, or *PASS* (Wolfensberger & Glenn, 1969, 1973, 1975), together extensively explicated normalization in terms of its implications to service provision. In doing so, they contributed decisively to an international wave of service change away from segregating mentally retarded people into institutions apart from typical society, and toward supporting their integration into normative community settings and activities. In addition to publishing, Wolfensberger also established a teaching culture to systematically disseminate the principle of normalization (mainly through *PASS*) to aspiring change agents, human service workers, family members and community leaders, via intensive lengthy training workshops given throughout North America and, to a lesser extent, Europe. Wolfensberger's highly articulated version of normalization became a foundation for

service training, practice, policy and legislation, particularly in North America and Great Britain, where normalization thinking fueled fundamental changes in patterns of service provision, though often explicit attribution of such changes to the principle of normalization were withheld (Kendrick, 1999; Race, 1999).

Yet, normalization was neither perfect nor universally welcomed. Particularly in its early years (the 1970s), there was enormous resistance to normalization, most often from people whose employment or professional status were dependent on maintaining the status quo, especially institutions, which by and large was inimical to the ideas and ideals espoused by normalization and *PASS*. This fact was certainly better known on a direct personal level among both supporters and resisters of normalization, though it was also documented in the literature (e.g., see Wolfensberger, 1980, 1999). Many individuals and organizations even fought normalization tooth and nail, motivated by their correct perception that normalization pointed to big changes in—and even an end to—the then-currently prevailing service models based on philosophies of social Darwinism, congregation, segregation, custody and non-development in which they were so heavily invested. Also, there were several schools of thought about how normalization was to be defined and what it actually should mean in practice. For instance, differing major versions of normalization were promoted by its "founding fathers," Niels Erik Bank-Mikkelsen of Denmark, Bengt Nirje of Sweden and Wolf Wolfensberger in North America. Further, there was also a large number of other idiosyncratic formulations (some of these are discussed in Wolfensberger, 1980). For better or worse, this plethora of opinions about what normalization is or should be led to both a lot of confusion, and to different people in different places interpreting and applying normalization in different ways, some of which were sharply at odds with one another. Many people dealt with the change implications of normalization not by changing their practice or service, but rather by continuing to do whatever



they had always been doing but simply calling it normalization—apparently convinced that whatever they were doing must be not only good but normal too. One big reason this particular type of distortion of normalization is not well documented in the literature is that few people who thusly misconstrued normalization published an account of doing so. (The authors' knowledge of this comes from our own first hand experiences in the dissemination of normalization, including the conduct of scores of evaluations of services that professed to be normalization-based.) Also, the term normalization itself was not especially helpful. It almost invited simplistic intuitive interpretations by a great many people, such that it meant primarily making people fully "normal." Many people offered normalization endorsements, critiques, demonstrations and even teaching sessions without themselves ever having had any training in the concept, or even taking recourse to the core normalization literature. Some people published criticisms of normalization that were notable mainly for displaying significant ignorance about what they were criticizing (see, for example, Branson & Miller, 1992; Wolfensberger, 1980; and Wolfensberger & Thomas, 1994). Altogether, there was much misinterpretation, disagreement and even cynical manipulation of the idea.

However, all of this also had at least one very positive effect. It led Wolfensberger to engage in an ongoing effort to further develop and clarify normalization (Osburn, 2006). This effort extended into the early 1980s. Wolfensberger generated several progressively more advanced versions of his own original version of normalization, each successive one more fully articulated, more precisely defined, and more clearly nuanced. In turn, this conceptual work enabled Wolfensberger to generate deeper understanding and insights that eventually went beyond normalization, drew closer to what might be called the nub of the matter, and ultimately blossomed into a new theory, deeply rooted in normalization, but also clearly different and more advanced. Drawing on some French language practices, he called this new con-

ceptualization Social Role Valorization (Wolfensberger, 1983, 1984, 1985), reflecting its core proposition that valued social roles are the key to promoting "the good things in life" (Wolfensberger, Thomas & Caruso, 1996) for people at risk of being devalued in their society.

As conceived and taught by Wolfensberger, SRV is a fairly straightforward yet complex theory that unifies manifold elements of empirical knowledge—including that gained from the creation and practice of normalization—into an overall coherent approach to service and social interactions. SRV generates nearly unlimited positive implications for actions to support valuation of the social roles of vulnerable people, both as a means to gain access to "the good things in life" and to offer them relief and protection from having bad things done to them which they otherwise would almost inevitably experience, sometimes to an extreme degree (as detailed in Wolfensberger's two-to-four day SRV training packages between the early-1980s and 2005, and partly in Wolfensberger, 1998).

SRV has been extensively disseminated via training workshops, and many key publications (Wolfensberger, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1991a, 1991b, 1991c, 1991d, 1992, 1995, 1998, 2000; Wolfensberger & Thomas, 1983, 2007). By circa the late-1980s, Social Role Valorization had largely superseded normalization in North America, to the point that by the early 1990s, normalization was hardly being taught there at all anymore. SRV has also been widely disseminated in Australia where an SRV training culture evolved, and to some extent in Europe. However, to our knowledge, the teaching of SRV in Europe (with the partial exception of Britain) has not been as systematic as in North America and Australia.

### Some Effects of Social Role Valorization on the Normalization Training Culture

**T**HE ADVENT OF SOCIAL ROLE VALORIZATION had a profound impact on the major teachers, trainers, thinkers and disseminators in the normalization movement and training

culture from which it arose. It presented them with a major and life-changing point of decision. Broadly speaking, their attitudes toward this new thing called Social Role Valorization tended to sort themselves out into four different patterns of response, with some overlap among these.

One pattern was to embrace SRV. Many people (the authors included) who had previously been strongly invested in normalization and PASS simply left these behind and made a full, almost seamless, transition into SRV and PASSING (Wolfensberger & Thomas, 1983), the SRV-based successor instrument to PASS. Perhaps some did so because they clearly and quickly recognized the superior conceptualization of SRV over normalization. However, frankly, it is likely that trust in Wolfensberger's scholarly judgement and moral leadership was the major factor in their decision. In other words, Wolfensberger saying SRV is superior to normalization carried enormous weight, and would have strongly predisposed many "normalization" people to accept SRV even before they had a chance to thoroughly learn and judge it for themselves. Either way, their decision required them to make a significant personal commitment, as well as to rethink and re-tool their former normalization-based roles. Of course, not everyone who made the transition to SRV more than a quarter-century ago stayed with it over the years: some of them eventually moved on from SRV as well, not always leaving it behind entirely, but using it as a foundation for different endeavors in which SRV per se was less prominent or less acknowledged or perhaps given no role at all, sometimes in favor of some more recent service trend or even craze. However, other individuals (again, including the authors), made careers out of disseminating SRV and PASSING in their roles as consultants, teachers, trainers, administrators, planners, evaluators and so on. Some have also been long-standing members or correspondents of the (North American) SRV Development, Training & Safeguarding Council (see Thomas, 1994), or otherwise have remained closely allied

to the work of Wolfensberger and (since 1973) his Syracuse University Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership & Change Agency.

In part, through their efforts, the SRV movement and training culture steadily—albeit slowly—continues to gain prominence and numbers; conversely, as noted earlier, normalization's following and training rapidly dwindled, to the point of near-complete disappearance in North America. Few participants in SRV training events since the mid-1990s report any awareness of normalization. Thus, in some ways, it proved easier for them to learn and accept SRV than it did for many others who were dazzled by the advent of normalization, and formed strong allegiance to, and knowledge of, it. The SRV dissemination effort in Australia is a good example of this: it is a country where, since the early 1980s, SRV took hold and spread rapidly in large part because Australia had not yet embraced the normalization principle.

A *second* type of response was that some normalization leaders spurned SRV and chose instead to stay with normalization, some doggedly so over the years, in spite of the advent of SRV. There seem to have been a variety of reasons for this. First, leaving normalization behind and moving on to SRV entailed a significant intellectual commitment, in terms of an effort to learn and become proficient in something new, a commitment which some seemed unwilling to make. Relatedly, adopting SRV may have been perceived as an undesirable identity-threatening role change by individuals who had successful and rewarding career roles built upon dissemination of normalization. Also, simply moving out of one's comfort zone might have exacted too high a toll both emotionally and physically for some. In addition to the required exertion of mental capital, an outlay of finances would often also be entailed, such as for tuition and travel-related expenses of attending SRV training, or for acquisition of new SRV resources and materials, and so on, which some people chose not to do even if they could afford it. Another likely reason was that loyalties people had

developed to one or more normalization leaders other than Wolfensberger may have caused some people to feel that adopting SRV would be a form of betrayal to them. Others sincerely believed that nothing could be better than normalization. Yet others were not convinced SRV was sufficiently different from, or advanced over, normalization. And, finally, some believed that SRV lacked a heart and soul because it is entirely empirical, unlike normalization which was partly empirical, but also ideological; for instance, there was a lot of talk about “values” in normalization, and this was one of the main things so many people found so “good” about it (see Elks, 1994). In actuality, there is also a lot of talk about “values” in SRV, but in a different way, in that they come into play in regard to any decisions a person makes about employing the empirical insights of SRV.

In some places, this “holding on to normalization” response has fairly effectively (if not purposefully) kept SRV off the scene. A case in point is in the Scandinavian countries, where normalization was born, where it became and remains deeply embedded in the culture and the social welfare state (Ericsson, 1985; Meyer, 2004), and where there are explicitly normalization-based laws, program operations and governmental policies, and where there is hardly any evidence of inroads by SRV, or even knowledge of it.

A *third* type of response can be characterized as reticence or ambivalence by those who neither fully abandoned normalization nor fully embraced SRV. There are several understandable reasons for this, such as some of the same ones noted above. Likewise, some reticence and ambivalence are inherent in all transitional processes. A related factor is that Wolfensberger’s normalization teaching began to place increasing emphasis on the importance of vulnerable people having valued social roles (Wolfensberger & Tullman, 1982). In a relatively short period of time, circa late-1979 to early-1980, the new concept actually became fully developed. However, because it had not yet been given a new name, it was being taught—again, for

a brief period—under the old normalization rubric. By the time the name “Social Role Valorization” was chosen sometime in mid to late-1982, the first published edition of *PASSING* (Wolfensberger & Thomas, 1983) was already being printed. Thus, while *PASSING* contained the most extensive written explication of SRV up to that time, it still referred to it as “normalization” because it was too late to change it once the book was in-press. The 2007 revised edition of *PASSING* corrected that problem. However, from 1983 until 2007, there existed the slightly awkward situation of teaching and evaluating SRV service quality via a *PASSING* manual that made no reference to SRV but only to normalization. That problem was effectively dealt with by simply asking *PASSING* users to mentally substitute “Social Role Valorization” wherever they read “normalization.” This they could quite easily do because all had previously attended at least one Introductory SRV training event. Still, this semantic condition may have accounted in part for prolonging a transition from normalization to SRV in some areas and for some people.

A prime example of ambivalence toward full acceptance of SRV occurred in the United Kingdom, where the transition away from normalization has been much more prolonged than in North America, and is still not complete. Normalization and *PASS* workshops continued to be taught there much longer than in North America, and many people there still seem to think more in terms of normalization than Social Role Valorization. An example is the description of a forensic service for mentally retarded criminal offenders in Britain by Fish and Loble (2001) that, as late as 2001, is still based on the principle of normalization and on the “five accomplishments” that are themselves based on the principle of normalization (O’Brien & Lyle, 1987). While SRV and *PASSING* training was imported into the UK from abroad on a few ad hoc occasions, this effort was not consistently sustained. At the same time, there was no corresponding effort by British normalization and

PASS teachers to concertedly study and learn SRV and PASSING in sufficient depth to gain teaching mastery of it. In consequence, hardly any SRV or PASSING events—qua SRV and PASSING—were taught there over the past 20 years or so. Instead, the training that did take place commonly conflated normalization and SRV, as well as PASS and PASSING. These were commonly referred to as “normalization/SRV” and “PASS[ING]” (Race, 1999) as if these were interchangeable terms, and as if they were not different things. (See also Race, 2007 for a general discussion of effects of normalization and SRV in the United Kingdom.) Eventually, the frequency of even this type of training waned. However, in 2007, a small group (called VERA, for “Values, Education and Research Association”) formed in Britain to engage in efforts to build interest and capacity in both SRV and PASSING; it has conducted both SRV and PASSING training there.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps some of this reticence or ambivalence could have been overcome in favor of SRV if leading SRV disseminators in North America had provided even stronger assertions and clarifications of the differences between SRV and normalization, or stronger rationales why normalization/PASS teachers should make a transition to SRV/PASSING, or more convincing demonstrations of the theoretical and practical superiority of SRV over normalization. However, this speculative hindsight does not account for continued ambivalence in the face of a quarter century of experience with SRV, nearly constant regular publication on SRV topics, and the availability of open access to multiple training workshops each year. As mentioned, this is in contrast to Australia where there had been little prior history of normalization training to encumber understanding and siphon off enthusiasm for SRV.

A *fourth* pattern of response among old normalization hands, one related to the third, was to promote the key ideas of both normalization and SRV in ways other than by conducting nor-

malization or SRV training per se. For instance, a few normalization/PASS leaders taught and wrote about principles of service that were in essence strikingly similar to SRV and/or normalization which, however, they called by other names. At least one of these, the Framework for Accomplishment schema (O’Brien & Lyle, 1987), is fairly comprehensive and explicated, and continues to have currency with some people, as noted earlier. The authors are clear that it is not a substitute for either normalization or SRV, but rather an alternative way of disseminating, interpreting or translating the main ideas thereof. Similarly, a number of leading disseminators began to specialize in various forms of change agency using normalization and SRV as their knowledge base, along with other intellectual tools in their kits, many of which were independent of normalization and SRV, and some of which had also been taught to them by Wolfensberger. Their change agency efforts were often directed at individuals and families, working on a person-by-person basis. A fairly widespread example of this was those who conducted, or trained others to conduct, “personal futures planning” in one or more of its many variants as a way of bringing SRV and normalization principles to bear on the process of structuring positive goals and attaining desired outcomes for devalued people (see, for example, Mount, 1992, and Mount & Wheeler, 1991). Others tended to direct their work more at the level of service agencies, for instance by promulgating strategies and techniques for organization-based implementation of normalization and SRV. A few operated, at least some of the time, at the even broader levels of service systems, or regional and national governments.

The fact that certain of these efforts have drawn and retained over many years the dedication of a considerable number of well-informed, creative people in our field signifies that they have merit. A number of these individuals would properly be thought of as leading practitioners, people who have demonstrated their capacities for leadership and influence among service providers, recipients

and families. They have been, either at times or habitually, in the forefront of formulating and demonstrating innovative service efforts and approaches, including some that others have called “best practices.” Some have conceptualized, developed and nurtured viable worthwhile projects aimed at enriching lives that might otherwise remain restricted in such domains of community living as abode, advocacy, family and relationships, employment, education, worship, sports and recreation, and thus have much to be commended for. Some have published instructive accounts of their perspectives and works. (For only a few North American examples, see: Kendrick, 2001; Mount, 1992; O’Brien & O’Brien, 1990; Pierpont, 1992; Wetherow, 2003.) Further, the greater proportion of this work has been done outside the publication world, via training, speaking and consulting; therefore, certain people are not aware of it, much as certain people are not aware of the corpus of published work.

Relatedly, some practitioners are closer to, and more simpatico with, SRV than others. For example, some have solid backgrounds in normalization (even if not necessarily also in SRV), and though they may not be SRV boosters, they display a certain degree of concordance with it. And, they seem to have an appreciation of SRV, even if they do not express that appreciation explicitly or consistently, or always explain how their teaching derived from, or is related to, SRV. Further, because of the influence that normalization and SRV ideas have had on them, it may also be true that the perspectives or practices they tend to promote are ones that are more clearly congruent with SRV than with normalization, especially since many of them at least implicitly recognize and promote the importance of valued social roles, even if they do not mention SRV (see, for example, Harlan-Simmons, Holtz, Todd & Mooney, 2001).

Systemically, the development of a variety of specialties within a broad field of service (such as law, architecture, medicine, etc.) is an understandable and, arguably, desirable dynamic. In fact, a

natural outgrowth of most high-level schemas or theories is a desire to find the best ways to apply the general principle to specific circumstances. Some such specialization had actually begun in the normalization era, as when some people focused not on normalization as a whole, but rather on pieces of it, such as a narrow emphasis on normalizing the physical environment, reducing congregation, pursuing culture-appropriate rights or greater autonomy, achieving age-appropriate attire, normalized eating and meal-time practices, or pursuing what they think is image-enhancing language practice. Such specialization seemed to burgeon more so during the 1980s phase of transition from normalization and PASS to SRV and PASSING. No doubt some so-called “best practices” (Osburn, Caruso & Wolfensberger, 2010) in mental retardation were born out of efforts on the part of some individuals to specialize in carrying some element or component of SRV theory into implementive reality (Caruso & Osburn, 2010).

However, these things are not true of other practitioners, such as those whose “best practice” may be derived from normalization and SRV, but whose grounding in these ideas may be nonexistent or weak. Some of these may harbor confusions, distortions or antipathies toward SRV. Some may engage in a kind of calculated distancing and dissociation of SRV from their “best practice.” Some have explained that a motivation for their not openly seeming to endorse—or even reference—SRV, and instead using terms such as “best practice,” is to avoid any taint or “stigma” they believed to be associated with normalization or SRV, e.g., of “zealotry,” “pedantry,” “self-righteousness,” “dreamy impracticality,” what one imperious director of a corporate human service called, “pompous naiveté,” or even religiosity. Another motivation (occasionally expressed, but usually left unsaid) was that by not acknowledging SRV, one could avoid appearing to be aligned with its implied critique of many prevailing human service practices. Ironically, this would be an inescapable consideration for anyone whose “best

practice” was primarily supported by those who were presently vested in the status quo. Another less-openly expressed (and possibly unconscious) motivation was that dealing with only pieces of SRV is simply easier: it avoids (up to a point at least) the inherent challenges involved in dealing with—and helping others to deal with—a unified complex and demanding theory. And, frankly, another motivation was a certain degree of reluctance to be seen as too closely associated with Wolfensberger, for two reasons. One was that it increased their own chances of being rejected by a constituency they wanted to reach which perceived him as “too radical” or even “a little crazy.” (Some of those people have never forgiven Wolfensberger for undermining the old way of doing things.) The other was that they sought simply to establish themselves fully in their own right, and to escape from beneath the long shadow of the master, moving on from the role of “disciple,” “acolyte,” “apprentice” or “journeyman.”

### Conclusion

**W**HATEVER EFFECTS THE TRANSITION from normalization to SRV had on individual people, SRV itself has continued to grow in terms of theoretical development, teaching and practice. It has been more widely disseminated than normalization had been before it, though by no means universally so. As a theory relevant to human service, SRV has attained intellectual eminence primarily in mental retardation and so-called developmental disabilities services. It has made some inroads into other service fields, as repeatedly borne out at various national and international gatherings on Social Role Valorization. For instance, at the 4th International SRV Conference in Ottawa, May 2007, on “Crafting Valued Social Roles,” professionals from more than a dozen countries presented their applications of SRV in services to elderly people, prisoners, the poor, newborns, aboriginal peoples and so on. Thus, SRV is recognized within at least certain circles beyond mental retardation, though

nowhere near to the extent it deserves. This is especially true in mental services, where drug and talk therapies are such powerfully entrenched and dominant service paradigms that they present enormous obstacles to inroads by SRV on professional, academic and systemic levels. On the one hand, few mental health professionals are familiar with the corpus of SRV literature, or have attended SRV training, or have sought to introduce SRV into their services. On the other hand, few major SRV disseminators seem to have developed clear strategies and active approaches for enlarging the presence of SRV in the mental health field. Still, SRV has gained some acceptance among a few community mental health advocates, rights-oriented “consumer” advocates, service practitioners and individual service recipients (see, for example, Kendrick, 1997, 1999; MacNeil, 2007; and Sangster, 2007). Such occasional glimpses indicate at least a drop-in-the-bucket degree of SRV presence, which, though it cannot yet be called encouraging, does point to the possibility of a long-term grassroots approach that would eventually broaden the acceptance of SRV in the sphere of mental services. Meanwhile, the expansion of SRV application in other service fields beyond mental retardation will continue to demonstrate its potential for enabling an experience of the good things in life for devalued people in very diverse circumstances and conditions. Perhaps the much-needed large-scale transfer of SRV theory and practice to many other fields will be the next major transition. ☺

### ENDNOTES

1. Personal communication, 21 July 2008, from William E. MacLean, Jr.
2. David Race, personal communication, 5 October 2010.

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# Achieving the Good Things of Life

**John Armstrong**

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The following guest column is adapted from a presentation by the author to an agency's annual conference in Sydney, Australia.*

## Introduction

WE HAVE MARVELLED at the exploits of Jessica Watson, who has just arrived home after seven months circumnavigating the world non-stop and by herself in her small yacht—so vividly and courageously living her dream. I'm not sure if she imagined the media scrum that would follow her every time she took a walk down the beach!

We are also impressed that such a young person should be so audacious as to imagine herself at the centre of her accomplishment. So often we dream of the good things of life dependent on the actions of others (like winning the lottery) rather than on our own efforts.

So I want to discuss what it really takes to enjoy the 'good things of life,' for ourselves and for others.

If we contemplate what it is that we want from our life, we might be surprised to discover that such hopes and dreams—many of which are already fulfilled—have much in common with other people, even people across cultures.

These ideas are so universal of what all people want, they provide a broad though distinct vision—even a mission of what it is we are working towards (Wolfensberger, Thomas & Caruso, 1996).

Some people find such ideas of what they want from life easy—because it's at the forefront

of their thinking. Even now, Jessica is thinking, "what next" (Sydney Hobart)! Others find this hard; such ideas are easily overridden by the daily grind, "keeping our head above water," "just surviving." It's that way too for many family members who have a son or daughter with a disability; daily life is so stressful that one seemingly doesn't have the mental space to devote to long-term dreams. Yet without dreams, we just react to daily predicaments without the benefit of a clear direction. No wonder decisions taken in people's lives can be chaotic and too often very damaging to their wellbeing.

Our western culture too lives in the moment; it conspires against our plans for a better future. Richard Sennett, a scholar on society and work from NY University and the London School of Economics, writes:

*How do we decide what is of lasting value in ourselves in a society that is impatient, which focuses on the immediate moment? How can long term goals be pursued in an economy devoted to the short term? (1998, 10)*

Thus external pressures can make it difficult to imagine goals; other short term pressures make it hard to dedicate oneself to living your dreams.

If we know what we want from life; this "Good Life," we can develop strategies for achieving them: the 'What' and the 'How.'

You usually develop and articulate goals, even to yourself, and then you find a context where these goals can be achieved: work, university/study, community groups and associations, and relationships of every kind. In other words, you craft some roles for yourself. The people you support will require significant assistance to achieve such roles.

Some of these roles are formal and structured, like obtaining a degree; other dreams are more dependent on the strength and commitment within a relationship, like being married and having children.

In either case, success in the good things of life is dependent on the presence of others: some who do things for you, others who do things with you and some who just believe in you, encourage you and offer you love and affection.

Has this list changed for you at all? Have your dreams changed since you were a teenager? Do you think Jessica's list of 'to do's' will change and develop? It shows that our vision for a better life for people must also adjust with time, with mastery and changed values and priorities that they have in their life.

Not everyone you know aids your dreams; some people want to cut you down and promote responses against your interest. They become jealous when they see someone close to them excel. Have you ever met people like that? Sometimes you have to cut those people loose and begin to surround yourself with people who can share your dreams.

Some dreams are shared with others and can benefit from the collective energy a common dream creates. Imagine the power of a dream that everyone shares? Clearly though, the good things of life can't be achieved in the context of a 'managed life' where at best only basic needs can be met. The good things of life have always occurred in the 'shared space,' where flourishing and thriving is free to take place.

But other people can't make your dreams come true for you—there is always the sustained effort you must bring yourself; to learn, practice, sacrifice and suspend one's immediate yearnings for something better. As Jessica said: "You've just got to have a dream, believe in it and work hard."

What about the people you support—what are the implications of the good things in life for them? One is that people will need more assistance in discovering and shaping the roles they can occupy.

### Connection to SRV

WE KNOW FROM OUR TRAINING in Social Role Valorization (SRV) that the more social roles one has, and the more valued those roles, the more chance one has of having access to the good things in life (Wolfensberger, 1998).

Why is this the case? Well, roles express one's worth and value, one's status—and status affects the way you get seen and treated. If you are devalued, valued people feel compelled to treat you badly, even if they say they love you. One primary way is to lower their expectations of what you might achieve and become. It is very hard for most people to not be affected by the low status they perceive in someone.

Well, we could just berate them for that, but they would still be compelled to respond to what they see. It is so powerful, even negative ideas about someone persist well after things have improved. They have to see people in successful circumstances repeatedly that communicate worth and value, if they are to be seen and eventually treated differently. One starts to comprehend how hard one has to work to achieve this. This concerted effort has sometimes been interpreted as unwarranted zealotry by those who don't see the seriousness of people's bondage.

I know a man who has had a terribly deprived and harsh life. He had frequently destroyed furniture, but once he started to live in a more attractive place and be treated respectfully, all of that changed. He is now able to live in a dwelling with pleasing furniture and appointments, but some would still resist such a move because they remember his past more than they acknowledge his present.

Now that he is living so well, the question becomes "well, what next for this man"? But that's an impossible question if you still see him inhabiting the past.

### Happiness

SOME OF THIS RESISTANCE might be due to some mistaken ideas about ‘happiness.’ In an effort to make complex things simple, people can attempt to summarise the point of all these efforts in an over simplistic fashion. They might say, “It’s just down to common sense” or “it’s about what people choose” or “it’s whatever makes people happy.” It’s a loophole we provide to our thinking that actually stops us thinking about what we should be doing. Typically it means we have to do very little to make that happen other than acquiesce “to the service recipient’s maladaptive but presumably happiness-inducing behaviours and decisions” (Osburn, 2009).

Yet valued roles bring many wonderful benefits that are indeed concordant with bringing happiness: security, relationships, well-being, growth and development, learning and new experiences, self-esteem, respect, dignity, belonging, acceptance, home life, work, contribution to others, etc. These are the benefits we all get from valued social roles, but wait—there’s more! There is also the potential for the added benefits of enhanced image, competency development, having defenders and protectors when needed, defence against wounds being struck that could define one’s life, a chance to heal the psyche and the chance to be seen as more intelligent. Sounds pretty good.

Negative roles and low status affect the belief others can have about your life and what you should experience. It’s much like the problem Jessica Watson faced because she was a teenager and a girl, sailing alone and running into ships, but much, much worse. Low expectations can become a self fulfilling prophecy providing not only a loophole justifying low expectations for the observer, but even the person themselves. They come to believe that they are right in thinking they can only fail.

### Preferences

HAVING OTHERS BELIEVE IN YOU is such an important requirement, but the person must also make an effort. The good life can’t be imposed, it has to

be embraced—you have to want it, and deeply! But harsh experiences and backgrounds often weaken the capacity for the strong habits that are needed to do so. How might one respond?

Have you ever gone shopping and come home with things you didn’t intend, with things you don’t really need? (Oh, always?) Have you ever made rash or impulsive decisions that you later regretted? There are those instantaneous decisions we can make in the spur of the moment. They are usually based on a superficial assessment that sees only an immediate pay-off. They are referred to as ‘first-order preferences’ (Hamilton, 2008). They are the preferences we are exposed to in the marketplace. They come from superficial interests, desires and passions. For some, such superficial interests can grow into preoccupations, preoccupations into compulsions, compulsions into obsessions and finally obsessions into addiction. We can become enslaved to desires.

With experience, hindsight and some self control, and help from others, we develop second-order preferences. These are preferences that bring long-term benefit to ourselves and others, and we will even forgo first-order preferences to achieve these second-order ones. Thus while we eat our greasy chicken, we can simultaneously be thinking of the good food we wish we were eating. First and second-order preferences can therefore be opposites we entertain simultaneously (though some people have had such limited experience with second-order preferences that they cannot identify what they even might be).

One cannot really assess the value of a first-order preference without holding second-order preferences. When we talk about supporting people’s choices, what level of choices are we referring to? But why should we prefer second-order preferences over first? Second-order preferences reflect our moral self; our true self that we have discovered in ourselves, rather than only a thoughtless response to an external stimulus. (After all, only animals persistently behave according to first-order preferences.)

Second-order preferences represent the actualisation of our vision. Second-order preferences mean

we are in control of ourselves rather than being impulsively led by external contrivances. Freedom comes when I have the will and intellectual application to select my preferences (Hamilton, 2008). Second-order preferences make one free.

Yet first-order preferences are continually emphasised in our market society. But which one is emphasised in our support of devalued people? First-order preferences promise a life of pleasure, though mostly it turns out to be a life of vain futility, even misery. The good things of life come from consistently and repeatedly making second-order preferences. And once we have acquired sufficient elements of the good things in life, and with much internal and personal work, we might even discover a meaningful life.

A meaningful life reflects not your vision for your life, but the vision for the person you want to be. It's a vision that defines the excellence you strive to be that is transformative to those who know you, including those you support.

How might second-order preferences be encouraged for the people who use your service and the staff who support them?

Firstly, only with a powerful and conscious set of goals, a vision towards a better life, might someone be able to resist the attraction of first-order preferences. That is, they have something better to live for than the shallow short-lived attraction of material and sensual things. We all slip up occasionally; we tend to treat it as respite, but some want to exist there. We have sayings for this; "Let your hair down," "Let it all hang out" (well, we used to say that); but then statements like "Be yourself" and "do what's right for you" disguise the seduction and betrayal of first-order preferences to what is not actually in one's own interests. Second-order preferences are only made when you clearly know and comprehend your own interests and have the volition to see it through. Hopefully any fleeting indulgence doesn't lead to tragic results that one frequently reads in the paper—almost every day actually.

Secondly, it also depends on the quality of those you relate to. Some of the people you know as your models often reflect this character. Their qualities impact on you enormously—for good or bad. Having the right people around that can be trusted to offer good support is an essential ingredient. Can you imagine what this could look like as you collectively assist people to acquire some valued social roles?

Have you noticed that many people with an intellectual disability pay attention to the character of people they meet, including support personnel? Wolfensberger (1988) described this ability as being able to relate to the "heart qualities" of others. Where non-disabled people are captivated by status and all manner of outward appearance and assumed importance, people with intellectual disability tend to be much more likely to respond to the genuine good character of those close to them.

### Leadership

WHERE MANAGERS MAKE PEOPLE DO THINGS, ethical leaders lead people to want to do things (Thrall et al). Each of you already provide a measure of leadership to the people you support. There are broadly two types of leaders: those that lead through fear, control, division and anger; and those that lead through love, enthusiasm, vision—leaders who shine a light and provide direction.

Poor leaders of all persuasions use the same negative approaches. Ethical leaders are alike too, but they bring out the best in people. They don't reduce people, they use love as their influencing principle. They are gracious and merciful to everyone.

But what is their ethic based upon? According to Naomi Wolf, author of *The Beauty Myth*, if one examines all of the world's religions, leaving aside questions of food, days for worship, etc., one finds a remarkable set of just seven precepts. And they are:

- Kindness and compassion
- Honesty
- Truth

- Peace-making (to heal the breach)
- Justice, based on everyone being equally precious, with equal dignity and value
- Generosity and giving
- What you sow, you reap; what goes around comes around; cause and effect

There are few that would argue against the importance of these. They provide a basis of comparison for what one wants to live up to. But are they ours?

We can all become good at replicating voices that aren't ours. But part of the integrity of an ethical leader is that they have found and identified 'their voice,' that connection to their true self or core. With it comes a close sense of mission or vision (some call this 'a calling')—something within our deepest being we 'hear' and must respond to. When that mission is coherent to your role, then you and those you positively influence are free to flourish.

However, speaking our true voice may make us very unpopular with some, perhaps because one is seen as a threat, or through jealousy or inconvenience. A voice can open or close doors that lose people but also gain other people. Your voice should speak what is beautiful in your heart.

It's very interesting that the nerve that stimulates and controls our voice travels from the brain via our heart (it actually loops under the aorta), before it goes to our vocal cords. Does our anatomy suggest the potential talent to speak not only from the head but also from a perfected motivation of the heart?

### Vision

AND THERE IS A CONNECTION between dreaming and happiness. Dreaming and striving brings vigour and vitality, even charisma, because it's so energising. Then, of course, doing what you're passionate about brings you alive as opposed to just doing one's duty. Visions and dreams stimulate creativity and problem solving, team work and relationships. When people comprehend their mission, they are very quick to seize an op-

portunity. Serendipity plays a significant role in their life. They are more optimistic and therefore willing to take calculated risks.

People without vision often become risk averse, over-concerned with remaining 'safe.' They worry too much about what might go wrong which can immobilize their thinking. Whole organisations can be immobilised by their aversion to risk. They become over reliant on prescriptions, regulations, policies and routine, which pushes us beyond our moral boundaries. A workshop participant told me a story recently of a worker he encountered who, when cleaning a woman's bathroom, just cleaned around all the objects on her cabinet without moving them. When asked why, she said "It was because of the 'no-lifting' policy."

There is nothing predictable or routine about empathy (Sennett, 38). Mindless compliance to routine can destroy our empathy for another person. And when we restrict our empathy by failing to act (perhaps because it wasn't pre-scripted for us), we have to reduce the pain of guilt caused by inaction by retreating further into our routines. In time this process leads to callousness (Staub, 2003); a hardened heart instead of a responsive one. So the two big questions that only you can answer:

- Do you really want the people you support to experience the good things in life?
- Are you willing to do what it takes to make that happen?

The leadership that is needed is an ethical leadership. It seeks excellence that rises well above the norm. Ethical leaders are serious about themselves, they don't amble through life; they treat themselves and others with professional courtesy—like being on time. They put demands upon their own standards. They are committed to others. They live by their best values; they apply consistently their best values. Ethical leadership will be an exemplar of second-order preferences.

## Loyalty

OF ALL THINGS, a service must be beneficial to the people served and, to be sustainable, to the people serving. Some degree of reciprocity is essential if relationships are to last. But the very essence of so-called ‘person centeredness’ is the value of loyalty—loyalty to the person being served. It has little to do with official forms and assessment protocols, but instead speaks to an orientation to never sacrifice the interests and needs of a service recipient in favour of oneself, one’s organisation or the powerful interests of other parties.

In this day and age of heightened economic imperatives, this may be one of the greatest hazards for the aspiring ethical leader—to not betray the people one set out to serve. The culture doesn’t expect people to strengthen their second-order preferences, nor does it expect people to look out for each other; instead it wants you to look out for yourself. After all,

*Neoliberal politics has almost nothing to do with self-discipline and consideration for others. It is designed on assumptions of unlimited desire and individualistic ambition (Aly, 2010, 37).*

Where do we think the rhetoric of ‘choice’ and ‘rights’ that fills our service system has come from? Such an orientation is strangely at odds with communities that flourish, which have always been built on a foundation of mutual obligation.

Everything we have discussed is diametrically opposed to this neo-liberal vision. For the people you support, they too will need a vision for their better life if they are to ultimately resist the deception posed by the market; that a good life can be had by just gratifying oneself.

People don’t have to fully reach their dream to still benefit; incremental steps will still make you happier. And if you live your life in accordance with your larger vision, you are already realising your vision. ☪

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# The Ring of Words: On Rhetoric, Writing & Social Role Valorization Dissemination

**Marc Tumeinski**

*Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man.*

*- Francis Bacon, On Studies*

'BOOK LOVER' has been one of my roles since I first learned to read. I'm rarely without a book, often several, and since reading that first book, I have had a growing appreciation for the power of words and writing. Despite my early and consistent appreciation of books and writing, however, I never gave thought to becoming a writer until after I started learning Social Role Valorization. When I participated in my first PASSING workshop, the message was loud and clear about the importance of writing to the SRV movement. Our team was told about the role of report writer, how crucial it was and what it entailed. I was hooked, and after that workshop was over, began to look for an opportunity to become a PASSING report writer.

Looking back, I can see that Dr. Wolfensberger, by his own example, by the sheer size of his written corpus, and by his explicit teaching, had created an atmosphere around SRV that held up writing as important to the SRV movement, both in terms of dissemination and application.

What are some lessons we might draw from this continuing atmosphere and set of expectations which I believe are highly conducive to writing in connection with SRV?

- Writing is hard work, requiring discipline, effort and even sacrifice. It is worth it though, for our own sake but more importantly for the sake of others: for other people engaged in service and for societally devalued people.

- The craft of writing can be learned and practiced until it becomes a useful habit.

- Writing takes time, usually more than anticipated or predicted.

- Seeking out and incorporating feedback on what we write will sharpen not only what we produce in the end but also the development of our skills and habits as writers.

- Writing can take many forms and serve various purposes, each suited to different occasions. With writing, we can deepen thinking, examine assumptions, exhort, challenge, provoke, persuade, inform, clarify, educate, entertain or inspire. The process of writing helps us 'step back' in a sense, so that we can more clearly think through and understand what we are writing about.

- As we develop the habit of writing, more and more ideas and circumstances will present themselves to us as opportunities for writing. Grab onto these when they arise. I heard over and over



from Dr. Wolfensberger, and I pass his advice on to you: Immediately jot down your thoughts and start collecting notes whenever such ideas come, so that when the right time arises, you will have material to build on.

- Writing can make a positive difference, including in the lives of vulnerable people, and as such deserves our best efforts. This brings us back to my first point; that writing requires sacrifice—but is worth it. Certainly Dr. Wolfensberger had powerfully relevant and coherent ideas, but if he had not shared them through the hard work of writing workshop scripts and publishing written materials, many of us, indeed most of us, would likely never have been influenced by his powerful ideas.

I have seen in Dr. Wolfensberger and others how the craft of writing can be capitalized upon to work for the good of vulnerable people; by putting forth a vision that galvanizes others to act, by shining a light on the ways that devalued people are at great risk of harm, by laying out a set of practices that can be picked up and used to help vulnerable people.

WITHIN THIS SUPPORTIVE ATMOSPHERE surrounding SRV and writing, I began from that first PASSING workshop to learn to see the potency and beauty of writing, as well as the discipline required in striving for mastery of the art. Learning to write, and the process of writing itself, continue to shape my own formation as a learner, teacher and practitioner of SRV.

Dr. Wolfensberger, in the tradition of other great teachers and change agents, has left a personal example as well as a body of work that we can carry forward. Part of this can include the challenge of opening our eyes, picking up our pen or sitting in front of that keyboard, and taking on the discipline of using the power of words on behalf of vulnerable people: describing the reality of devaluation, expounding on the power of valued roles to open the door to the ‘good things of life,’ persuading others to stand by the vulnerable, inviting reflection, and encouraging deep interpersonal identification between people. ☺

*Bright is the ring of words when the right man rings them.*

~ Robert Louis Stevenson, *Songs of Travel*

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EDITOR'S NOTE: *To learn more about PASSING report writing, please contact us at [journal@srvip.org](mailto:journal@srvip.org). To learn about PASSING, see Wolfensberger, W. & Thomas, S. (2007). PASSING: A tool for analyzing service quality according to Social Role Valorization criteria. Ratings manual. (3rd rev. ed.). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership & Change Agency.*

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- 2c The Rise of Pauperism (29:42)
- 3a Deportation and Exile (16:28)
- 3b Containment and Confinement (15:47)
- 4a Degradation and Elimination of the Altar (11:46)
- 4b The Panopticon and Central Observation Stations (28:11)
- 5a Service "Deculturation" and Moral Treatment (17:09)
- 5b "Menacization" Images and Associations with Leprosy and Contagion (23:58)
- 6a The Association of Hospices with Houses of Detention (13:43)
- 6b Various Beliefs That Played a Role in Menacization (4:59)
- 6c Human Service Assumptions Based in Materialism (14:18)
- 6d Further Menacization Through "Treatments" Based on Punishments (31:23)
- 6e Regimentation and the Use of Military Imagery (17:07)
- 7a Historical Lines of Influence in the Perversion of Western Human Services (14:51)
- 7b Core Realities, Strategies and Defining Characteristics of Contemporary Services (31:21)
- 7c Some Conclusions (10:53)



# REVIEWS MORE

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THE ‘HAPPINESS ISSUE’: A BRIEF ELABORATION ON A COMMON OBSTACLE TO SOCIAL ROLE VALORIZATION. By JOE OSBURN. *The SRV Journal*, 4(2), 33-41. REVIEW AVAILABLE ONLINE @ [www.srvip.org](http://www.srvip.org)

Reviewed by Ray Lemay

JOE OSBURN, A WELL-KNOWN very senior SRV and PASSING trainer, in his 2009 article “The Happiness Issue,” takes up some of the oft-repeated objections to SRV implementation: that a particular SRV measure might possibly make a person unhappy; or that SRV as a whole won’t make an individual happy. Not a few have observed that some people living in what would be generally viewed as miserable circumstances or even in a state of great devaluation seem nonetheless content and even possibly happy. For some it might be natural disposition, low expectancies tied to previous disappointments, or possibly a saintly ascetic renunciation.

Osburn shows that SRV is not inimical to happiness, and that many SRV-influenced measures may contribute to an individual’s happiness. Valued roles and the good things in life (Wolfensberger, Thomas & Caruso, 1996) are not the same as happiness, though we could easily imagine a strong correlation between the two. However, though friends and family (‘good things’ numbers four and one) are often a source of well-being and happiness, there are moments and events with such persons that may lead to suffering and unhappiness. Unfortunately, much research (Lemay, 2009) suggests that people who are devalued often have very few social relationships that might bring about such happiness or unhappiness.

AS OSBURN POINTS OUT, the invocation of the “happiness” argument is often a cop out: SRV is demanding and people will sometimes equate

effort with unhappiness. Some SRV initiatives do come with risk and here again some people suggest that this will put happiness at risk. The happiness argument may be used to detoxify an otherwise noxious practice or life-circumstance and thus be an argument for the status quo: “Our client is happy as he is, why change anything?” In such circumstances the happiness argument is certainly illustrative of the low expectations of employees or family members who are content to leave things as they are. In such circumstances, “who is happy?” and “who benefits?” could be viewed as important questions.

Osburn could have pointed out that happiness is an issue of contention in many therapeutic enterprises: Freud is reputed to have written something to the effect that the goal of therapy was to free an individual from his neurotic misery so that he could face the misery of the world (Onfray, 2009); so much for happiness. Richard Friedman, a psychiatrist, wrote in the *New York Times* on 17 January 2011 that: “I am pretty good at treating clinical misery with drugs and therapy, but that bringing about happiness is a stretch. Perhaps happiness is a bit like self-esteem: You have to work for both. So far as I know, you can’t get an infusion of either one from a therapist.”

According to Friedman, therapy is supposed to help provide people with a narrative that explains why things are as they are. But, having a narrative that makes sense of the past does not make it accurate or even an effective narrative. For instance, understanding why you are doing poorly today is not as likely to be as effective as having a narrative that tells you where you are going tomorrow, how things (including yourself) might or should change.

MIHÁLY CSÍKSZENTMIHÁLYI (1996), one of the positive psychology gurus, has made it his career to study happiness, or something close to it, that

he has named “flow”—when we are involved in a pleasurable activity and our consciousness of time momentarily stops. The exalted state of flow is focused motivation when we are immersed in an enjoyable activity of learning, doing or striving. In such a view, happiness is doing, or getting there. Once there it is over. One could thus imagine that the effort required by an SRV measure might just provide the moments of flow that might also be counted as one of the good things in life. Indeed, the eighth “good thing in life” listed by Wolfensberger et al (1996) could be viewed as a necessary precursor that might enable experiences of flow: “Opportunities and expectancies that enable one to discover and develop one’s abilities, skills, gifts, and talents. In most societies today, this would also include schooling. Probably no one ever develops all their abilities to the fullest, and we are not talking about getting to ‘actualize’ oneself in every way and in every aspect of life. But most people do want to be able to contribute at least something, to be good at one or more things” (13).

It also seems that working (‘good thing’ number six) is a potential source of happiness. “Work, and especially work that can be invested with meaning other than, and usually in addition to, merely a way to gain money or comparable material gain. For many people, this is likely to be work that is of the nature of primary or secondary production, or that is life-enhancing to others or the environment, that hopefully has readily visible results, and that is recognized as valuable by others” (13). Csíkszentmihályi writes that “what often passes unnoticed is that work is much more like a game than most other things we do during the day. It usually has clear goals and rules of performance. It provides feedback either in the form of knowing that one has finished a job well done, in terms of measurable sales, or though an evaluation by one’s supervisor. A job usually encourages concentration and prevents distractions; it also allows a variable amount of control and—at least ideally—its difficulties match the worker’s skills” (59). Martin Seligman, the former President of the American

Psychological Association and founder of the Positive Psychology movement, in his book *Authentic Happiness* (2002) also suggests that work is essential for happiness. According to Seligman, a job will engender satisfaction as long as it puts to use what he has termed our “signature strengths.” Indeed, when a job allows us to marshal our signature strengths, it becomes less a career and more a calling. “A calling is the most satisfying form of work because, as a gratification, it is done for its own sake rather than for the material benefits it brings” (166).

Seligman goes on to tell us that “A calling (or vocation) is a passionate commitment to work for its own sake ... any job can become a calling, and any calling can become a job” (168). Thus even people who hold what we might consider lowly employment such as an orderly in a hospital or cleaning lady in a hotel, can view their work as a calling, allowing them to deploy their signature strengths and provide them with great satisfaction. Seligman describes such circumstances for hair cutters, nurses, kitchen workers and so on. All of the above is consistent with good thing in life number 16, “Being able to contribute, and have one’s contributions recognized as valuable” (14).

Seligman also writes of the concept of flow and tells us that work is an activity that is well-suited for engendering flow. “Flow cannot be sustained through an entire eight-hour workday; rather, under the best of circumstances, flow visits you for a few minutes on several occasions. Flow occurs when the challenges you face perfectly mesh with your abilities to meet them. When you recognize that these abilities include not merely your talents but your strengths and virtues, the implications for what work to choose or how to recraft it become clear” (173).

“Work can be prime time for flow because, unlike leisure, it builds many of the conditions of flow into itself. There are usually clear goals and rules of performance. There is frequent feedback about how well or poorly we are doing. Work

usually encourages concentration and minimizes distractions, and in many cases it matches the difficulties to your talents and even your strengths. As a result, people often feel more engaged at work than they do at home” (175). Thus leisure, idleness or waiting for your professional worker to enact your individual service plan do not seem to be conducive to happiness, which is maybe why these could be listed under the heading “life wasting,” one of the common “wounding” experiences that are often the consequence of devaluation. It is quite true that some might choose idleness over work, but research suggests that this is not likely to lead to happiness. Csíkszentmihályi reports that the evidence suggests that free time is more difficult to enjoy than work. “Free time with nothing specific to engage one’s attention provides the opposite of flow: psychic entropy, where one feels listless and apathetic” (66). Many devalued people have a lot of time on their hands.

For Seligman and Csíkszentmihályi, happiness is hard work and it is the product of being actively engaged in day to day life, which is quite foreign to the experiences of many devalued people. Also, and not surprisingly, a number of people I know have noted that being involved as a team member of a PASSING team doing a PASSING assessment (an otherwise grueling experience) was a happy experience, something akin to flow.

Osburn does suggest that there are things we can do to increase the likelihood of happiness, and that there are service measures, directly assessed through PASSING, that may be conducive to happiness: “One such sub-score is ‘Felicity,’ comprised of ratings which measure conditions that taken together would likely contribute to a recipient’s overall sense of ‘well-being’ or, yes, feelings of ‘happiness’ ” (39). Indeed, such a statement falls well within mainstream psychological research and theorizing. For instance, George Vaillant, the Harvard Psychiatrist who has led a number of longitudinal studies on outcomes, famously found that only one childhood experience predicted adult mental health or well being. He

found that parents who have their kids do chores and keep them active provide experiences that are highly correlated with adult mental health later on. Intelligence, family, socio-economic status, composition and background were not critical mediating factors. Vaillant broadly conceptualized childhood work to include a regular part-time job, regular household chores, participation in extracurricular clubs and sports, and regular school participation in activities. Thus, being active and engaged as a child and youth seems to have a long-term impact on mental health and thus by extension employment and well being as an adult.

For some, maybe a few, all of the above might be surprising, but SRV’s position on happiness is no different than one might find in a number of other theoretical approaches, and is certainly not inconsistent with most research. Nobody’s against happiness, but as Osburn concludes, “making ‘happiness’ the decisive factor in one’s service philosophy is not the same as the idea of supporting a felicitous set of service conditions which potentially might facilitate such a state” (39).

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**Since you are reading this journal,**

why not tell someone else about it? We believe Social Role Valorization is an important tool that concerned individuals can use to address social devaluation in people's lives. As someone who shares that belief, encourage others to read and subscribe to the only journal dedicated to SRV. Information available at [http://www.srvip.org/journal\\_general.php](http://www.srvip.org/journal_general.php).

# LIST OF ITEMS TO BE REVIEWED

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IN EACH ISSUE OF *The SRV Journal*, we publish reviews of items relevant to SRV theory, training, research or implementation. These include reviews of books, movies, articles, etc. We encourage our readers to look for and review such items for this journal. We will be happy to send you our guidelines for writing reviews, or they are available on our website ([http://www.srvip.org/journal\\_submissions.php](http://www.srvip.org/journal_submissions.php)). We are open to reviews of any items you think would be relevant for people interested in SRV. We also have specific items we are seeking reviews of. (We strive to include items which might have relevance to: SRV theory, one or more SRV themes, and/or social devaluation. If, however, a reviewer finds that a particular item is not so relevant, please let us know.) These items include:

SOCIAL INCLUSION AT WORK. By JANIS CHADSEY. Annapolis, MD: AAIDD, 49 pages, 2008.

INCLUSIVE LIVABLE COMMUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH PSYCHIATRIC DISABILITIES. Washington, DC: NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY, 84 pages, 2008.

BODY & SOUL: DIANA & KATHY. By ALICE ELLIOTT (Director). 40 minutes, 2006.

HALLMARKS AND FEATURES OF HIGH-QUALITY COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES. BY KENDRICK, BEZANSON, PETTY & JONES, Houston, TX: ILRU COMMUNITY LIVING PARTNERSHIP, 13 pages, 2006.

ACHIEVING COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP THROUGH COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROVIDER SERVICES: ARE WE THERE YET? *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, 45(3), 149–160 (2007).

PERSKE, R. COMING OUT OF THE DARKNESS: AMERICA'S CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM AND PERSONS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES IN THE 20TH CENTURY. *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, 45(3), 216-220 (2007).

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WOLFENSBERGER, W. HOW TO COMPORT OURSELVES IN AN ERA OF SHRINKING RESOURCES. *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, 48(2), 148-162 (2010).

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ABERNATHY, T. & TAYLOR, S. TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR OWN DISABILITY. *Teacher Education & Special Education*, 32(2), 121-136 (2009).

CARROLL, S., PETROFF, J. & BLUMBERG, R. THE IMPACT OF A COLLEGE COURSE WHERE PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS AND PEERS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES STUDY TOGETHER. *Teacher Education & Special Education*, 32(4), 351-364 (2009).



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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THIS FEATURE PROVIDES a way to continue learning from & engaging with a *Journal* article after reading. We will publish questions based on selected articles, prompting the reader to continue considering, reflecting, discussing & even writing about what they read. Such questions can be useful in deepening a reader's level of understanding of the article content & its SRV implications, whether for teaching or application, & may even lead to a shift in mind-set. We hope these questions will be used by individual readers, as well as by university/college professors in their classes, by program managers during staff meetings & so on. Reflection on these questions might work best spread out over a period of time.

## HISTORY OF EVOLUTION OF NORMALIZATION INTO SRV (PP. 32-42) ~ WOLFENSBERGER

The author lists 5 general ways & 42 specific ways that role messages can be communicated, consciously or unconsciously.

- a) Think of an example of one 'big' valued social role. It may work best to think of a role outside the relationship domain. Discern examples of the above general & specific ways in which that **particular** valued social role is communicated. As you do this, you might keep a real person with that role in mind.
- b) Do the same exercise for a socially devalued role.
- c) The author mentions that these role message carriers can be structured. Rank order your 2 lists (general, specific) in terms of the likely impact(s) of changing these message carriers, i.e., which message carriers would likely have the *greatest* impacts in changing the role messages about a socially devalued person, which message carriers would likely have the *smallest* (even though still important) impacts in changing the role messages about a socially devalued person?
- d) What criteria did you use in the previous exercise to rank order the message carriers?
- e) What lessons for implementing SRV can you draw from doing these exercises? It might help to organize such lessons around the 10 themes of SRV, for example.

## TRANSITION FROM NORMALIZATION TO SRV (PP. 47-57) ~ OSBURN & CARUSO

The authors mention the desirability of SRV theory & practice being transferred to other fields, in addition to the field of intellectual impairment where it seems to have had its greatest influence.

- a) What other fields of human service (formal & informal) could SRV ideas be applied within (e.g., corrections, mental health, adoption, poverty, child welfare, medicine, etc.)?
- b) How could SRV be effectively taught in those different fields, any of which come with their own field-specific language, history, assumptions, etc.? E.g., how does social devaluation & the resultant wounding take shape for vulnerable people in that particular field? What particular vulnerabilities do devalued people have, including vulnerability to particular negative perceptions & negative treatment? What devalued roles are commonly imposed on devalued people in that field? What valued roles are likely available? What valued roles would likely be highly beneficial & likely bring greatest access to the 'good things of life'? Etc.
- c) How could SRV be effectively applied in those different fields? For example, what particular non-programmatic factors would likely pose a barrier to SRV implementation in that field? Or, where are the greatest opportunities to start supporting personal social integration & valued social & societal participation? Or, what might a model-coherent service look like, incorporating the elements of service a) assumptions, b) content & c) processes? Etc.

# CALENDAR OF SRV & RELATED TRAININGS

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THIS CALENDAR LISTS UPCOMING SRV & PASSING workshops we are aware of, as well as a number of other workshops relevant to SRV. Each event varies in terms of length & depth of coverage of material; contact the person listed to make sure the workshop fits what you are looking for. Additional training calendars may be accessed at [www.srvip.org](http://www.srvip.org) & [www.socialrolevalorization.com](http://www.socialrolevalorization.com). To notify us of SRV, PASSING & SRV-related workshops for upcoming issues, send information to: [journal@srvip.org](mailto:journal@srvip.org).

## **Protecting the Health & Lives of Hospital Patients**

September 19, 2011

Canberra, ACT, AUS

email Erin Geaney - [erin@imaginebetter.co.nz](mailto:erin@imaginebetter.co.nz)

November 21-25, 2011

Adelaide, SA, AUS

email Peter Millier - [peteus@bigpond.com](mailto:peteus@bigpond.com)

## **The Liberation of Handicapped & Devalued People**

September 20, 2011

Canberra, ACT, AUS

email Erin Geaney - [erin@imaginebetter.co.nz](mailto:erin@imaginebetter.co.nz)

## **SRV Study Visit Using PASSING (1 site visit)**

*prerequisite: attendance at a leadership level SRV workshop*

November 14-18, 2011 (no overnights)

Fairhaven, MA, US

email [register@srvip.org](mailto:register@srvip.org)

## **5th International SRV Conference**

September 21-23, 2011

Canberra, ACT, AUS

email [srvconference@koomarri.asn.au](mailto:srvconference@koomarri.asn.au)

## **Towards a Better Life: A Two-Day Introduction to SRV**

June 27-28, 2011

Adelaide, SA, AUS

email Peter Millier - [peteus@bigpond.com](mailto:peteus@bigpond.com)

## **Crafting a Coherent Moral Stance on the Sanctity of All Human Life**

September 26-30, 2011

Baulkham Hills, NSW, AUS

email [jlarm@optusnet.com.au](mailto:jlarm@optusnet.com.au)

June 30-July 1, 2011

Canberra, ACT, AUS

email Veronica Hadfield - [VHadfield@koomarri.asn.au](mailto:VHadfield@koomarri.asn.au)

## **An Introduction to SRV: A High-Order Schema for Addressing the Plight of Devalued People (\*with an emphasis on developing leaders in SRV\*)**

June 20-23, 2011

Holyoke Community College, Holyoke, MA, US

email [register@srvip.org](mailto:register@srvip.org)

August 25-26, 2011

Canberra, ACT, AUS

email Veronica Hadfield - [VHadfield@koomarri.asn.au](mailto:VHadfield@koomarri.asn.au)

## **Practicum With SRV Using the PASSING Tool**

*prerequisite: attendance at a leadership level SRV workshop*

August 1-5, 2011

Taranaki, NZ

email [StandardsPlus@imaginebetter.co.nz](mailto:StandardsPlus@imaginebetter.co.nz)

September 1-2, 2011

Indooroopilly, Brisbane, QLD, AUS

email [viaainc@gmail.com](mailto:viaainc@gmail.com)

October 27-28, 2011

Blacktown, NSW, AUS

email [foundationsforum@yahoo.com.au](mailto:foundationsforum@yahoo.com.au)

October 17-21, 2011

Indooroopilly, Brisbane, QLD, AUS

email [viaainc@gmail.com](mailto:viaainc@gmail.com)

November 24-25, 2011

Canberra, ACT, AUS

email Veronica Hadfield - [VHadfield@koomarri.asn.au](mailto:VHadfield@koomarri.asn.au)

October 30-November 4, 2011

West Virginia, US

email Linda Higgs - [Linda.s.higgs@wv.gov](mailto:Linda.s.higgs@wv.gov)

## **Leadership in Service Design Based on Model Coherency**

*prerequisite: attendance at an SRV workshop*

July 25-26, 2011

Indooroopilly, Brisbane, QLD, AUS

email [viaainc@gmail.com](mailto:viaainc@gmail.com)

# Social Role Valorization News & Reviews

Susan Thomas

SOME READERS OF THIS JOURNAL may already have heard that Dr. Wolf Wolfensberger passed away in Syracuse on 27 February 2011. However, we are able to continue his column for an unknown number of future issues of the *Journal*, because he had a large backlog of items. To the degree these need editing and compiling into the column, his long-term associate Susan Thomas will continue to do so.

As always, the intent of the column is five-fold:

(a) Briefly annotate publications that have relevance to Social Role Valorization (SRV). Conceivably, some of these might be reviewed in greater depth in a later issue of this journal. Some of these items may serve as pointers to research relevant to SRV theory.

(b) Present brief sketches of media items that illustrate an SRV issue.

(c) Present vignettes from public life that illustrate or teach something about SRV.

(d) Document certain SRV-related events or publications for the historical record.

(e) By all the above, to illustrate and teach the art and craft of spotting, analyzing and interpreting phenomena that have SRV relevance.

The Training Institute has about 20 SRV-related topics, from among which to present a selected few in any particular issue.

Aside from being instructive to readers, persons who teach SRV will hopefully find many of the items in this column useful in their teaching.

## The Common Wounds of Lowly & Devalued People

### *Distantiation*

\*In 1834 or shortly thereafter, the 62nd section of the English Poor Laws was revised to allow local communities to use money raised for the relief of the poor to pay their passage for emigration. One result was that entire poorhouses were emptied and their inmates sent to America, and especially Massachusetts (Shattuck, L. [ & others]. [1850/1948]. *Report of the Sanitary Commission of Massachusetts, 1850*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 204-205).

\*A peculiar human service category in California is private “elder care homes.” There has begun a wave of foreclosures on such homes, with the elderly residents being the last to be informed, and getting set out on the curb (*AARP Bulletin*, June 2010, p. 6).

### *The Wound of Impoverishment*

\*Involuntary poverty is one of the wounds of social devaluation, so acquiring some money when one is very poor can lead a person out of this wound. In fact, recent research claims to have shown that merely being around money can make people feel better. For instance, counting money, all by itself, reduces pain (*Discover*, July/August 2010, p. 19).

### **Physical & Social Discontinuities**

\*Weinberg, H. & Hire, A.W. (1956). *Case book in abnormal psychology* (1st ed.). New York: Alfred A. Knopf. Before the reform days of the 1970s, it was common for devastating physical and social discontinuities to be inflicted on service recipients, with the rationale that each such discontinuity contained some benefit, or rectified a previous error.

All this came to mind reading some case studies of “mentally defective” persons in the above book. The lives of some can only be described as a “continuous discontinuity,” and one is amazed today that the writers of these case studies showed zero awareness that so many of the problem behaviors of the described persons could be attributed to their constant movement.

\*Relevant to the wound of physical discontinuity is a June 2010 report in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* that American adults who had changed neighborhoods or cities as children had lower life satisfaction, well-being and life expectancy.

\*Cochran, W., Sran, P. & Varano, G. (1977). The relocation syndrome in mentally retarded individuals. *Mental Retardation*, 15(2), 10-12. These authors mistakenly equated deinstitutionalization with normalization, plus deinstitutionalization with nursing home placement, and then added the third mistake of blaming normalization for the mindless and hurtful practices of deinstitutionalization. However, they did note the wound of physical discontinuity, and called it the “relocation syndrome.”

\*A private adoption agency in St. Louis, MO (US), called Extreme Recruitment, has shown that it can track down dozens—and even hundreds—of relatives of a child for whom adoptive parents are being sought. The key proved to be the hiring of private investigators: they keep having success where social workers give up. The St. Louis model is being imitated elsewhere. Often, out of a circle

of these relatives, one will step forward to adopt the child or identify another relative who will. Some are very thankful that someone was able to bring them together because they value kinship roles. Sometimes these kinship roles are not even remote ones, but could be those of grandparent, aunt/uncle, etc., and are valued for this reason.

The adopted children are thus spared some of the discontinuity wounds that go with being a foster child, and important, life-long family roles are established for them.

### **Life-Wasting**

\*Bureaucratism in human services typically leads to a lot of life-wasting of service recipients. In Germany, a charity sponsored a study of this problem, and found that service bureaucratism cost the parents of 162,000 handicapped children age 0-18 an astonishing average of 9.6 hours per week, plus a lot of extra expenses, on top of all the extra work and expenses entailed in having an impaired child. The study also identified 13 common bureaucratic devices that burden the families: (a) withholding of information, (b) claiming not to be the responsible agency, (c) shifting responsibility for an issue from one party to another, (d) trying to falsely refer the client to another agency, (e) losing mail, (f) delaying decisions for months, or deciding them faultily, (g) computer glitches, (h) false or faulty invocation of a law, (i) unintelligible or incomplete decisions, (j) a never-ending demand for documentation from parents or other involved parties, (k) demanding new documentation even though the client’s condition has not changed, (l) unintelligible or unreasonable contact hours, and (m) producing fake claims of accomplishments. In response, the study proposed 13 remedies, though as is often the case, the diagnosis of the ills was better than the prescription of remedies (*Das Band* magazine, June 2008, pp. 17-18).

\*When a person acquires a “disability,” and applies for a Social Security government pension, it

may take up to five years for the application to be acted on. In the meantime, the person can lose everything he or she has, and end up homeless—even dead. Of all applicants, 64% get rejected the first time around, and then they have to wait 120 days before they can even appeal. Currently, 300,000 are on appeal in the US. However, appeals are won 60% of the time. An army of lawyers helps the applicants, but they get a cut of the benefits if the appeal succeeds (*Syracuse Post-Standard*, 13 April 2010, pp. A1, A9).

### **Brutalization**

\*In the early 1800s, children even as young as two who had misbehaved were kept in prisons (Despert, J.L. [1965]. *The emotionally disturbed child—then and now*. New York: Brunner).

\*How much services can participate in the wound of brutalization of service recipients was brought out when the State of Texas fired or suspended 270 employees all at once for neglect or abuse of residents of state institutions for the retarded. Some of the offenses were minor, but 11 were of the nature of sexual or bodily abuse (*Syracuse Post-Standard*, 13 June 2009, p. A9).

\*In early 2011, New York State had fired only 35 of 233 employees who had abused or even assaulted residents of state-run group homes; in 25% of the cases, the offending employees were transferred to other group homes, even when the abuse or assault had been very serious. One fired employee said that working in a group home was “almost like working in a prison” (*Syracuse Post-Standard*, 20 March 2011, p. E2).

\*Fisher, K.M., Orkin, F.K., Green, M.J., Chinchilli, V.M. & Bhattacharya, A. (2009). Proxy healthcare decision-making for persons with intellectual disability: Perspectives of residential-agency directors. *American Journal on Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities (AJIDD)*, 114, 401-410. Medical decisions for retarded people under

agency care in Pennsylvania were made on the basis of what physicians recommended and the person’s alleged wishes. Of little importance were considerations of benefits and risks, family wishes and religious affiliation. This is one of many ways of inflicting the wound of brutalization and deathmaking on devalued people.

### **Conclusion**

\*One of our street friends, who had spent much of his life in different institutions but had an active mind and will, occasionally regaled us with stories of “busting out” of this or that institution. We recently (*Syracuse Post-Standard*, 22 August 2008) ran across a news item of a 63-year-old man who lived with the aid of home health workers who suddenly went missing. After several days, he was found at a campsite in a different county. Immediately, we thought “he has busted out” and enjoyed a few days of freedom.

\*Richard Wurmbrand was a Lutheran pastor (a convert from Judaism) who spent almost 15 years in several imprisonments in solitary confinement in Communist prisons in Romania. For three of those years he was kept in a cell 30 feet underground, with 50 pounds of chains on his feet and with his hands manacled, and in total silence except for his interrogation and torture sessions; the guards even wore felt-soled shoes so they could not be heard. He wrote that “Whoever has passed through long years of imprisonment remains a prisoner even after he has been freed” (p. 6). This speaks to the fact that wounds leave lasting scars on the wounded person (Wurmbrand, R. [1999]. *Alone with God. God and suffering: New sermons from solitary confinement*. Bartlesville, OK: Living Sacrifice Book Co./The Voice of the Martyrs).

### **Consciousness & (Un)Consciousness**

\*Everything that has been taught in connection with SRV about the human perceptual process, and its relevance to social valuation, continues to be confirmed by research. (E.g., Lee, in *Science*

*News*, 29 August 2009, pp. 22-25; ⚡ Kendrick, in *Scientific American*, October 2009, pp. 22-24.)

What one will perceive is strongly affected by the physical context, and what one expects to see. Viewed very briefly, a certain dark-colored object will be perceived as an electric drill on a work site, as a hair dryer in a beauty salon, and as a gun on a mean street.

Emotions play a larger role than previously thought in how and what one perceives. They can also not be factored out, no more than sensation and perception can be from each other. In fact, people can often report an emotion elicited by the perception of an object without being able to tell what they perceived. Accordingly, people respond with positive or negative affect (i.e., emotion) toward a just-encountered person (or something standing for the person) even before perceiving the person distinctly.

Even objects that one would think are emotionally neutral can convey affect/emotion via their physical characteristics: shape (sharp or rounded), color, texture, etc.

Affect alerts a perceiver to the more important objects perceived, which has survival value. Objects with high significance are perceived faster, or a person (and some animals) may even respond to such an object before having clearly perceived it. Thus, out in nature, a stick on the ground can trigger an escape motion because it just might have been a snake.

Affect-laden objects also hold a perceiver's attention longer.

The brain reacts to some objects within 30 milliseconds after they register on the eye—even faster than one would have guessed from reaction time experiments. However, in most cases, the response is apparently within the range of 60-200 milliseconds, which is still amazingly fast.

\*Sigmund Freud's nephew, Edward L. Bernays, hypothesized in 1928 (in his book, *Propaganda*), that one could manipulate people's behavior without them being aware of it. To test this hy-

pothesis, he launched a public relations campaign to persuade women to smoke. Until then, it had been taboo for women to smoke in public. Lucky Strike (a cigarette company) financed his campaign which was launched in 1929, by showing glamorous women smoking in public. The campaign—as we all now know—was a smashing success. Yes, people can be entirely unaware that their mind content and behavior are being manipulated (*Monitor on Psychology*, December 2009, pp. 32-34).

\*Jung, C. (1946; 1950 printing). *Psychologie und Erziehung: Analytische Psychologie und Erziehung, Konflikte der kindlichen Seele; Der Begabte*. Zürich, Switzerland: Rascher Verlag. One important claim of Jung is that progress in the development of the human spirit is intertwined with an expansion of human consciousness, that every step forward is a major accomplishment, but that humans hate nothing worse than giving up any part of their unconsciousness! Raising consciousness increases suffering, but it is discomfort focused on the real thing, whereas the suffering of neurosis focuses on a false thing, is a deception, and draws in and influences many other people, including the children, who can pass it on to their children, for generations.

\*Vedantam, S. (2010). *The hidden brain: How our unconscious minds elect presidents, control markets, wage wars, and save our lives*. New York: Spiegel & Grau (Div. of Random House). This is yet another book-length treatise on (un)consciousness, which reports that unconscious processes do much of the mind's work.

### Mind-sets ⚡ Service Models

\*Wampold, B.E. (2007). Psychotherapy: The humanist (and effective) treatment. *American Psychologist*, 62(8), 855-873. In 2007, Bruce Wampold received an award from the American Psychological Association for his applied research. Wampold proposed that psychotherapy should

not be based on a medical model, but should be more equated with religious and indigenous healing practices that “involve an emotionally charged and confiding relationship with a healer, a healing setting, a rationale or conceptual scheme, and procedures that both the healer and patient believe in and that involve active participation and positive expectations for change. According to this perspective, these aspects of healing practices are the critical ingredients of the treatment, whereas in medicine it is the medicine’s direct effect on the biological system. What the [religious and indigenous] healing practices ... have in common is that they appear to be embedded in a cultural context, rely on the interaction between the healer and the recipient of the treatment, and involve an interpretation of events and their meaning” (Wampold, 2007, citing Frank & Frank, 1991).

In his scheme, mind-sets (one of the ten themes in the teaching of SRV) play a crucial role, and both healer and the person seeking healing need to share a mind-set that is culturally plausible in order for the healing effort to be effective. How valid the shared mind-set is seems less crucial than that it is shared, and not in contradiction to cultural beliefs. In other words, what works very powerfully are shared expectancies and culturally valued analogues, just as SRV teaches.

\*We are in the middle of a big model and mind-set shift in regard to the use of marijuana. At one time, it was illegal dope sold by illegal dealers, and its users were addicts, or at least potheads. Now it is becoming “medication” “prescribed” by “health care workers,” and sold at “dispensaries” to “patients” who are in pain. However, nearly all the “patients” are young males, and the drug does cause cognitive impairment, though for how long (or how permanently) is in dispute (*Time*, 22 November 2010).

\*One overnight shelter for homeless and vagrant men was said to provide “an overnight place to crash” and “places to sleep” on a “first-come,

first-served” basis—yet some residents have been staying at the shelter for over 20 years, and the average length of stay is 10 to 15 years. A place where one stays for a decade or two would hardly be described as an overnight shelter, and at least for those residents who did stay that long, one would expect a different arrangement than for short-term, temporary and even one-night stays (Case, D. [2010, August 15]. *The Ox*, a place for men down on their luck. *Syracuse Post-Standard*, pp. B1-B2).

\*Sometimes, even ordinary people become aware of model incoherencies. A reader of *Consumer Reports* (October 2009) sent in a picture of a store that sold sushi and donuts as a peculiar juxtaposition.

### The Power of Imitation

\*One of the 10 themes running through SRV, and by which it is taught, is the power of imitation. Many SRV applications recruit this pedagogic process. The propensity to imitate has strong survival benefit, and therefore has become ‘hard-wired’ in the human psyche. Of course, in order for one party to imitate, there must be a ‘model’ that demonstrates the behavior for the learner to acquire. This has many implications to juxtaposing and grouping people together, and to what one expects models to demonstrate.

Imitation is a human universal, in that one can find the modeling-imitation dynamic everywhere and in all areas of human behavior. That being so, research no longer has to be done to demonstrate that the model-imitation dynamic exists; one needs only to establish whether a particular behavior is being exhibited by persons who have model qualities (such as being admired, having authority, or even only being present and common) in order to be near-certain that their behaviors will be imitated by others who can observe the behavior at issue.

One of the amazing things about the social sciences is that they are not reconciled to the con-

struct of such universals. We can observe this in the fact that endless research gets done on whether one small specific act of modeling will produce imitation. Here is an example. In 2008, it was announced that “research had demonstrated” that teen girls who watch a lot of TV with sexual dialogue and sex behaviors are more likely to get pregnant. (Research says teen pregnancies tied to tastes for sexy TV shows. [2008, November 3]. *Syracuse Post-Standard*, p. A10.) We would add that they are almost certain to be more likely to engage in sexual behavior and have non-marital intercourse. It should not have needed any ‘research’ to demonstrate this; one would only need to establish that impressionable viewers are exposed to models (live, fictional or virtual) to be able to say with near-certainty that there would be a lot of imitation of whatever is being modeled. If the models committed suicide, one would predict that suicide would increase dramatically in those who saw them; if the models walked on their hands, hand-walking would skyrocket; etc.

\*Pinker, S. (2002). *The blank slate: The modern denial of human nature*. New York: Viking Press. This book makes a very compelling point that the recent craze of attributing almost any human aberration or abnormality to genetics is entirely ideologically based, and that when it invokes research, in part it is de facto junk science. The human brain is believed to have not changed in over 100,000 years, and yet permits an incredible range of behaviors to be learned for which the evolving brain had not been specifically selected by the evolutionary process. In turn, all of this means that invoking inheritance violates Occam’s razor in being a vastly less economical and elegant explanation for all sorts of behaviors.

The book also underlines the predominant role played by imitation in the learning of young children.

\*Iacoboni, M. (2008). *Mirroring people: The new science of how we connect with others*. New

York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux. Underlining how hard-wired and ancient the imitation instinct is in humans, it has been found that baby monkeys will imitate human adults. Obviously, the imitation genes evolved millions of years ago in the common ancestor of monkeys and humans.

\*Nadel, J. & Butterworth, G. (Eds.). (1999). *Imitation in infancy*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press. We learn from this book that vastly more research on imitation has been done on children than on adults. And experts on imitation inform us that there are distinct categories of imitation: of object use, of other people’s gestures, of their features or behavior, etc.

\*The drive to imitate is known to be hard-wired in healthy infants, to be very strong throughout childhood and adolescence, and to persist to various degrees throughout life, though much more with people who are impressionable than others. In teenagers, this drive is so intense that some of them will do virtually anything that they see their peers, role models or admired personages do. For instance, when one of their entertainment heroes commits suicide, they may go as far as committing suicide in imitation. In the larger society, we now have a great many so-called copycat crimes, where a new or spectacular form of crime very quickly gets imitated by a lot of impressionable people of poor moral identity. For instance, one type of crime that has increased dramatically is the sending of letter bombs and package bombs to people, obviously inspired by publicity about such crimes.

The obvious lesson from all of this is that the imitative drive can be just as easily channeled toward more adaptive behaviors as toward maladaptive ones. And while it is not possible to control all the modeling to which a person is exposed, it is usually possible to control a great deal of it.

\*Yawning, scientists tell us, is one of the most imitation-evoking behaviors. If someone in a



group yawns, then a large proportion of the other group members soon yawn as well, even if they are not tired. Apparently, an urge to yawn upon seeing others do so is embedded deep in the brain, and is quite unconscious. One theory is that yawning helps a group to synchronize other behaviors (maybe the wake-and-sleep cycle) so as to function more adaptively as a group (*Discover*, June 2001).

\*When British prime minister Tony Blair visited President George W. Bush on his Texas ranch, Blair suddenly abandoned his normal gait and began to swagger and strut like President Bush, and like a cowboy (*Discover*, October 2009). This was attributed to a modeling-imitation effect, facilitated by the physical context. Even powerful figures are not exempt from an imitation dynamic.

\**National Geographic* did a feature on the enterprises of Prince Charles of England as Prince of Wales and Duke of Cornwall. Prince Charles is said to often speak in a “strangled voice,” and many of his estate stewards often fall into the same vocal tone when they speak of their work (Mitchell, S. (2006, May). Duchy of Cornwall. *National Geographic*, 209(6), pp. 96-115). This is a good example of imitating some features of a person one admires, wants to be like, or wants to curry favor from.

### **Evidence of the Power of Expectancies**

\*Many people know of Rosenhan’s famous 1973 study, “On Being Sane in Insane Places,” in which he had sane people check themselves into a mental institution with vague complaints of “hearing voices,” but once admitted, they ceased any pretense of insanity, acted perfectly normal, and even began investigating how the insane people were being treated. Yet the expectancy that anyone who lived in such a place must be insane was so strong that neither the nurses, doctors, nor other staff concluded that they were sane, even though they reported cessation of their symptoms. How-

ever, many people may not be aware that this same trick was employed almost 100 years earlier—in the 1890s—by the first female newspaper reporter, Nellie Bly, who investigated such things as the abysmal working and living conditions of the poor and immigrants. To find out about the conditions of New York City’s institution for poor mentally disordered people, she first feigned a mental disorder, but once she was taken away to the institution, she immediately ceased any pretense of insanity. She protested her sanity repeatedly to personnel, but with no success. Eventually, a lawyer for the newspaper obtained her release (Graves, C.P. [1971]. *Nellie Bly: Reporter for the world*. Champaign, IL: Garrard).

\*People who were told by researchers that it was scientific fact that more people are low in the mood cycle on Mondays were compared to people who were told that the “Monday blues” had been shown to be a myth. In due time, people in the first group reported that they felt worse on Monday while the latter group failed to do so, with a third group acting as a control (*Guardian*, 1 July 1997).

\*One study has shown that a single encouraging letter from one’s physician may help a person significantly reduce their drug intake, even from drugs taken for years and widely considered addictive (Cormack, et al., 1994, reported in Breggin, P.R. & Cohen, D. [1999]. *Your drug may be your problem: How and why to stop taking psychiatric medications*. Reading, MA: Perseus Books). Within a six-month monitoring period, long-term elderly users of benzodiazepines (which include Valium and Librium) reduced their drug use on average by two-thirds compared to a control group, merely by receiving a letter from their general practitioner describing the risks of drug use and suggesting that drugs be gradually reduced and, in time, stopped. Nearly one-fifth of those who received the letter completely stopped drug use.

\*At one time, no women were allowed to serve upon insane men. To many traditionalists, the presence of skilled women nurses in male insane wards was wrenching, and contrary to all their expectancies. But it turned out that the insane men behaved themselves much better with women nurses around, merely on the basis of their expectancies.

Once, at the infamous Bellevue Hospital in New York City, there was a prison ward for 30 insane men. One night, while it was staffed by six former policemen and one short, young pretty nurse, a few of the inmates tried to make a break for it. In terror, the former policemen locked themselves into their staff cage, leaving the nurse outside. However, she calmly and sweetly talked the men into getting to bed. In this case, her expectation triumphed (Selling, L.S. [1940]. *Men against madness*. New York, NY: Greenberg). Also, her mentality would have been the same as that of the practitioners of moral treatment, who believed in the at least residual rationality of the human, and appealed to it.

\*Hollingworth, H.L. (1930; 1931 British ed.). *Abnormal psychology: Its concepts and theories*. London: Methuen. After the Americans stopped shooting at the Battle of New Orleans in 1814, to General Andrew Jackson's amazement, whole rows of apparently dead British soldiers (about 600) began to rise up from the ground. In the face of the withering fire, they had fallen down and played dead. Jackson said that it was like being at the Resurrection on the last day.

Something similar happened at the end of World War I. The enlisted (less educated, less intelligent) troops of all the major armies suffered very high rates of hysterical incapacitations: functional paralyses, hysterical blindness, etc. All sorts of things were tried out to 'cure' these men and restore them to service, with only limited success. Many had to be sent home and mustered out. But all of a sudden, when armistice was declared, thousands of soldiers suddenly recovered their 'health.' Hollingworth (1930) called the

armistice "a grand piece of psychotherapy." We can link this phenomenon to the power of expectancy. The expectancy of being wounded or killed had caused the functional impairments, and the expectancy of being able to go home whole had overcome them.

\*It may be craze-hype, or it may be true, what an increasing number of psychologists are claiming to 'prove,' namely that intense social expectancies can significantly modify mental qualities that were once thought to be either genetically hard-wired, or at least unalterably established, such as personality, introversion/extroversion, neuroticism, ruthlessness, etc., etc. *Newsweek* (1 December 2008, p. 14) carried a column on this. We have not seen much of this in real life, but if true, it would testify to the power of expectancies and mindsets.

### Integration/Segregation

\*According to *Time* magazine's end-of-the-year issue (December 28, 2009-January 4, 2010), "the most underreported story of 2009" was that African-American and Latino schoolchildren in the US were (as of 2009) more segregated from the majority of society than at any time since 1968, when Martin Luther King Jr. was killed, with 40% of them attending schools where the student body is between 90-100% "students of color."

\*In 1954, the prominent psychologist Gordon Allport offered a so-called 'contact theory' that claimed attitudes of a mainstream group toward negatively-stereotyped outsiders would improve if the two parties had direct interpersonal contact. The theory was widely embraced and put into practice, especially by trying to arrange contacts between African-Americans and Caucasians. Dr. Wolfensberger believed the theory and practiced it by trying to arrange contacts between members of the public and people with mental disorders or with mental retardation. (However, when—after such a contact—several visitors to a service for the

mentally retarded vomited and fainted, he also gave up faith in the validity of contact theory.)

In essence, normalization and SRV theory replaced contact theory with the thesis that attitudes of members of one group toward another would improve only if the contacts they had were positively experienced. The entire integration scheme of SRV is based on this assertion. All the integration-related ratings of the PASSING tool (at least nine) that parses SRV into its components, specify that conditions must be such as to increase the likelihood that members of valued classes will experience their different kinds of contacts with members of devalued classes positively, and especially by being enabled to see the previously devalued party positively imaged.

Allport and his followers in time modified the contact theory (see review in Novak & Rogan, 2010), by specifying that contact had to be intense, that members of the two classes had to interact in equal status, that attitudes improved if mutual goals were pursued, and if authority figures endorsed integration. But they never discovered the obvious: the contacts had to be experienced as positive. Nor did Novak and Rogan refer to SRV as a relevant and successful successor of contact theory. Instead, they tortured contact theory in an effort to achieve greater social integration of handicapped people in employment settings, when use of the SRV model would have been vastly superior (Novak, J.A. & Rogan, P.M. [2010]. Social integration in employment settings: Application of intergroup contact theory. *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, 48[1], 31-51).

\*Page, S.E. (2007). *The difference: How the power of diversity creates better groups, firms, schools, and societies*. Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press. In SRV teaching, we identify 13 factors (having to do with group size and composition) that contribute to whether a grouping is likely to be, or not to be, social-role valorizing, and especially integrating.

Many of these factors have to do with how 'diverse' a group is. The politically correct culture claims that the more diverse a group is, the better, which is of course a mindless absurdity. At a certain point of diversity, groups tip over into total disfunctionality: no one shares anything with any other group member except their humanity, members cannot even communicate anymore with each other, and the assimilation potential of the group is overwhelmed.

There is research that tells us that the more diverse a group becomes, the less likely are members to be satisfied, share common goals, to attend group meetings, or to stay with the organization—if that is what is involved—because they are less committed to the organization.

\*As recently as June 2010, not only was there a designated day for physically and mentally handicapped people to attend a county fair, when no other people would be there—called Special Times for Special People—but the day was also publicized in the newspaper with a picture showing an adult male holding a child's stuffed dog. The accompanying article said this year's event "attracted people ages 2 to 82" (*Syracuse Post-Standard*, 1 July 2010, p. A4). The founder of this event said it was too difficult for "the disabled" to maneuver around throngs of people. We understand that navigating through crowded public venues can be difficult, even for people who do not use wheelchairs; but many mentally handicapped people do not use wheelchairs. And the huge segregated congregation of devalued people is very image-degrading.

### Role-Valorization & Valued Roles

\*Actress Shirley Jones said, "After I won the Oscar, my salary doubled, my friends tripled, my children became more popular at school, my butcher made a pass at me, and my maid hit me up for a raise" (*Newsweek*, 8 February 2010, p. 49). This is a typical result of a significant role-valorization.

\*The famous French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss became so infirm that he was carried up to the stage in order to give his lectures (Kidder, T. [2004]. *Mountains beyond mountains*. New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks. [p. 59]). This illustrates once again that a valued role can override the problems that come with an impairment.

\*Frédéric Bilodeau is a 20-year-old French Canadian who has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair much of the time. He has a good mind, and is good at painting, but speaks very slowly. He was shot into a very prominent positive role in February 2010 when his brother Alexandre was an Olympic gold medal-winner in the mogul skiing competition. Because everywhere Alexandre was filmed, photographed or interviewed, Fred was too, he came off well, and achieved a glamorous role as well.

This is an instance of gaining a positive role (brother of an Olympic champion) by not much more than association. (Brown, I. [2010, February 20]. 'We built the family around him.' *Globe & Mail*, pp. F1, F6; source item from Zana Lutfiyya).

\*A 1999 Canadian film with the clever but problematic title "Working Like Crazy" reports on three businesses run by "consumer survivors," as they call themselves. These are people who were once (and could be in the future) clients/victims of the shrink service system; this terminology apparently has superseded the earlier language of "psychiatry survivors" and is part of the "mad pride" movement. The three businesses are A-Way Courier, in which the couriers ("consumer survivors") pick up and deliver packages by using the Toronto bus and subway system; a cleaning business, which cleans offices after hours; and a restaurant/deli, which failed though apparently the film does not explain why. However, why it failed would be good to analyze; for instance, the restaurant business is notoriously difficult to succeed in, and the failure rate is very high, as is the stress level even when the operation is successful;

personnel are involved in much face-to-face contact with their customers, and when customers are unhappy with their food and/or the service, they can be very unpleasant; etc. All these factors could make such a service operated by people with mental problems even less likely to succeed.

The employees work many more hours per week than they get paid for, because if they were paid for more, they could lose their public pension (ODSP, which stands for Ontario Disability Support Program). But at least one worker interviewed in the film explained that if they only worked the hours they were paid for, then they would end up sitting at home the rest of the week, watching the television, and probably back on mind drugs. This underlines yet once again the points we have been trying to make about the value of unpaid work, and how foolish it is to be overly concerned about payment vis-à-vis all the other benefits of work even when it is not paid. (See article by Wolfensberger & Thomas in the December 2009 issue of this *Journal*.)

The film also illustrates that, unlike what some human service progressives say, there can be many benefits even to work that is segregated, i.e., work in businesses where all the workers are impaired or otherwise devalued. In fact, such businesses can have certain advantages, including that they may be more tolerant of the quirks and unpredictability/unreliability of people with certain impairments—quirks that could mean the end of employment for the same person in an ordinary business. Also, people with some conditions or impairments may actually fare better in work where they have only limited contact with other people (e.g., as after-hours office cleaners rather than as cleaners who work when an office is open and busy). Also, a business that employs only devalued people does not necessarily have to congregate them together, depending what the nature of the work is. For instance, in a courier business, the employees are each out on their own running to and from many different locations, and may only be congregated together very briefly (e.g., when

they stop at the office to pick up the next job), and/or with very few others. And even a business that employs only devalued people can still mediate integration with valued people, as in the courier business where the employees meet ordinary people on the buses and subways, at the offices where they pick up and deliver items, etc.

A viewing and analysis of the film could make a good project for an SRV study group; a lengthy written analysis could be a project for a student (e.g., in a college course on SRV), and of course would be welcome content for this *Journal* (source material from Stephen Tiffany).

\*In some parts of Europe, it once was possible for a competency-limited person to take an unpaid work role as a so-called “Voluntär,” i.e., working at will for a farm, business, property-owner, with wide discretion as to what the Voluntär would do, how much or when. The Voluntär role was something like a least-worst line of role defense.

Some German states around 1900 paid craftsmen a subsidy if they employed a retarded worker. This seems to have many advantages over our current so-called “supported employment” arrangements.

\*According to the *Ottawa Citizen* (12 June 2010), and research by Statistics Canada, people are least likely to commit suicide if they are in occupations that provide “strong social roles” (source item from Jacques Pelletier).

\*The obituary of a severely retarded young man ascribed to him a very unusual role: “soldier of God” (*Syracuse Post-Standard*, 20 June 2010).

\*A man with Down’s syndrome just out of high school wanted to help out as a volunteer at local radio and television stations (that’s the unpaid adult work that we have discussed in earlier issues of this *Journal*), but they would only give him simple tasks such as emptying trash bins. So he began to take non-credit courses at a local community college, and eventually became a

volunteer disc jockey at the campus radio station, for 1½ hours per day per week. He is now saving money to buy the equipment so that he can own his own DJ business. However, he spends most of the rest of his time in a “day habilitation” program, rather than working and going to school (*ARISE News*, Spring 2010).

\*Without mentioning SRV, an article on addiction in older people in the *American Association of Retired Persons Magazine* (October 2010) made a big SRV point by emphasizing that “addicts are neighbors, friends, grandmothers, husbands” (p. 46).

\*The annual Muscular Dystrophy Association fund-raising telethon, featuring Jerry Lewis, has long been problematic because of the pity-charity imagery and clown imagery that has suffused it. However, in recent years, it has made some improvements in its interpretations of impaired people. For instance, a several-page article in a Sunday magazine (*Parade*, 5 September 2010) highlighted a young woman who has the roles of wife and mother, daughter, college graduate and works at a job in marketing.

A shorter article on three men with muscular dystrophy in their mid-20s who are musicians depicted each one with his instrument. One is also an architecture student, another is studying to be a music producer. What is unclear is whether they only play together, in a “handicapped band” called Wheel’n and Deal’n, or whether they also play with non-handicapped musicians. ♪

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