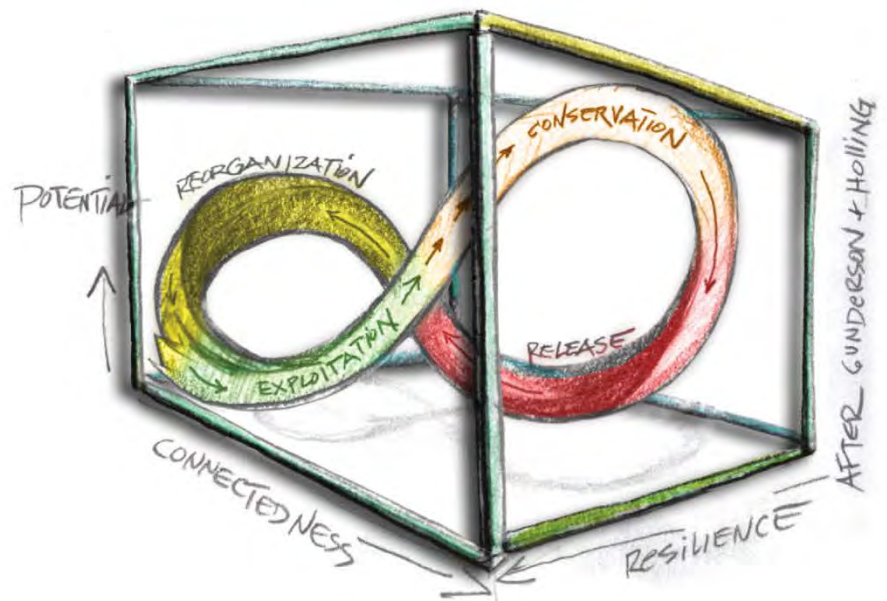


RESILIENCE: HEAD AND HEART JOURNEY

Marv Baldwin



An essay contribution to
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ABOUT GARY HUBBELL CONSULTING CONVERSATION

Annually, Gary Hubbell Consulting convenes and hosts a small hand-picked group of social sector professionals from throughout North America for three days of intense dialogue and critical thinking. We strive to create a thought-provoking, mind-opening, and stimulating conversation about philanthropy, organizational leadership, and social sector change. This deep exploration of the nature and challenges of the philanthropic environment is intended to engage, inform, and inspire senior leaders to be catalysts for change in their own organizations and communities of influence. With each *GHC Conversation*, we seek to establish the seeds of a continuing and enriching network that nourishes us as individuals and helps each of us change how we converse, inspire, and seek



PARTICIPANT BIO

Marv Baldwin

CEO, Foods Resource Bank

Marv Baldwin has served as President and CEO of Foods Resource Bank (FRB) since February 1, 2005. Marv's initial experience with FRB in 2002 was as a volunteer.

FRB raises funds in the US to support agriculturally based food security programs in the developing world. FRB supports farmers in 30 countries around the world by engaging U.S. community growing projects to raise the money and awareness needed to support people in their efforts toward lasting solutions. FRB's model honors and respects local customs and agricultural approaches both in the US and overseas allowing all those involved to learn from one another. FRB's grassroots breadth and diversity provides ample opportunity for all those who willingly open themselves to be transformed. Marv is especially grateful for the many teachers and friends he has come to know through FRB.

Prior to joining FRB, Marv was a district sales manager for Nalco Co. In his various roles at Nalco, he always enjoyed working alongside other staff and customers to address mechanical, operational, biological and chemical challenges in water using systems.

Marv was born and raised in Saginaw, Michigan; graduated from Hope College in Holland, Michigan; resided for a time in Costa Mesa, California, Laguna Hills, California, Nashville, Tennessee and now lives in Western Springs, Illinois, with his wife Amy and their three children.

In addition, Marv enjoys a variety of activities including painting, writing and reading. He is involved with a number of organizations locally and nationally as a volunteer and board director.

This is Marv's fifth *GHC Conversation*.



Resilience: Head and Heart Journey

Marv Baldwin

Each day there are moments when we might embrace a new thing, a new idea, a new way. Resilience is maximized and enhanced when we are ready to see the New. I often observe the New in conversation, travel, prayer, in short; relationship. Our work to be resilient can be enhanced by our preparation. At times the New comes to us when we are alone, at other times, as has been the case in *Conversation*, we have witnessed the New together.

Being open to the New is what brings resilience. We can work on our openness and willingness. We can prepare our beings to accept the New. Within these paragraphs are several shared moments and some solitary times when the New seemed to break through; sometimes within, sometimes on the side, sometimes brought forth by, *Conversation*.

Although we have opportunities daily to see the New and be energized and inspired by it, it is through deliberate action that we often glimpse or experience the New. *Conversation* has been a deliberate attempt in many ways to try to recognize the New. As a courageous leader Gary could see from early on that the New was "among and within" us and has been faithful to bring forth this platform and maintain it for 5 years. His effort as well as those who have participated in conversation over the years have been instrumental in my transformation and have helped our organization (FRB) develop our learning culture and accept our transformational role in our world. May this writing convey both my deep gratitude and a warm invitation to explore the New together both during *Conversation 2013* and beyond.

Embracing the tension

I recall the morning when Gary arrived with what might be called his "tension diagram". He was like a kid in a candy store as he explained an overnight epiphany about holding perceived opposites in tension. In hindsight it may not seem as big a moment now as it did then but the freedom, creative energy and excitement of that moment was palpable. I can clearly recall the place in the room we met where he made the drawing and explained the dawning of this revelation. His mind had been transformed, a New thing was happening and he was able to share both the revelation with the group and bring energy to the conversation. Often I am a part of discussions which include great efforts to avoid tensions. The moment Gary embraced and shared the tension we were struggling with provides me with an important reminder to embrace tension long enough to find the New.

"How do we?" balanced with "should we?"

It was a moment of awakening for me on several fronts but mostly when I realized the power of challenging myself with the question of 'should I act' rather than 'how should I act' struck me. It started dawning on me the night before I asked the question "should we?" as I read an article about Chinese culture as I was searching for other ways to approach our thinking. I realized that to change our assumed frameworks, to find new starting points, was key to opening up moments for the New to emerge. The new framing that began for me that day has been a transformational moment in my life. I also realized what a powerful question "should we?" is in our western culture.

What we need is here, the future is now.

Conversation gets our attention and there have been numerous nights during conversation that I have lied awake or not slept well, processing the many discussions of the day. One night I awoke with the words clearly in my mind "what we need is here, the future is now". If I could describe the peace, energy, thankfulness and knowing that came with those words I would. Bottom line, those words have guided me many days since then. Presence is that all encompassing word that addresses the whole saying. There is a great power when we can be present. The New is right here. The transformation we seek is at hand and we may be made New. Presence contains infinite wisdom and knowledge too. We spend a great deal of time deliberating our past and playing scenarios about the future. Often our anxiety gets the best of us individually and collectively. We must, if we are to become more resilient, learn to be more present. Being present to heart thinking is a traditional way to do so. When in doubt, we can turn to our hearts for peace, presence, guidance and a core of love. That which is most personal is most universal and that which is most present is most eternal. I am thankful for the places conversation has taken me.... Us.

"the Heart takes us places we don't necessarily want to go." - Angela Boss, FRB Staff

The Dimensionality of Conversation or the Dimensionality of Communication

Dimensionality is a word that I thought I might have made up but since the spell checker accepts it, I'm not sure who to credit it to! Several years ago I was captured by a Scott Peck book entitled the Different Drum. It had a huge section about the dynamics of conversation in groups which I found most intriguing. The details could be a whole paper so will just share that I have found a truth in the progress (process?) of conversation and have found many examples over the years that highlight various ways people in conversation knowingly and unknowingly take the group to a deeper place.

Fast forward to conversation 2010 when I was once again awake early one morning with the additional ideas that had been percolating during the day as our conversation had ebbed and flowed, reopened and surfaced, etc. The idea was that there are many dimensions to conversation that can be recognized, even observed and some can be named. Again, too much for a paper like this as the focus here is about those moments of presence that bring about the New. That was a moment for me in the early hours of the morning and the energy available to me to pull together the thoughts and ideas, insights and learning was in short awesome! I'm sure that aha moment was not unlike moments many have had but I guess ultimately, I hope to live for more of those moments and believe we can and will.

Perhaps a way to approach this concept is to be with the conversation within the conversation within the conversation... Love is there.

Getting through the mandorla...

During the conversation around the mandorla a few years ago, there was a strong sense to get through it. Perhaps it is the contrarian in me but I sensed such peace about staying in that "middle place". Hanging out in the threshold as it were. In retrospect, I think I see the mandorla as a place of humility where presence may abound if we pay attention. In the mandorla, we don't know who we are, we are in unfamiliar space, new rules certainly pertain, yet we don't know if they exist nor what they are. We hasten to move through the uncomfortableness of the unknown as we crave the facade of control and thus want to go there. Yet in the unknown, our minds are not usable like they are in familiar territory. Our beings must therefore be open in other ways to receive input. Learning may occur in this space, if we are patient. We might hear from the divine if we give ourselves time. *(If you're like me, you're probably trying to rush through reading this and 12 other essays on the plane... If you can take a moment, allow yourself to be in the middle, breath in deeply, allowing yourself a few minutes to "be uncertain")*

Sometimes to get to truth, to find wisdom, and understanding, we need to either stop our thinking, disrupt it a bit or distract it. The average person's mind has more than 20,000 thoughts per day and of course it is complicated by multiple feelings etc. Our inability to process all those thoughts, makes them in essence, noise. As we discover ways to "turn down the volume" (and there are many: meditation, prayer, devotional reading, exercise, music, art, poetry, etc.) we will find that luminal space, that threshold or middle place to be present to the New.

Difficulty in trying to imagine and embrace a preferred future... Why?

When they rolled out the original name, I almost gasped "family by choice". As a "skeptic by choice" in that moment, I was choosing to not see the New they had allowed to emerge in their break out group's conversation. The "preferred future" described during conversation 2012 was, ironically, almost my (perhaps our?) undoing. It seemed in hindsight that their group had become loving and present enough to embrace a preferred future but I (and I think I was not alone...) had a tough time getting to that New space with them. In hindsight, I am a bit sheepish that it took me so long to recognize the magic they had found together. I have only one legitimate excuse; I had so much invested in 2 of the other scenarios I had hardened myself against other possibilities.

They had written about a beautiful, visionary future we could all aspire to if we so choose and yet, I was at first, afraid. Ironically I had previously written about the difficulty we have as humans accepting and then working towards a "positive" vision, a preferred future.

After some time in the conversation, it was apparent to me I was missing the magic they had glimpsed. They were passionate about it! They saw something I wanted to see, taste, smell, take in. They clearly had a glimpse of the New and after a struggle, I was able to accept the gift they brought to the table. My hope is that we all might be more open, more often, to glimpse the New. May we each abide in a state of willingness.

Moments of silence, listen to the silence.

There have been those moments when the silence has said much more than the words in between. I am now more mindful of those moments each day. In a sense, a brief mandorla between two words or phrases. The relationship, one of the many dimensionalities of the conversation. Listen, can you hear the truth,

.... the wisdom, in the silence, in between.

"silence is the language of God, all else is just poor translation." - Rumi

In conclusion... And beginning anew.

And so a new moment begins. Now is the time. I am here. You are here. There is great power in the present moment. Perhaps Resilience by another name. We have already begun the process, we have all glimpsed the New. Do we dare dream the New can be more pervasive, more resilient, more present?

It is here, now, we can feel it in our hearts.

Our willingness prepares each of us,
our families,
our communities,
our organizations and
our world...

To be open to receive the New. In the acceptance of the New, we find Resilience, we discover Hope, we uncover Peace and we become a vessel for both the giving and receiving of Love.

I have been inspired and guided by so many people and events through our conversations, interactions, readings, observations, prayers, etc. Thank you! May our journey together continue to reveal inspiration, learning, peace, joy, love and the New.

Respectfully submitted by, Marv Baldwin, February 28, 2013