



Review:

Who Dialogues? (and when and where and how?)

I think "Who Dialogues?" begins to answer at least two important needs: to see how dialogic thinking and practices actually play out in multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural contexts, and to get an inside view on the process of practitioners' reflection on their own experiences. It's written in an easily-accessible style (no academic turgidity here) and offers questions to ponder and exercises that can be used "in the field" right away. Beginning with participants' mini-biographies helps the reader to better locate and understand the comments and exercises offered later in the book. As we read, we imagine being in conversation with real people who have come to their interest in dialogue from hard-fought personal experience and deep thinking, not just idealized aspirations.

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The other thing that stays deeply with me is the Kenya story of "one of the DFNG members who went to the conference in Germany" (Jeffrey?). There's something very profound and powerful about a group's willingness to take actions to enhance life made possible by a practitioner's willingness to understand and honor their ideas about death. I wanted to know much more about how he created the relationships that enabled him to enter in to that level of understanding. There are many things I wanted to learn more about. (So I want to say, "More! More!"). One of them is the foundation of spiritual commitment and practice that informs many of the participants' involvement in dialogue. I want to ask them about "pivotal moments" in their practice when they were especially aware of the spiritual dimension; how they defined it and knew it to be present, etc. I want to know more of their thinking about the effects of dialogue on human development, and of the effects of development on the quality of dialogue. I would like to hear a more far-ranging conversation about facilitation dilemmas. The example given was terrific, but could be just the beginning.

Thanks for providing contact information. There are three people whom I intend to follow up with to learn more. And thanks for your generous words in your Acknowledgement. Not necessary, but appreciated nonetheless.



—Robert R. Stains, Jr., Vice President, Public Conversations Project