

## SEVEN STAGES OF *DEEP-DIALOGUE/CRITICAL-THINKING*

Following are seven stages of **Deep-Dialogue/Critical-Thinking** that a person can go through if s/he persists. The photos are an attempt to visualize the characteristics of each stage. The text was developed by Prof. Ashok Gangadean [agangade@haverford.edu](mailto:agangade@haverford.edu) and Prof. Leonard Swidler [dialogue@temple.edu](mailto:dialogue@temple.edu); the photos were created by Prof. Ingrid Shafer [ih@ionet.net](mailto:ih@ionet.net).

### STAGE ONE

#### RADICAL ENCOUNTERING OF DIFFERENCE *SELF FACES THE OTHER*

This 1<sup>st</sup> encounter comes with a certain shock, a realization of an Other, a different way of life, a different worldview, an alien Other that resists, interrupts, disrupts my settled pattern of interpretation. With this primal encounter there is a new realization that my habits of mind cannot make sense of this Other. This radical encounter with Difference (a different world, a different way of making sense of and experiencing the world) is disconcerting, sometimes threatening, and evokes a vulnerability to this alien presence. I have a new sense of delimitation and I feel challenged to change, to revise my way of relating to this Other. I realize now that my habit of translating the Other into *my* pattern of “minding,” of appropriating the Other to *my* worldview, is dysfunctional. I am forced toward a *self-critical-thinking*. So I face a sudden silence, pause, opening (an open horizon of uncertainty and risk. I must make a decision to move forward) or draw back.



## STAGE TWO

### CROSSING OVER, LETTING GO AND ENTERING THE WORLD OF THE OTHER *SELF TRANSFORMED THROUGH EMPATHY*

After the initial shock and realization that I now face an alien world, a worldview very different from my own, I feel challenged to inquire, investigate, engage and enter this new world) to engage in *critical-thinking*. As I open my Self to this Other I realize that I need to stand back and distance myself from my former habits and patterns of minding the world. I begin to realize that this other world organizes and processes the world very differently from my way. I realize that I must learn new habits and ways of interpretation to make sense of this different world. I must learn a “new language.” Indeed, I must translate myself into a different form of life that sees the world differently. This involves a bracketing of my prejudices.



## STAGE THREE

### INHABITING AND EXPERIENCING THE WORLD OF THE OTHER *SELF TRANSFORMED INTO THE OTHER*

I begin to feel a new and deep empathy for my new habitat; I want to let myself go ) free myself to enter, experiment, learn and grow in this new way of being ) to embrace *critical-thinking*. I hold on to my prior views as much as I can, but I do advance in a conservative fashion. Still, I experience an excitement in discovering, in inhabiting a new, and different worldview. I have a new realization of an-Other, an alternative reality and form of life. But in the end I realize this is not my home.



## STAGE FOUR

### CROSSING BACK WITH EXPANDED VISION *SELF RETURNS HOME WITH NEW KNOWLEDGE*

I now cross back, return, to my own world, bringing back new knowledge of how to think and act (*critical-thinking*) and may even wish to adopt/adapt some of it for myself. As a result of this Primary Encounter with the world of the Other, I realize that there are other ways of understanding reality. I am therefore open to rethinking how I see myself, others and the world. I encounter my Self and Culture anew, with a newly opened mind. My encounter with radical difference now challenges my former Identity, and everything begins to appear in a new light. There now begins a dramatic deepening of my sense of my Self, my Identity, my Ethnicity, my Life-world, my Religion, my Culture... There is no return to my former unilateral way of minding.



## STAGE FIVE

### DIALOGICAL/CRITICAL AWAKENING: A RADICAL PARADIGM-SHIFT *SELF INWARDLY TRANSFORMED*

As a result of this new encounter with Self, when I cross back from my deep encounter with an Other I begin to experience a profound shift in all aspects of my world (in my inner experience, in my encounter with others, in my relating to the world. I begin to realize that my encounter with the Other has shaken the foundation of my former worldview, my former identity. For now that I am mindful of the living reality of other worlds, other perspectives, I can no longer return to my former identity and forget this living presence of the Other. Indeed, I now begin to realize that there are many other worlds, other forms of life, other perspectives that surround me. I now open to a plurality of other worlds and perspectives and this irrevocably changes my sense of Self. I feel transformed to a deeper sense of relation and connection with my ecology. I feel more deeply rooted in this experience of relationality and community. I now see that my true identity is essentially connected with this expansive network of relations with Others. This is the ignition of the Dialogical/Critical Awakening



## STAGE SIX

### THE GLOBAL AWAKENING: THE PARADIGM-SHIFT MATURES *SELF RELATED TO SELF, OTHERS, THE WORLD*

In my transformed Dialogical/Critical Awakening I discover a deeper common ground between the multiple worlds and perspectives that surround me. I have a new sense that Self and Others are inseparably bound together in a boundless inter-relational web. I realize that multiplicity and diversity enriches my Self and my World. I now see that all worlds are situated in a common ground of reality and that radical differences are nevertheless situated in a field of Unity. I experience three related dimensions of Global Dialogical/Critical Awakening:

a) An ever deepening discovery of Self: I become aware of a deep inner dialogue within my Self. I discover a rich multiplicity and diversity of perspectives within my own inner world. In this inner dialogue I feel increasingly more deeply rooted and grounded in my world. My Identity is enriched with multiplicity and I experience a more potent sense of my uniqueness as I celebrate my expanded world of relationality with Others and with the Ecology.

b) A dynamic dialogue opens with Others in my Community: As my new inner dialogue and critical-thinking evolves I find myself in a new and transformed relation with others who share my world, my tradition, my religion, my culture. This new phase of relations with my peers can be disorienting and disconcerting, for as I now dramatically grow in my Identity I find myself in an estranged distance from many of my peers, even as I discover a deeper affinity and embrace of my community, my *polis*. I face a new turbulence (miscommunication and misunderstanding with my colleagues) and a challenging and dramatic dialogue unfolds in my *polis*.

c) A Global Awakening emerges in all aspects of my life: As this inner and outer dialogue/critical-thinking matures I realize that my understanding of my world enters a new "global" light: I realize that I am surrounded with many worldviews. I enter a global horizon and a global consciousness in which inter-religious, inter-cultural, inter-ideological, inter-disciplinary, inter-personal dialogues abound in all directions. I now have a new globalized sense of reality) a dialogical domain in which multiple alternative worlds are situated in dynamic ever-deepening relations. With this understanding comes a new attitude to life and to ethics.



## STAGE SEVEN

### PERSONAL AND GLOBAL TRANSFORMING OF LIFE AND BEHAVIOR *SELF LIVES, ACTS IN A NEW GLOBAL DIALOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS*

As this paradigm-shift in my life matures I realize that there is a deep change in all aspects of my life) a new moral consciousness and *a new practice*. As my new dialogical/critical consciousness becomes a *habit* of life I find that my behavior and my disposition to Self and Other has blossomed. I feel a new sense of communion with my Self, with Others and with the Ecology. I realize that the deepest care for my Self essentially involves my care for Others and for the environment. I have a deeper sense of belonging to my world, to my community, and with this a boundless sense of responsibility in all of my conduct. I now realize that I am transformed in the deepest habits of mind and behavior. I find a deeper sense of Self-realization and fulfillment and meaning in my life and my relations with others and the world around me.

