

A Short Introduction – Why Working in Transitional Space Matters

This book is a synthesis of my various formal and informal life-roles, all of which have brought me lessons about how I choose to live in the world. After decades of teaching and consulting, I am sure that the global concerns we face stem from a lack of courageous, emotionally intelligent leaders whose ethics call them to lead for the common good. As one voice among multitudes paying attention to the leadership field, I notice that there is not much available outside change theory/process work that addresses living well in uncertainty while using that space to create imaginative ways forward to better the planet. The wise thinkers and leaders whom I mention in this book bring their own perspectives to this crucial work, and I am grateful for their focus on meaningful leadership beyond techniques to build personal or organizational success. We live in destructive, “addicted-to-power” times, with grave consequences for the health of humanity and the planet. Local countermovements to rising narcissistic and tyrannical leadership occurring worldwide are crucial for the well-being of the planet and all who dwell here. There is urgency to develop a non-violent, effective response in the midst of an increasingly traumatized world population and planet. I don’t have specific fixes, and, indeed, am suspicious of “quick fixes,” having experienced firsthand the general ineffectiveness of such short-term remedies and the long-term problems they sometimes cause. I believe that our conversations and relationships foster alternatives, especially when we are intentional about meeting each other

in the thresholds of uncertainty. I offer a method to evoke such alternatives in groups, teams, organizations, institutions, families and in one's own self.

My method intersects the human imagination through a visual, living metaphor (water), with attention to space (liminality, or transitional space), and focus on role (leadership development) for powerful engagement with what organizational learning theorists call "the emerging future." Here, the theoretical meets the practical, the research meets the "how to" and "why."

Like some of the authors I cite, I am clear that this method is for local participation rather than mega-problem solving on a global scale. Living in liminal space, with all its facets and challenges, is the crucible from which leaders rise as refined, rooted persons, clear about their purpose in their work and relationships. The chapters that follow invite us into the movement of the liminal, the threshold between the present and the future; I hold great hopes that a new imagination and corresponding action will arise, calling for powerful, positive change where we dwell, and making meaning of our work. to make meaning of our work that calls for powerful, positive change where we dwell.