

The Wonder of Interpersonal Relationships Via: Culprits of Division and Bach Family Members as Exemplars of Relating Midst Differences

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When expanding on his initial focus on psychotherapy to the nature and dynamics of groups and even entire civilizations, Sigmund Freud (1929) wrote about the tendency of social systems to separate from one another over minor differences. Considering what he called “the narcissism of small differences,” Freud proposed that the more two groups of people tend to share common perspectives and values, the more likely they are to seek out ways in which they differ from one another and to establish a barrier or create a gap between one another because of the difference.

For Freud, the narcissism shows up as a tendency for human beings to believe (or desire) that they are better than other people. Beginning in childhood, we want to believe that we are “special”—and the world revolves around us. This is what psychoanalysts call “primary narcissism.” If our neighbor seems to be a lot like us, then we are particularly threatened. How can we be “special” if we look like, think like and act like other people. Hence, it is critical that we differentiate ourselves in particular from those people with whom we are most closely aligned.

There is another, related factor that Freud brings into the mix. Having just witnessed the horrors of massive conflict in Europe (World War I) and observing the early rise of Nazi ideology and increase in Anti-Semitism in his society (Vienna), Sigmund Freud began to postulate a death wish (Thanatos) and accompanying aggressive drive. This wish and drive complement the sexual drive (libido) that Freud believed motivates all human behavior. For Freud, the aggressive drive is most likely to be elicited in our relationship with those who are closest to us—especially if they challenge our personal narcissistic sense of being “special.” We hate those whom we resemble. Some psychoanalytically oriented theorists would even suggest that we project our “self-hatred” (formed by negative interactions with our primary caregiver) onto other people. And who better to receive this projection than people who resemble us in some important ways.

Thus, we seek to differentiate ourselves from people who resemble us in important ways. We look for minor differences in our view of the world to justify this differentiation. Evidence of this “narcissism of small differences” is abundant in the multiple differentiation of cultures through the history of European civilization—we need only witness the splintering of the Protestant Church into many sects. Ironically, we see this same splintering of Freud’s psychoanalytic school into multiple factions, competing training programs, and conflicting ideologies. All becomes of minor differences in fundamental psychoanalytic theory and practice.

I propose that Freud was correct in his observation that human beings tend to differentiate themselves from other people with whom they are related as a result of minor differences. We are living in a world where it seems that relationships can’t exist among people who differ from one another with regard to a range of issues—from artistic taste to political perspectives. We demonize those who disagree with us

and polarize our society. While these differences might not be very great, the gulf is great. Little gets done. Aggressive thoughts—and actions—arise. Relationships with our friends are challenged. Even relationships with other members of our family are splintered when this gulf exists. Conversation ceases, conflicts remain unresolved, problems remain unsolved, and decisions are never made. The entire pyramid of effective relationships and collective empowerment crumbles. The pyramid's foundational building blocks of communication, conflict-management, problem-solving, and decision-making cannot bear the weight of this aggressive narcissism (Bergquist, 2003).

Freud might have been right about the tendency of human beings to differentiate themselves from other people based on minor differences; however, was he also correct in proposing that this narcissism is somehow built into the human psyche? Are there factors that exist out there in the world that reinforce and amplify the space between people? I would suggest that there are societal “culprits” who make matters worse. What might these culprits be and how do they make the gulf even greater? In this essay, I identify some of these culprits, engaging a specific model of mid-21st Century challenges—called “VUCA-Plus”.

I don't want to offer only this negative perspective regarding relationships that are shattered by minor differences. I wish to counter with a strong, positive perspective by introducing three examples of relationships that have been sustained (even enriched) in the midst of differences. What have we learned from the exemplars? In this essay, I introduce one of these three exemplars (the Bach Family) and turn to the second and third example in two companion essays. I offer a fourth essay in this series, where I identify some of the specific gulfs that now exist in mid-21st Century life and explore structures, processes and attitudes that encourage collaboration in the midst of major differences in the perspectives, values and actions taken by specific, siloed factions in our society.

The Culprits

Obviously, there are many reasons for the polarization that is now taking place and contributors to the gulf are diverse and multiple in number. However, I propose that there are six specific polarizing challenges that mid-21st Century citizens face as they live and work in their own communities and nations. While the specific nature of these challenges is unique to each person and to each society in our world, they can be grouped as the challenge of volatility (U), uncertainty (U), complexity (C) and ambiguity (A). I would add to these four challenges (commonly labeled “VUCA”) the equally as challenging conditions of turbulence and contradiction that we all encounter every day (Bergquist, 2020).

Taken together, these challenging conditions of VUCA-Plus contribute in a major way to mid-21st Century polarization and a pervasive intolerance of differences. Essentially, the culprit is profound and pervasive anxiety (often called “angst”) associated with the multiple VUCA-Plus conditions (Bergquist, 2020). We know that angst tends to produce what psychologists call “regression” in the functioning of cognitive (thinking) and affective (feeling) processes. Put simply, we turn back the clock of our personal development when we are anxious. We think and feel like we did when young, impressionable and

inexperienced. William Perry (1970), a noted developmental psychologist and counsellor, proposes that we begin to perceive and operate in a world that is Dualistic. There is good and bad, right and wrong, correct and incorrect. There is no grey.

Under these conditions, those who disagree with us and hold a different perception of the world are identified as the “Other.” Barry Oshry (2018) notes that:

. . . our cultural rules are experienced as the way to live, to survive, to be, the cultural behavior of the “other” is experienced as upsetting of our culture, as weakening it, or coarsening it, and, potentially, as threatening its survival. And we react. . . .

. . . we go Tight. We reflexively reject the behavior of the “other,” we judge it negatively, dismiss it, afford it no legitimate place in our culture. Our reflexive dismissal again allows us to avoid the discomfort of dealing with the complexity raised by the “other’s” presence.

It is in the gulf that we find a dualistic distinction drawn between the truth and the false, between the right and the wrong, the good and the bad. Often in the distance across the gulf we observe the menacing “Other”—who is ready to engage in the false, wrong and bad. Angst has not only created the gulf, but also infused with additional anxiety as we confront the “Other” in our nightmares, our myths, our media and, on occasion, our actual interaction with someone who is an “Other.” At this early point in the essay, I wish to enter the gulf and provide a preliminary analysis of this anxiety-driven VUCA-Plus impact. I begin by offering a brief description of each VUCA-Plus challenge and then specifically consider how each contributes to the gulf and polarization between “Me/Us” and “Other.”

In essence, Complexity concerns the many elements and dynamic interaction among elements that have to be considered, while Volatility refers to the rate and shifting rate of change among the elements. The other two terms have to do with epistemology (the way in which knowledge is acquired and reality is defined). Ambiguity concerns the assessment of both the evidence available regarding reality and the meaning assigned to this reality. The fourth term, Uncertainty, is about the stability of any assessment being made regarding reality. Does reality change over a short period of time? Why do an extensive assessment if our world is constantly shifting? VUCA is deservedly becoming the coin-of-the-realm among contemporary organizational analysts. Here is a bit more detail regarding each element:

Volatility

Volatility refers the dynamics of change: its accelerating rate, intensity and speed as well as its unexpected catalysts. It concerns rapid change in an unpredictable manner. The systemic impact centers on the fact that everywhere is changing. What is the personal impact: we are often surprised and unprepared.

Uncertainty

Uncertainty refers to the lack of predictability, the increasing prospects for surprising, “disruptive” changes that often overwhelm our awareness, understanding and ability to cope with events. It concerns a lack of continuity and resulting lack of clarity regarding what is going to happen from day to day. It is hard to plan for the future or even for one or two days from now given that nothing seems to

be permanently in place. This is the systemic impact. The personal impact centers on the requirement that we must keep our schedule and expectations quite flexible given the uncertainty.

Complexity

Complexity entails the multiplex of forces, the apparently inconsistent information flow, the sensitive interdependence of everything we touch, leading to the sense of confusion in which it's hard to make smart decisions, steeped as we are in the moving dance of reality. It concerns the presence of many different things and events that simultaneously impact life and work. Systemically, we find that it is very hard to make sense of or even find meaning in that which is occurring every day. At the personal level we find that a considerable amount of time must be devoted to figuring out what is happening before making decisions or taking actions.

Ambiguity

Ambiguity is the 'haziness' in which cause-and-effect are hard to attribute, relativity seems to trump established rules, weighing heavily on our ability to hold inconsistent data and still function and make choices. It concerns the presence of many things and events happening that are quite confusing and often not very easy to observe clearly and consistently. The Systemic impact centers on the fact that we can't trust the accuracy of that which we see or hear or what "experts" tell us. It all gets very personal. We often must look and listen a second and third time to ensure that what is seen or heard is accurate.

Turbulence

Some things are moving rapidly, while other things are moving in a cyclical manner, not moving at all or moving in a chaotic manner. At the systemic level we find ourselves navigating through four subsystems that are all operating at the same time: (1) rapid change (flowing segment of the stream), (2) cyclical change (the stream's whirlpools), (3) stability/non-change (the "stagnant" segment of the stream), and (4) chaos (the segment of a stream existing between the other three segments). At the personal level, we find that this condition requires a search for balance and direction—which in turn requires ongoing attention. We must be both diligent and agile.

Contradiction

Messages are being delivered all the time that are valid—but they often point in quite different directions. Contradiction concerns the frequent presence of radically different constructions and interpretations of reality and the differing meaning assigning to the reality that is being constructed.

In this VUCA-Plus world, credible advice is being offered by people and institutions that can be trusted—but the advice is often inconsistent. This is the systemic challenge. We must be ready to change our mind or at least be open to new perspectives and ideas. This is the personal challenge.

Implications of VUCA-Plus Conditions

In our mid-21st Century world, we must communicate, resolve conflicts, solve problems and make decisions under challenging VUCA-Plus conditions. There is ambiguity, uncertainty and contradictory. Polarizing values are present making thoughtful consideration and caring compassion difficult to sustain; furthermore, the information we share, conflict we confront, problems we face and decisions we must

make are subject to frequent review and modification as we try to navigate our volatile, complex and often turbulent VUCA world.

Volatility

It is hard to think and work when everything is swirling all around us. It is hard to navigate in a storm. Goal setting is often unrealistic and subject to review and revision from multiple perspectives. The ad hoc character of our VUCA-Plus world often produces a feeling of infinite possibility and an unrealistic sense that the sky's the limit. Failure and disenchantment frequently are associated with a lack of realistic goal setting unless the process of designing and managing an organization includes not only re-examination of context and strategy but also the regular re-examination of goals.

Another frequent problem we faced in a VUCA-Plus world concerns the complex interpersonal and task related skills that are needed to run such an organization. We are often “in over our heads” when seeking to build and sustain a viable working relationship with other people. When this sense of “drowning” is prevalent we look for someone to blame or grasp onto someone else who is drowning with us. Rationality is replaced by a focus on survival.

Thus, it seems that we must enter the challenging world of VUCA-Plus with several critical skills. First, is the ability to think in a careful, systemic manner about the world swirling about us. It is easy to think quickly with nothing but a desire to make the anxiety go away. We are fleeing the real and imagined lions identified by Robert Sabolsky (2004) in his study of stress—but to little avail. Second, we must acknowledge this VUCA-Plus-associated challenges. We must be mindful of the stress and find ways to reduce it while being proactive in our response to the VUCA-Plus challenges.

Finally, our problem-solving and decision-making in a VUCA-Plus environment must be done in collaboration with other people. We are not strong enough to fight about the VUCA-Plus challenges alone. It is in collaborative dialogue with other important people in our life that we find the courage, clarity and strength to not just make sense of our mid-21st Century world, but also learn from the VUCA-Plus challenges and find nourishment and sense of self-purpose in successfully confronting these challenges. Yet, it is in the need to seek collaboration that we are likely to discover differences that make collaboration difficult. It is hard to collaborate when we are afraid.

Uncertainty

There is a lack of predictability in our contemporary world—and increasing prospects of surprising and "disruptive" changes that often overwhelm our awareness, understanding and ability to cope with events. Under these conditions of uncertainty, we are desperate to make sense of and finding meaning in what is occurring in the present reality (*Assimilation*). By contrast, we also recognize that we must make changes (*Accommodation*) by adjusting or reworking our existing framework. This perspective concerns learning from and adapting to what is occurring in the present reality. As assimilators, we want to take a strong stance regarding our current beliefs and actions while immediately dismissing the beliefs and actions of those who are disagreeing with us. We “know” that accommodation is necessary, but also know it is difficult and fortify against this painful requirement of change. The required “cognitive stretch” is indeed challenging.

Complexity

This condition of complexity entails the multiplex of forces, the apparently contradictory information flow, the sensitive interdependence of everything we touch. Complexity leads to a sense of confusion in which it's hard to make smart decisions and to take in alternative perspectives. We must somehow be *Clear minded* in the midst of confusion. The central concern is sorting out what is most relevant and most easily confirmed.

The opposing perspective on Complexity would center on being *Open minded* in the midst of confusion. From this perspective, we would be primarily concerned with recognizing and holding on to the multiple realities that imping on us from those people with whom we disagree. The slow thinking introduced by Daniel Kahneman (2013) incorporates both clarity of thought (identifying and setting aside biases and sloppy heuristics) and open-mindedness (consideration of alternative perspectives, practices and options). However, In the midst of pervasive anxiety associated with complex conditions (and the other VUCA-Plus conditions), it is difficult to slow down our thinking.

Ambiguity

The condition of ambiguity concerns the 'haziness' in which cause-and-effect are assessed. Causes are hard to attribute. It is hard to navigate in a fog. Relativity seems to trump established rules. Conditions of ambiguity weigh heavily on our ability to hold contradictory data and still function and make choices. From one perspective, Ambiguity requires that we focus on *Engaging* the Haziness. The primary concern is with establishing a viable "truth" and "reality" upon which one can base and guide their actions. There is another perspective that stands in opposition. This perspective would focus on *Tolerating* the haziness. The primary concern would center on being patient and willing to remain in a state of "limbo" until such time as the haze clears and actions can be taken. We need to tolerate this ambiguity if we are to somehow listen to and even consider the validity of differing beliefs and perspectives.

Appropriate strategies must be applied in addressing the ambiguity polarity. It is a matter of introducing multiple templates for assessing the nature of any challenging issue. One of these templates concerns the identification and analysis of both the immediate issue (the figure) and the context within which this issue is situated (the ground). A second template concerns the special distance from which a specific issue is being addressed. It should be examined close up (as an intimate narrative) (proximal perspective) and at a distance (as a broad landscape) (distal perspective). The third template involves temporal distance. The issue should be examined as it is currently being experienced (the present time) and as it will probably be (or could be) present at some point ahead of us (the future time). A convening issue can be viewed from multiple perspectives which allows for both immediate engagement and tolerance of certain immediate circumstances—as well as longer term and “bigger picture” engagement and tolerance.

Turbulence

As I have noted, this condition exists in the "white water" world where four states of change intermingle: rapid change, cyclical change, non-change (stagnation) and chaotic change. One perspective focuses on *Centering* in the midst of multiple conditions of change. This perspective primarily concerns a

search for and finding the core, orienting place that provides one with balance and direction. This balance is critical if we are to remain stable while adsorbing differing points of view. As the same time, we must embrace a perspective that focuses on *Agility* in the midst of multiple conditions of change. From this perspective, we must allow for and participate in multiple points of balance and direction in our work and life. We must “dance with the differences.” This requires that we be “light of foot” in our relationships with other people, while also be grounded (and balanced) in a firm set of principles and values.

In keeping with the white-water metaphor, we must anticipate what is likely to happen around the next bend in the river—and recognize that alternative perspectives might needed to successfully navigate this next bend. Specifically, this means using the centering—and the agility—to think outside of the immediate box and to “lean into the future.” Otto Scharmer (2019) offers a “Theory U” way of thinking about and acting in a world of turbulence. He writes about “learning into the future.” In order to do this anticipatory learning, Scharmer suggests that we must first seek to change the system as it now exists. Scharmer is emulating John Dewey’s suggestion that we only understand something when we give it a kick and observe it’s reaction. However, Scharmer goes further than Dewey. He suggests that we must examine and often transform our own way of thinking in the world—which requires both balance and agility—if this change is to be effective and if we are to learn from this change and from divergent perspectives in preparation for the future.

From the perspective of whitewater navigation, this would mean that we experiment with different ways of engaging our kayak (personal life, organization, community) in our current whitewater world. We particularly try out some changes that might make sense in terms of how the river is likely to operate around the next bend. Will there be more rocks, greater drop in elevation, more bends, etc. We take “notes” on how our kayak is behaving in response to changes in our use of the paddle, our way of sitting in the kayak, etc.

Scharmer requires that we not only try out several ways of kayaking, and take notes on these trials, but also explore and embrace new ways of thinking about the kayak and the dynamic way it operates in the river’s turbulence. These new ways are activated by what we have learned from the current trials—as well as from those who offer differing perspectives. The new ways, in turn, influence other changes we might wish to try out before reaching the next bend in the river. Effective learning, in other words, becomes recursive and directed toward (leaning toward) the future. None of this learning is easy. Furthermore, it is hard to determine which changes to make and how best to reflect on these changes. These processes are particularly challenging to engage when we are still navigating the current white-water world.

Contradiction

This condition exists when we are presented with two or more perspectives or sets of practices that are of equal validity and are equally useful -yet differ in significant ways from one another and are not readily reconciled. This condition moves us directly into the gulf. From one perspective, we must focus on *Discerning* the value of each viewpoint or practice in order to choose the best one.

The primary concern from this perspective is to determine where the greatest truth is to be found and which option is most aligned with fundamental human welfare. An alternative perspective concerns *Integrating* the diverse perspective and practices. The primary concern from this perspective is recognition that there is one (and only one) unified reality which can be viewed from multiple, complementary perspectives.

Despite VUCA-Plus

Given these challenges of VUCA-Plus, it is easy to see why it is difficult to keep our relationships with other people together. Many years ago, Robert Sommer (1969) wrote about social dynamics and the designs of space in our communities that tend to move us away from other people. These socio-petal dynamics and forces seem to be in full force in our mid-21st Century communities—and were probably in full force when societies in the past were going through major transitions involving revolutions in perspectives, practices and power.

These revolutions tend not only to pull apart nations and cultures but also friends and even families. Yet, we find examples of extraordinary women and men who have retained their close and nurturing relationships with friends, colleagues and members of their own family. We turn in this essay to a family of musicians who have remained close despite major differences (that were central to a revolution in musical compositions). IN our next two essays we consider the capacity of an American president and a developmental psychologist to sustain relationships despite confronting the challenges of a political/military revolution and revolution in the conception of human development.

Exemplar: The Bach Family

Johan Sebastian Bach (J. S. Bach) came for a long line of musicians. The great musical legacy that centers on J. S. Bach began many years before he was born—and was sustained for many years after his death. While it is often declared that the “classical” era in music began with Hyden and Mozart, it really began with the “revolution” led by several of Bach’s sons. The complex, Baroque style compositions of J.S. Bach gave way to the more “streamlined” style of compositions produced by Carl Philipp Emanuel (C.P. E.) and Johan Christian (J. C.) Bach. These two composers (and to a lesser extent their brother Wilhelm Friedemann Bach) appealed to the contemporary middle-class audience that now had sufficient money and time to attend concerts in Germany, England and other Northern European countries. Yet, in the midst of this major shift in the nature of European music, the relationship between the senior Bach and his sons was sustained.

It was not easy being the son of J. S. Bach. It was assumed by those who were hiring court composers, conductors and choir directors that the sons of J.S. Bach would bring the now outdated, “churchly” perspective of their father to a European community that was in transition from church and royal authority to secure authority. Music was no longer intended primarily for the upper class and members of the royal court and clergy. The new middle-class wanted music that was more accessible after a long day of “doing business.”

The sons of J.S. Bach provided this new-style music. It was more “melodic” and “colorful.” Their music was less stuffed with the “frills” of their father’s Baroque styling. The structure and sequencing of forms in the music of Bach’s sons was more predictable (a highly structured sonata form becoming prevalent).

Bach's sons championed a new "classical" style that was being widely embraced by other composers—especially Haydn and Mozart. J. C. Bach (the "London" Bach) actually spent time with Mozart and his influence on Mozart's music is quite evident. All of this led soon to the creation of symphonic forms by Haydn and Mozart and to the ascendance of Beethoven and the romantic composers of the early 19th Century.

The change in musical form and composition was indeed "revolutionary." As noted in the authoritative Grove narration of the Bach family saga (Wolff, 1983, p. 168), "the rejection, by the musicians of the succeeding generation, of the artistic principles that Bach stood for went beyond the normal changes in style that are found at other periods." This rejection was led in large part by Bach's sons. Yet, with all of this "revolution" taking place within the Bach household, there was an honoring of "Papa Bach" musical legacy. His sons (especially Philip Emanuel) led the formation of musical groups "that preserved and passed on most of the original manuscripts of Bach's works that have survived." (Wolff, 1983, p. 169)

While some of Bach's many children wished to distance themselves from the "old man" and even began to throw away some of his scores, Philip Emanuel, as executor of a third of J.S. Bach musical estate, fought hard to preserve what his father had composed (Wolff, 1983, p. 263). This preservation was very important, for the music of J. S. Bach was to go into wide-spread disfavor for many years. While some of the composers that worked during the years after J. S. Bach's time studied his compositions and were influenced by what he had written, there were few performances of his work. Papa Bach soon became known primarily as a great organ player—not as a great composer. It was actually not until the early 19th Century that J. S. Bach's great musical contributions were recognized – with Felix Mendelssohn (himself a great composer) leading the way in championing and performing the music of J. S. Bach.

What was it that Bach's sons did which preserved the relationship with their father, while still allowing them to revolutionize the world of music. It was all about guardianship and the safeguarding of a tradition (or treasured documents in the case of J.S. Bach).

Guardianship

Many years ago, Erik Erikson (1963) introduced the concept of generativity and specifically suggested that there is a particular time in our life when we focus on caring deeply for that about which we care most. He focused in particular on the generative acts that come with assisting other people who are younger or less experienced in performing a specific task. This engagement of what we now call "mentoring" is usually engaged during the mid-point in our life (ages 40-60). Along with my colleague, Gary Quehl, I have expanded on Erikson's concept of generativity by identifying four types of generativity. The first type focuses on the rearing of a child (or a special project), while the second type concerns the mentoring of other people (who are younger or less experienced in performing a specific task). The third type concerns the preservation of traditions, while the fourth concerns honoring and celebrating achievements. Each type is engaged at multiple times in our life.

In exhibiting the third type of generativity, some of the sons of J. S. Bach seem to be particularly "generative" in their protection and preservation of their father's compositions. While they were moving beyond the Baroque style of their father's work, the sons were engaged in many activities ensuring that most of Papa Bach's many, magnificent works of art were saved. This third type of generativity was called "guardianship" by George Vaillant (2012).

Vaillant (2012, p. 155) indicated that: "Guardians are caretakers. They take responsibility for the cultural values and riches from which we all benefit, offering their concern beyond specific individuals to their culture as a whole; they engage a social radius that extends beyond their immediate personal surroundings." The domain of concern for guardians is no longer just their family (our first type of generativity), their organization (second type of generativity), or even their community (fourth type of generativity). While this third way to express generativity can be identified as a form of resistance to change, or as an overdose of nostalgia, it also can be seen as an expression of deep caring for that which remains valid in contemporary times and which continues as a source of wisdom regardless of its date of origin or the quaint way in which it is stated, painted, or sung.

As noted by Erik Erikson, generativity is about caring for that which *should* be cared for, and this includes the ongoing presence of critical societal values. It is about caring not just for a specific person, organization, or community. It is about caring for an idea, for the history of action and achievement, for a particular artifact (e.g., painting, building) that represents a lingering value or exemplifies an ideal of beauty. When engaging like Bach's sons in this third form of Generativity we are guardians of something that already exists – or existed in the past.

McAdams (McAdams, Hart, and Maruna, 1998, p. 15) hints at this third generativity role when identifying the way in which cultural demands serve as an external motivating source of generativity. Specifically, like Quehl and myself, McAdams and his colleagues suggest that the extension of time places an important role in generativity: "In its linking of generations, generativity links past and future time." McAdams believes that generativity is about our desire to outlive our self. It is about stretching time beyond the boundaries of our own lives. Gary Quehl and I (Bergquist and Quehl, 2020) specifically suggest that this extension of time often takes place by honoring our heritage and preserving that which we most value and about which we most care. For the sons of Papa Bach, this would mean outliving themselves by preserving not only their own musical compositions, but also those written by their father.

Safeguarding a Tradition

Safeguarding a tradition seems to be at the heart of what George Vaillant means when writing about "guardianship," although we suspect that he did not intend to limit himself to this often-reactionary motivation. While the safeguarding function can be nothing more than hesitancy to accept change and a reaction against anything new, it also can be founded in a strong commitment to keeping what is good in a society.

In essence, a tradition is safeguarded in one of five ways. First, it can be preserved by ensuring that nothing changes in the system; we set up a fortress, buttress it, and make certain nothing will "pollute" or "water-down" the tradition; we see this form of safeguarding in the policies of many countries that place severe restrictions on immigration. We also find in the constant monitoring of theological and ideological conformity by some religious sects and political groups. Strict enforcement often leads to the splintering of these groups over minor differences of opinion. Unfortunately, this form of preservation often results in not just splintering, but ultimately the death of the system itself. Theorists tell us that systems which are closed and have very heavy boundaries cannot survive; there must be openness and permeable boundaries if a system is to remain viable. Diverse input (ideas, products, sources of energy) must be available to the system, especially if it is to remain creatively adaptive (Stacey, 1996; Page, 2011)

A second strategy for safeguarding a tradition is found in the process of *discernment*: which elements of the tradition should be preserved? Which should be discarded? This process is quite challenging. As

behavioral economists (Kahneman, 2011; Ariely, 2008) have repeatedly shown, we tend to hold on to what we already have. The joy we anticipate from successfully doing something new is much less motivating than the sorrow we anticipate from losing something we already possess. Even more painful is the regret we anticipate after having given away or lost something that once was of great value to us. We can imagine the sons of J. S. Bach grieving the sale or disposal of some of their father's manuscripts by less discerning (or at least less musically inclined) members of their family.

There is a third strategy, one that enables us to have our cake, and eat it too, with regard to Generative Safeguarding. We can celebrate a tradition, but not embrace it too tightly. Like the sons of J. S. Bach, we can occasionally review and appreciate old documents. C. P. E. Bach can play one of his father's works, while working on his own radically different composition. The *Mardi Gras* festivals that are held throughout the world represent old and revered traditions that are not engaged during most of the year—and are often not taken too seriously even when enacted. There are many such festivals, fairs and carnivals that come to town once a year. Matthew Miles (1964) has written about temporary systems that allow us to engage elements of ourselves that are not usually part of our daily routine and persona. We honor the tradition without getting too "uptight" in terms of engaging it every day of our life.

A fourth strategy stands in stark contrast to the third. We take some traditions quite seriously and wrap them around our daily living, even though we live in a modern and nontraditional society. Observant Orthodox Jewish and Muslim colleagues find ways to engage their elaborate traditions while also living and working in a contemporary, secular society. The challenge is great for these men and women, especially in a world that is becoming increasingly suspicious of those who dress differently, practice restricted diets, and choose to allocate time each day to religious devotions. J. S. Bach devotees refuse to play anything other than the work of Papa Bach (and perhaps a few other Baroque composers). Like those who abide by orthodox religious traditions, these Bach enthusiasts must remain in a silo and limit their contacts to those who share their own tastes in classical music. The gulf is wide for all those who embraced this fourth strategy.

The fifth and probably most impactful strategy for many people is to set aside space where the tradition can be fully honored. Nothing but J.S. Bach music can be played at a Bach festival. The Bach heritage is being preserved and celebrated. Certain islands in Hawaii are reserved for safeguarding traditional Hawaiian culture. National parks, land trusts and game preserves have boundaries and are protected. Theme parks are established to emulate and look after old traditions. All these safeguards can be identified by a single word, which is itself wrapped in tradition: *sanctuary*.

We need sanctuaries in our lives, both because they can be re-creating and because they are often sources of new learning or the remembrance and enforcement of old learning that has been forgotten or ignored. We see the role of sanctuary being played out in many acts of generativity. Sanctuaries are temporary systems. They are about the sacred and about that which we wish most to safeguard. Sanctuary is a place of deep caring. It is a place where we can explore and even temporarily embrace alternative perspectives, values and preferences, while still holding on to our current perspective, values and preferences. We can be a traditionalist while also being an innovator—as in the case of C.P. E. and J.C. Bach.

Remnant

There is a good reason why Papa Bach's sons preserved their father's manuscripts. They recognized that while they were moving on to a new world of "classical" music, they could fully appreciate the artistry of their father's music—and could recognize that certain elements of their father's work were themselves revolutionary in its time (in such areas as counterpoint, modulation and harmony). They also preserved

what Papa Bach wrote because it just might become relevant again at some point in the future—which ended up being the case (Bach’s music is still extensive in the 21st Century repertoire of classical music).

This recognition of potential enduring value is represented even more broadly by Gregory Bateson (one of the great minds of the 20th Century). Bateson (1979, p. 157) wrote about the “remnant” in all biological systems. These are elements of any system that is now “out of date” or “not needed” but is preserved because it might once again be relevant and needed as conditions in this system change. As an example, Bateson points to the presence of the femur fin on the whale. This fin (along with the pelvis) on whales is identified as a “vestigial” structure that once played an important role in the adaptation of the whale to its environment but is now much smaller, less noticeable – and of little use. Bateson noted that the femur (as a much larger fin) was needed to help balance the whale in an ocean environment that was much more turbulent than it now is. Bateson proposed that the whale did not abandon the femur, but instead preserved it (in much smaller form) so that it might once again be enlarged and made useful in navigating an aquatic environment that is once again turbulent.

Old organizational and societal remnants (like the whale's femur) are preserved at a minimal level "in case" the skills or perspectives of this remnant are needed again. Perhaps, wisdom contained in (and preserved in) the old remnant might actually be relevant and of use in our current environment. We hold on to this ancient wisdom “just in case.” Perhaps, Papa Bach’s music was still of great value in the repertoire of European music. It might just be that documents and ideas with which we do not agree might actually be “right” and of great value. We preserve them in case they are fully relevant and of great value.

Conclusions

In preserving Papa Bach’s compositions and his ideas about music that is dedicated to something greater than humankind, his sons do something else of even greater value. They preserve the relationship with someone about whom they care deeply. J. S. Bach’s son can show their continuing love for their father by guarding and preserving what he has produced. Papa Bach can, in turn, continue to love and support his sons even though they have “moved beyond” his work.

It is in this enduring love that we find one of the ingredients of sustained relationships in the midst of major differences of perspective and practices. We will find other important ingredients in the examination offered in the two companion essays regarding two other exemplars of relating amidst differences: Abraham Lincoln and Carol Gilligan.

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