

From Networking to Quantum Learning

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All of a sudden, I realize what has been bothering me all along. When we talk about networking, our meaning is often shallow. We do not really mean getting to know others. Far less do we mean sharing, learning and teaching, perhaps understanding a different paradigm or viewpoint. Often, what we really mean is ... hum, I wonder what that person over there can do for me? Could she give me a job? Buy one of my widgets? Help me in my next promotion? Networking becomes netusing.

I looked up the word “networking” in my electronic dictionary. Here is a possible definition: A network is an intricately connected system of things or people. Through networks, we are joined in a common passion for learning, cooperating, leading one another. Networking, therefore, means the collective weaving of a web of collaboration for which we all become responsible. Does that sound like the networking we hear so much about?

I have lately read fascinating articles connecting Quantum Sciences to learning. The term “Quantum” comes from “Quantum Mechanics,” a field that emerged from Einstein’s theories. “Quantum” means “a quantity of,” and “Mechanics” is a study of bodies in motion. A possible definition for “Quantum Mechanics,” therefore, is “the study of subatomic particles in motion (Shelton & Darling, 2003, p. 354). Quantum Learning, on the other hand, was defined by Vella (2002) as a type of learning that uses “all of the neural networks in the brain” (p. 73). Quantum Learning means awakening all our senses for learning. We are urged to assimilate different paradigms, absorb different worldviews, and allow our intuition to guide our learning path. Quantum Learning is total learning.

By definition, we can never reach Quantum Learning without one another. Total learning makes no sense unless different people dialogue, debate, dispute, and collaborate. For instance, Stacey (2003) defined learning as the product of interactions between interdependent people. These are the very interactions that we achieve through the real networking. Not the netusing or netgettingajob or netmovingahead kind.

Next time you hear the word networking, therefore, think about the kind of networking that we are called to pursue – the kind that intricately connects us all in a web of learning. Think about netlearning – the Quantum way.