

**"I know too much to NOT do this work."
To all Center members**

By Barbara Hacker

That's a statement I made many years ago when I was leading Dialogue and weekend workshops regularly. Doing the research behind Dialogue and hearing the many heartfelt stories of participants, gave me a knowledge base and level of awareness that wasn't going to fade in spite of my white privilege. Combined with a firm belief that people can change and the key to that change is a careful education and exposure in a safe atmosphere, made me feel I'd be doing this work forever. Indeed, it felt like a gift to have found a vehicle for addressing the disease I had wanted to cure since childhood.

"You need to get lots of rest and stay stress free to avoid exacerbation."

That's a statement my neurologist made when I was diagnosed with MS. Hmm. It was when I was rushing from work to Dialogue, having stopped to make copies on the fly, that I had to pull over because weird sensations were happening in my head. And those late nights (I could never sleep after Dialogue) made getting up and teaching children the next day difficult. I never knew when the dizziness, double vision, flashing lights and even panic attacks would strike. The level of activity I thought was normal life was making me sick!

"Only you get to decide what you will do."

That was a statement a therapist made as I struggled with how to change my life, and it became an important life lesson for me as I finally internalized the concept. I realized that time and energy are limited and I must choose wisely how to expend it. It was not only ok, but also essential to say "no" to some things people wanted me to do. It was a novel idea to me that I had a choice and didn't have to do my darndest in response to everything I was asked to do. So I gave up many things. Some were easy, but Dialogue was hard.

"Could I do Dialogue again with you during the summer?"

That was the question I asked Cherry months ago. Of all the things I gave up doing, I missed Dialogue the most. I never stopped doing "the work" in that all the principles of interaction we use in Dialogue underlay how I teach my class of young children, And the information and knowledge I strive to give them is what so many of us did not get in school. But I did miss the interaction with adults and the insight and understanding I have gotten from every participant's sharing. And I missed working closely with that very special "other facilitator" to aid a group of people to move forward.

"Thank you. Thank you. Thank you."

Is what I want to say to Cherry for all her work to make a two Saturday session happen in June even as she completed the Spring Session. And it is what I want to say to John Long, head of Post Oak School, for making the space available for us to conduct Dialogue. And it is my message to all the Dialogue participants who turned out. I treasure meeting each and every one of you, learning from you and adding you to my circle of allies.

It was wonderful to have the chance to do Dialogue again and I hope the time and circumstances will be right for me to be able to do it again in the future.