

From "The Touchstone", Barnes and Conti, 1990:

"MY WORK: THE DANCE OF INFLUENCE, DESIGN AND FACILITATION" by Bev Scott

"You must love your work! You have so much energy and enthusiasm as you talk about it." an eager student observed during the break where I was speaking to a class of graduate students in OD.

I do love my work. Of course, there are times when I am frustrated, discouraged and unsure. I just emerged from one of those times, in fact, when I seriously examined whether I had the right job or I needed to move to another organization. But that reflection had to do with my position in the organization and the context in which I do my work. I was not questioning or frustrated about my work.

I think about my work as my purpose here on earth for this life time and maybe my future life times. Many of my ideas about my work come from my father, whom I admired a great deal. His messages are still fresh: "Your life has a purpose": "Use your abilities to make a contribution to the world": "When you are fortunate and have privileges you have a responsibility to give something back." It took me several years to find out what my work was. I tried teaching, community organizing, managing and, although I was good at them, I kept looking for something more. When I discovered there was something called organization development, I found a profession in which my purpose and abilities could prosper and find reward.

My understanding of myself and my work has evolved with my own personal growth and my frequent reflection continues to bring more clarity to my understanding. So as I describe my work it is the articulation of my current understanding.

My work is to bring positive energy and to facilitate learning, insight, and acceptance. In the talk I referenced in the opening quote, I discussed the dance of politics in the organization. Politics is the art of the possible, where one uses influence to accomplish goals. When people are drifting, frustrated, annoyed, or even angry at co-workers, the boss, or the events around them over which they have no control, I find challenge and excitement. I don't have answers but truly believe that people with open minds, using each other as resources, in a conducive environment, will find their own answers.

My work is to choreograph the dance of influence, design and facilitation -- the art of the possible-- which produces the encore of growth, energy, implementation and accomplishment. I am excited as I watch a frustrated collection of individuals move to the high energy of collaborative teamwork. It brings joy and reward to work with a faltering manager who is able to see his own contribution to the department conflict through self-awareness and personal growth. I find reward and satisfaction as a workshop participant learns and applies her new skills. I am thrilled as I succeed in getting sponsorship for a special project because a manager who was a client several years ago understands and trusts my work. It is affirming when a Human Resource Manager says I know you are the right person for this project not only because your skills but because of who you are. I am proud as I observe a group of hourly employees unsure, shy, insecure and sometimes hostile become confident, skilled, effective problems solvers.

My work is with professionals, managers and executives, supervisors and hourly employees, in work groups, departments, whole organizations or as individuals. My work challenges me to meet individuals and groups in their reality, to look at the world through their glasses, to frame ideas and concepts in their language and to find ways to bridge from their present view to what is possible. My work is purposive and it is my contribution but more importantly it brings me joy and satisfaction.