

*EMPOWERMENT AS A  
RESPONSE TO  
DEVALUATION, OPPRESSION  
AND EXCLUSION*

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JOHN DEWEY  
THE PUBLIC AND ITS PROBLEMS (1927)

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**A FOURTH MARK OF THE PUBLIC IS INDICATED BY THE IDEA THAT CHILDREN AND OTHER DEPENDENTS (SUCH AS THE INSANE, THE PERMANENTLY HELPLESS) ARE PECULIARLY ITS WARDS. WHEN THE PARTIES INVOLVED IN ANY TRANSACTION ARE *UNEQUAL IN STATUS*, THE RELATIONSHIP IS LIKELY TO BE ONE-SIDED, AND THE INTERESTS OF ONE PARTY TO SUFFER. IF THE CONSEQUENCES APPEAR SERIOUS, ESPECIALLY IF THEY SEEM TO BE IRRETRIEVABLE, THE PUBLIC BRINGS TO BEAR A WEIGHT THAT WILL EQUALIZE CONDITIONS.**

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**FRATERNITY, LIBERTY AND EQUALITY ISOLATED FROM COMMUNAL LIFE ARE HOPELESS ABSTRACTIONS...IN ITS JUST CONNECTION WITH COMMUNAL EXPERIENCE, FRATERNITY IS ANOTHER NAME FOR THE CONSCIOUSLY APPRECIATED GOODS WHICH ACCRUE FROM AN ASSOCIATION WHICH ALL SHARE, AND WHICH GIVE DIRECTION TO THE CONDUCT OF EACH.**

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**LIBERTY IS THAT SECURE RELEASE AND FULFILLMENT OF PERSONAL POTENTIALITIES WHICH TAKE PLACE ONLY IN RICH AND MANIFOLD ASSOCIATION WITH OTHERS: *THE POWER TO BE AN INDIVIDUALIZED SELF MAKING A DISTINCTIVE CONTRIBUTION AND ENJOYING IN ITS OWN WAY THE FRUITS OF ASSOCIATION.***

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**EQUALITY DENOTES THE UNHAMPERED SHARE WHICH EACH INDIVIDUAL MEMBER OF THE COMMUNITY HAS IN THE CONSEQUENCES OF ASSOCIATED ACTION.**

SAUL ALINSKY  
REVEILLIE FOR RADICALS  
(1969)

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**IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO OVEREMPHASIZE THE ENORMOUS IMPORTANCE OF PEOPLE'S DOING THINGS FOR THEMSELVES. IT IS THE MOST COMMON HUMAN REACTION THAT SUCCESSFUL ATTAINMENT OF OBJECTIVES IS MUCH MORE MEANINGFUL TO PEOPLE WHO HAVE ACHIEVED THE OBJECTIVES THROUGH THEIR OWN EFFORTS.**

SAUL ALINSKY  
REVEILLIE FOR RADICALS  
(1969)

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**THE OBJECTIVE IS NEVER AN END IN ITSELF. THE EFFORTS THAT ARE EXERTED IN THE ACTUAL EARNING OF THE OBJECTIVE ARE PART AND PARCEL OF THE ACHIEVEMENT ITSELF...WHAT YOU GET BY YOUR OWN EFFORTS IS REALLY YOURS. IT IS A PART OF YOU, BOUND AND KNIT TO YOU THROUGH THE EXPERIENCES YOU HAVE UNDERGONE IN SECURING IT.**

ALFRED KAHN  
PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL PLANNING  
1971

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**MOBILIZATION IS THE ACTIVE EXPRESSION OF OUR FAITH IN THE DIGNITY AND WORTH OF THE INDIVIDUAL. TO DENY EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION, INCLUDING THE OPPORTUNITY TO CHOOSE, TO BE HEARD, TO DISCUSS, TO CRITICIZE, TO PROTEST, AND TO CHALLENGE DECISIONS REGARDING THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL CONDITIONS OF EXISTENCE IS TO DENY THE INDIVIDUAL'S OWN WORTH AND TO CONFIRM HIS IMPOTENCE AND SUBSERVIENCE.**

JULIAN RAPPAPORT  
IN PRAISE OF PARADOX: A SOCIAL POLICY OF  
EMPOWERMENT OVER PREVENTION  
(1981)

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**WE ARE WITNESSING THE RISE OF THE IDEA OF RIGHTS OVER NEEDS. THE PARADOX FOR THE REMAINING YEARS OF THIS CENTURY WILL BE ENCAPSULATED IN A STRUGGLE BETWEEN OPPOSING VIEWS OF THE POOR, THE PHYSICALLY DISABLED, THE MENTAL PATIENT, THE RETARDED PERSON, THE JUVENILE, THE ELDERLY AND SO ON, AS DEPENDENT PERSONS TO BE HELPED OR AS CITIZENS TO BE ASSURED OF RIGHTS AND CHOICES.**

JULIAN RAPPAPORT  
IN PRAISE OF PARADOX: A SOCIAL POLICY OF  
EMPOWERMENT OVER PREVENTION  
(1981)

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**SYMBOLS AND IMAGERY WILL BE VERY IMPORTANT IN THIS STRUGGLE. IT MAKES A GREAT DEAL OF DIFFERENCE IF YOU ARE VIEWED AS A CHILD OR AS A CITIZEN SINCE IF YOU BELIEVE IT YOU ARE QUITE LIKELY TO ACT THE PART (SNYDER & SWANN, 1978; SWANN AND SNYDER, 1980), AND IF THOSE IN POWER BELIEVE IT THEY ARE LIKELY TO DEVELOP PROGRAMS, PLANS AND STRUCTURES THAT WILL HELP YOU BELIEVE IT.**

JULIAN RAPPAPORT  
TERMS OF EMPOWERMENT/EXEMPLARS OF PREVENTION:  
TOWARD A THEORY FOR COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY  
(1987)

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**THE CONCEPT SUGGESTS BOTH INDIVIDUAL DETERMINATION OVER ONE'S OWN LIFE, AND DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION IN THE LIFE OF ONE'S COMMUNITY, OFTEN THROUGH MEDIATING STRUCTURES SUCH AS SCHOOLS, NEIGHBORHOODS, CHURCHES, AND OTHER VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS.**

JULIAN RAPPAPORT  
TERMS OF EMPOWERMENT/EXEMPLARS OF PREVENTION:  
TOWARD A THEORY FOR COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY  
(1987)

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**EMPOWERMENT CONVEYS BOTH A PSYCHOLOGICAL SENSE OF PERSONAL CONTROL OR INFLUENCE, AND A CONCERN WITH ACTUAL SOCIAL INFLUENCE, POLITICAL POWER, AND LEGAL RIGHTS. IT IS A MULTILEVEL CONCEPT APPLICABLE TO INDIVIDUAL CITIZENS AS WELL AS TO ORGANIZATIONS AND NEIGHBORHOODS; IT SUGGESTS THE STUDY OF PEOPLE IN CONTEXT.**

## EMPOWERMENT: SEEING PEOPLE AS COMPLETE HUMAN BEINGS

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- **CONFLICT BETWEEN “RIGHTS” AND “NEEDS” MODELS FOR VIEWING PEOPLE IN TROUBLE CREATES A PARADOX**
- **RECOGNIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DIALECTIC**
- **EMPHASIZES DIVERGENT REASONING (MANY SOLUTIONS) OVER CONVERGENT REASONING (A SINGLE SOLUTION)**

## EMPOWERMENT: SEEING PEOPLE AS COMPLETE HUMAN BEINGS

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- **SEES SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS AS HAVING BECOME “ONE SIDED” AND CREATING MORE PROBLEMS THAN THEY SOLVE**
- **THIS IS THE RESULT OF USING CONVERGENT REASONING TO THINK ABOUT DIVERGENT PROBLEMS, LEADING TO AN INABILITY TO THINK DIALECTICALLY**

## EMPOWERMENT: SEEING PEOPLE AS COMPLETE HUMAN BEINGS

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- **BUT, IN ACCEPTING THE NOTION THAT ADVOCATING FOR LEGAL RIGHTS IS A SOLUTION TO PROBLEMS IN LIVING WE SETTLE FOR A ONE-SIDED SOLUTION THAT MISSES THE DIALECTAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RIGHTS AND NEEDS**
- **WHAT GOOD IS A “RIGHT TO TREATMENT” IF TREATMENT IS NEITHER AVAILABLE NOR GOOD?**

## EMPOWERMENT: SEEING PEOPLE AS COMPLETE HUMAN BEINGS

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- **WHAT GOOD IS A “RIGHT TO BE IN THE COMMUNITY” WITH NO ROLE, NO RESPECT AND NO RESOURCES?**
- **THE REALITY IS THAT SOME PEOPLE BENEFIT FROM A “NEEDS” ORIENTED HUMAN SERVICE SYSTEM, WHILE OTHERS BENEFIT FROM “RIGHTS ORIENTED CONTROLS” ON THAT SYSTEM, BUT A GREAT MANY PEOPLE WILL REQUIRE BOTH RIGHTS AND NEEDS**

## EMPOWERMENT: SEEING PEOPLE AS COMPLETE HUMAN BEINGS

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- **THUS, EMPOWERMENT HAS AS ITS AIM ENHANCING THE POSSIBILITIES FOR PEOPLE TO CONTROL THEIR OWN LIVES**
- **EMPOWERMENT SEES PEOPLE AS FULL HUMAN BEINGS WHO HAVE BOTH NEEDS AND RIGHTS**
- **EMPOWERMENT CONVEYS BOTH A PSYCHOLOGICAL SENSE OF PERSONAL CONTROL OR INFLUENCE AND A CONCERN WITH ACTUAL SOCIAL INFLUENCE, POLITICAL POWER, AND LEGAL RIGHTS**

## IMPLICATIONS OF AN EMPOWERMENT MODEL FOR HUMAN SERVICES

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- **LOOKS AT MANY DIVERSE LOCAL SETTINGS WHERE PEOPLE ARE ALREADY HANDLING THEIR OWN PROBLEMS IN LIVING, IN ORDER TO LEARN HOW THEY DO IT (DIVERGENT REASONING)**
- **DEMANDS FINDING WAYS TO TAKE WHAT WE LEARN FROM THESE DIVERSE SETTINGS AND SOLUTIONS AND MAKE IT MORE PUBLIC—TO HELP FOSTER POLICIES THAT MAKE IT MORE LIKELY THAT OTHERS NOT NOW HANDLING THEIR PROBLEMS IN LIVING, OR WHO ARE SHUT OUT FROM CURRENT SOLUTIONS, GAIN CONTROL OVER THEIR OWN LIVES**

## IMPLICATIONS OF AN EMPOWERMENT MODEL FOR HUMAN SERVICES

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- **CHANGES ROLE OF PROFESSIONALS FROM THAT OF “EXPERT” TO THAT OF “COLLABORATOR”**
- **MANY COMPETENCIES ARE SEEN AS BEING ALREADY PRESENT OR AT LEAST POSSIBLE, GIVEN NICHE AND OPPORTUNITIES**
- **POOR FUNCTIONING IS SEEN AS A RESULT OF SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND LACK OF RESOURCES WHICH MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR EXISTING COMPETENCIES TO OPERATE**

## IMPLICATIONS OF AN EMPOWERMENT MODEL FOR HUMAN SERVICES

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- **WHEN NEW COMPETENCIES NEED TO BE LEARNED, THEY ARE BEST LEARNED IN THE CONTEXT OF LIVING LIFE RATHER THAN IN ARTIFICIAL PROGRAMS WHERE THE EXPERT IS IN CHARGE**
- **LEADS ITSELF TO A VARIETY OF LOCALLY RATHER THAN CENTRALLY CONTROLLED SOLUTIONS, WHICH FOSTERS SOLUTIONS BASED ON DIFFERENT ASSUMPTIONS IN DIFFERENT PLACES, SETTINGS AND NEIGHBORHOODS**

## IMPLICATIONS OF AN EMPOWERMENT MODEL FOR HUMAN SERVICES

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- **POLICY DEVELOPMENT CHANGES FROM A TOP-DOWN OR FORWARD MAPPING PROCESS TO A BOTTOM UP OR *BACKWARD MAPPING* PROCESS THAT STARTS WITH PEOPLE AND WORKS BACKWARDS TO TELL OFFICIALS WHAT SOCIAL POLICIES AND PROGRAMS ARE NECESSARY (DIVERSITY OVER HOMOGENEITY OF FORM)**

## RECOVERY AS A RESPONSE TO EXCLUSION, DEVALUATION AND OPPRESSION

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- **RECOVERY REFERS TO THE LIVED OR REAL LIFE EXPERIENCE OF PERSONS AS THEY ACCEPT AND OVERCOME THE CHALLENGE OF THE DISABILITY—IT IS A WAY OF LIFE, AN ATTITUDE AND A WAY OF APPROACHING THE DAY'S CHALLENGES**
- **RECOVERY DEMANDS THAT PEOPLE WITH PSYCHIATRIC DISABILITIES CARRY A NEW MESSAGE OF HOPE, OF HEALING BACK INTO THE COMMUNITY WHERE PEOPLE LIVE, LOVE, WORK AND WORSHIP**

## RECOVERY AS A RESPONSE TO EXCLUSION, DEVALUATION AND OPPRESSION

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- **RESPONDING TO THIS DEMAND ITSELF IS A VALUED SOCIAL ROLE—BEING IN RECOVERY IS VALUED**
- **THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT IS HELPING TO REMOVE MANY OF THE BARRIERS THAT HAVE HISTORICALLY PREVENTED PEOPLE WITH PSYCHIATRIC DISABILITIES FROM ACHIEVING VALUED ROLES IN OUR SOCIETY**

## RECOVERY AS A RESPONSE TO EXCLUSION, DEVALUATION AND OPPRESSION

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- **BEING IN RECOVERY MEANS THAT ONE KNOWS ONE HAS CERTAIN LIMITATION— THERE ARE THINGS THAT ONE CANNOT DO**
- **BUT, THESE LIMITATIONS MUST NOT BE CAUSE FOR DESPAIR AND GIVING UP— LEARNING WHAT ONE CANNOT DO OPENS UP THE POSSIBILITIES OF WHAT ONE CAN DO**

## RECOVERY AS A RESPONSE TO EXCLUSION, DEVALUATION AND OPPRESSION

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- **RECOVERY MEANS BECOMING POLITICIZED AND DEVELOPING A COLLECTIVE AWARENESS OF SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND HUMAN INJUSTICES (THE ROOTS OF EXCLUSION AND DEVALUATION)**
- **RECOVERY MEANS FINDING A COLLECTIVE VOICE FOR PEOPLE WITH PSYCHIATRIC DISABILITIES, DEVELOPING A COLLECTIVE PRIDE AND USING COLLECTIVE POWER TO CHALLENGE AND CHANGE INJUSTICE**