

Disclosing Apithology: Twenty Questions to Apithology

ABSTRACT – This collection of questions and answers results from an exercise undertaken during the fourth practitioner’s apithologue. Questions were put to discover what was known and unknown about apithology at this time. Contributions to the inquiry came from practitioners within the community of practice, others involved in initial inquiries into apithology and from those with merely a passing interest. The answers recorded reflect initial responses only, which are intended to generate more questions, more dialogue and new iterations of the answers. In this way, they provide a historical snapshot of both this emerging discipline and its practice of inquiry.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most interesting applications of apithology as a discipline of inquiry is when it is applied to its own formation processes. The unnerving nature of an inquiry into prospectivity means that at any stage of generation, hopes and expectations are continuously relinquished. Rather than having answers, the practice of apithology generates its content by a process of constant inquiry. For this reason a question and answer process has evolved which forms statements of present unknowing by an inquiry prompted by a question which is also open to inquiry into its assumptions. The answers formed are in the nature of ‘... this we know now’, recognizing that these answers may change. Those answers may have come into form merely as a result of the question itself being asked. A unique feature of this form of inquiry in apithology is that the response is to the question, as it is asked, but from an

apithological perspective. The following are attempts to answer specific questions as posed to apithology, not as explanations, but representations, authentic to the limitations of knowledge at that time.

WHY APITHOLOGY

Question #1 – Why Apithology?

In one way, the reason for apithology is simply to enable a subtle distinction in a presently existing focus already there for many. This subtle shift comes about from the recognition that in dealing with problems we may never reach the origin of their causes. This may be especially true for problems of our own making. For generative development, a different emphasis may be required. This approach to human flourishing appreciates that essential needs must be met, and also looks at potentials, rather than only at existing or potential problems. Those who come to apithology are often those outstanding in their fields wanting something more. They may also come to apithology after seeing how a lifetime alleviating a detriment may yield no meaningful benefits. This field gives them a place to focus their best work.

APITHOLOGICAL ORIENTATION

Question # 2 - How do I 'know' I have an apithological orientation?

This is probably one of the primary research questions in apithology. Simply, if you are alive, you have an apithological orientation, as apithology is the study of the qualities of life. Each person may have the potential

for a combination of orientations. Those who practice in this area, probably have a bias in one direction. They seem to frame questions differently. They are also comfortable with ambiguity. There is an approach that is comfortable using an aware unknowing.

INTUITIVE PRACTICE

Question #3 - Do the a^ inquiries become intuitive for the experienced practitioner?

In an emerging area, we may never have experienced practitioners, as the knowing gained will be continually changing and newly experienced each time. We do have the present experiences of existing practitioners. In one practice of apithology particular sets of inquiries are undertaken and new information is revealed. Because these steps concern directly our habits of mind, they are done very consciously. Perhaps with time it would become like a yoga or tai chi set, or a spider spinning a gossamer daily web, or a skillfully performed novel medical procedure, where no focusing of the mind is required, only a particular state of mind. This would eventually need to be for every eventuality. Rather than intuitive and subconscious, perhaps it would instead be mindfully conscious. This would take some practice. In the meantime, we follow the steps so far learned.

COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY

Question #4 - Do a^ practitioners need to work with other a^ practitioners to optimize the integrity of findings?

Yes, this is an essential part of the field and the practice. It also relates to the reason for the adoption of in-common practices. By following a particular form a second practitioner can confirm and affirm what is being observed. Rather than the assumption of the skillful individual, apithology relies on a combination of viewpoints as its content, and its practice. In this way questions bigger than our own definition of the problem can be worked with generatively.

THEORY AND PRACTICE

Question # 5 - Is apithology a theory, or practice, or both?

In any practice of conscious inquiry we are usually testing our theories held. It is said that as a result theory and practice always arise together. In some disciplines,

theory leads the way and what is experienced is fitted into the mental model held. In apithology, the formation of mental models and their potentials is what is being inquired into, so there is not a theory of how things are, only how they might become. A certain level of unknowing is required.

As apithology primarily involves the study of generativity, often what is disclosed is novel and emergent by its nature. Models of how the world works don't help in finding what is yet to be. This is why apithology is primarily 'a practice' of how to engage in certain questions. It is really 'a theory of practice', with the belief that 'how' one engages will have a particular effect and reveal certain information. In apithology, this provides the structure for an inquiry, but not the answer itself. These open forms of practice are what allows each practitioner to find the uniqueness in and the virtues of their own approach.

EXPRESSIONS OF FORM

Question #6 - Are there expressions of apithology other than in words, such as visuals or sounds?

Because apithology is all about appreciating human meaning-making, it is likely that the expressions of apithology will be as infinite as the forms of human creativity. Expressions already exist in graphics, music, art, human movement, performance, story, mathematics, bubbles, meditations, energy-practices and will expand with each contributing practitioner's work and talents. We have begun with words because they are easily discernable as constructs that provide visible artifacts of the meanings being made. They are only one form by which we can view the architecture of thought in its generative formations of emergent creativity. Watch this space.

OPENING TO POSSIBILITIES

Question #7 - Is apithology about opening possibilities beyond current thinking?

Yes. It is also more than this. It is about opening the possibilities of current thinking, in all forms, in all structures, in all levels, in all phases. This does not necessarily involve a change in thought beyond what is. It does involve a consideration of thought in terms of how it is.

Apithology presently considers the qualities of current and future potential forms of thought. Yet it is not

limited only to thinking. It actually considers the role of thought as a conjunction of present and potential ways of knowing, being and doing. It does this ecologically, situationally; and coactively. It studies the contributions of current thinking in all its forms to the wellbeing (and wellthinking and welldoing) of the whole. It is more than an opening of possibilities. It is about understanding the actualisation of present and future potentialities.

ELDER VIEWPOINTS

Question #8 - How would you explain apithology to your grandmother?

I think our grandmothers explained it to us: "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.", "A stitch in time saves nine.", "More haste, less speed.", "Waste not, want not.", "Pick up not a lazy man's load.", "Make hay, while the sun shines.", "Don't spoil the ship for a ha'penny of tar.", "There's no use crying over spilt milk.", "Feed a cold and starve a fever." and "If you look after the pennies the pounds will look after themselves." - which are the apithology principles of proactivity, observance, presence, forethought, carefulness, potentiality, sufficiency, prospectivity, appropriateness and generativity. What was not revealed was how each truism when held together becomes a practice for humanity in the management of its own wellbeing. That is for the present and the next generation to discover.

CHILD-LIKE KNOWING

Question #9 - How would you explain apithology to a child?

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BEYOND DIALOGUE

Question #10 - What's an apithologue?

In discussion we share content and our opinions. In dialogue we look to find understandings in common with others by our sharing. In the process of Bohmian Dialogue the content and container come together to allow us to make meaning together. An Apithologue is a collective dialogue process that begins where Bohmian Dialogue ends. It too involves a release of personal opinion, but without the negation of personal contribution, in the context of a container of unknowns that becomes the commencement point for an in-common inquiry. There are many similarities with

other generative dialogue processes because these forms are formative parts and are included. There is a flow of meaning, yet also a generative tension. There is an open inquiry, and yet a clear intention. It has a different name because it is similar, and at the same time is profoundly different. The distinction perhaps is, in Dialogue we enter into the inquiry not knowing. In an Apithologue we enter in unknowing.

MEDIATING DIFFERENCE

Question #11 - How do you enter into a debate apithologically when the two debating sides may not have this orientation, and without looking like a fencesitter?

This question is profoundly complex with many layers of practice revealed in its asking. As apithology looks at the 'coactions' of meaning in meaning-making, debate and conflicting interactions are seen as profoundly healthy activities. The dynamics are considered situationally. With an understanding of how momentary orientations are phase dependent responses in health, even a pathological fixation can be apithological (just as there is the pathology of apithology in wanting an increase in decline). A whole inquiry is required. This is the practice of apithology.

One principle of practice that may be common to any situation may be to see the grace in each expression of meaning. This cannot be pointed to or pointed out if not present, but it can be 'asked about'. The reaction is usually a re-membering of what that grace is, which is re-called so as to be present, as if it had never left. In this way, that which is always present is found to be never absent, even when seemingly lost. Rather than directing attention to the absence, the apithology practice may be more to enable intention, in-tension, for the conducive finding of what is precious to both. Fence sitting is replaced, by aware-listening and mindful engaging. The real practice is in the inquiry. The eventual action in intervention is secondary - and is often found to be completely unnecessary.

NEW VESSELS

Question #12 - Isn't this just new wine in old bottles, or is this a new vintage in the making?

Apithology can be seen as old wine, new wine or a new blend. Discernment is in the tasting, not the label. If nothing new is seen here, then there is nothing new to be seen. It would seem strange though, to consciously

create a new word, new paradigms of inquiry, different forms of engagement, use unfamiliar assumptions and clear expressions of subtly different intentions, to inquire into unknown circumstances, for something that is already known. Perhaps it is only our observing minds that remain the same vessel. There are new questions here, yet we may have also been here before. Certain lineage practices inquire into the nature of mind in a way similar to this vintage. These look at the mind of the individual in the continuum of thought. Other practices examine the mind of the tribe in its transitions in health. Some practices enable the small group inquiry for collective social learning in what is emerging. Yet somehow, looking at the mind of humanity is not a collective practice we have commonly engaged in previously. Something new, using all that we have, is being investigated. Familiar questions when asked in new ways have a tendency of generating new unknowns from which we may progress to discoveries that too, are new. To taste the unknown anew, takes courage.

WHOLENESS AND PARTS

Question #13 - In what way does Apithology redirect the attention of someone who has spent several years using AQAL?

This question has perplexed many in this practice. Yet for others unfamiliar with the AQAL epistemology of Integral Theory, there is a quizzical wondering of what the fuss is about. Originally it was thought there was a natural transition between the two. The discovery is that they are different approaches at their source and a gestalt shift in understanding is required. AQAL is immensely informing to this. Unlearning is also required.

It appears that, to the extent AQAL concerns a retrospective construction of the involution of form, apithology concerns the experiencing of evolutions in their process of formation. In this way, they are complementary to each other. There is in apithology a subtle turning of, and returning to, intention in the midst of this. Many assumptions change. From an AQAL perspective, apithology redirects our attention from; seeking Oneness in an epistemology of the partialness of parts, to finding wholeness in the expression of all of the emergent All. Yet, this does not fully capture the apithological perspective. It is perhaps only a statement of the apithology of integral theory, which is probably in this context, enough.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLES

Question #14 - What is a practical, on the ground, use of apithology to make the world a better place?

Because apithology concerns the dynamics of generative health there are many obvious examples close by. Applications occur by those on the ground seeing beyond. One form is the guidance of the passage of children into youth, rather than working ceaselessly to prevent teenage suicides. Another is to look to the processes of connections of persons to place, rather than slow the pace of unnatural and unwitting degradations. We might inquire newly into how childhood experiencing is evolving, rather than rely on the medication of attention deficits in learning. These uses range from the micro to the macro at every level of becoming. Others are less obvious. One significant inquiry is into the dynamics of generativity of mind, in a reversal of the vicious cycles occurring in the depression pandemic of global mental health, which is occurring largely unseen. One of the more interesting applications is how humanity navigates the transitions of this century with grace, to have an experience that reflects the emerging humanity's characteristics of our most human future face.

FAMILIAR FRAMES

Question #15 - What would be another way of expressing the concept in terms I might be familiar with?

Often we use metaphors of what is familiar to describe what is unfamiliar in apithology. These are situational and specific. They may concern architectural forms, weather patterns, a forest ecology, or views from a mountain vista. The main reason for this use of metaphor is it meets respectfully the tension of wanting to understand a practice of forming unfamiliar minds while holding onto existing frames of mind. The use of metaphor allows for new meaning to be explored without distress. It is a step to understanding, yet not equivalent to an understanding. We enter the story, but not the practice.

The easiest way of imagining apithology in familiar terms for those preparing to enter into the practice of this inquiry, is to think of all that we do in the study of pathology, all forms of illness, definition of problems, models for their understanding, effort expended to defeat them, and theories as to their cause. Now place these next to a mirror. In the mirror you will see the

exact same landscape stretching to the horizon with the same depth of forms, yet flipped horizontally to show a different orientation. In this mirror is the unexplored landscape of prospective generative health. It is familiar, yet all of its content is also distinctly different. Apithology is the discipline that reveals the terrain of this other horizon of inquiry. The practice of apithology is for those with a desire to explore this other realm of knowing. To do so requires unknowing and a comfortableness in the ambiguity of its unfamiliarity.

HEALTH CARING

Question #16 - Is apithology related to nursing, medicine or other forms of health care?

Apithology is not really related to health care. Apithology is related to 'health caring'. It is the practice of caring for healths. This includes those healths that have not occurred yet, existing only as potentials. Health here is seen in the context of life, rather than in the passage of time leading to personal illnesses and death. Apithology may possibly have nothing of value to add to existing professional medical practice in the mitigation of illness. There is, however, great potential in the health practices of caring for wellbeing. Existing health care practices may already have apithological components (e.g. in medical practice; graceful dying, traumaless birthing, natural aging, processes of caring). But we have not yet even begun to define the full range of practices for all healths; such as ecological healths, societal healths, or humanity's healths. This itself, is an immense task. As equally immense as has been our study of illness to date. Apithology simply begins an inquiry beyond what is, in the nurturance of living, without challenge to what we already do in the preservation of life.

SEEING IT

Question #17 - If an apithologist was working in your community, how would you know?"

There are many people working in your community apithologically. This is where social cohesion, communal vision, interpersonal trust, mutual respectfulness, selfless contribution and community spirit all arise from. A distinction is that apithology is the detailed study of these naturally occurring dynamics, particularly where there is the inexplicable presence of their absence.

There are a few recognisable artifacts of applied apithology practice. These usually occur as forms that enable or attract greater coherence in meaning - more meaningfulness. They are unique to each situation and context. The creation of emergent trichotomies is one such artifact of the practice of an apithological inquiry. The only difficulty is it takes an apithologist to discern one of these forms from a simple trilogy of ideas. Perhaps it is the case that we intimately feel when there is a failure of apithology, rather than know of its presence. As we move our attention to the presence of apithological work, it is the potential absence of this, that may be the real signal for concern.

LIVING IT

Question #18 - How do I live apithologically, and do I need to be in an apithological space within myself to practice apithology externally.

This question is the one we have spent the most time on collectively. Because apithology is primarily an embodied form of practice that enacts minds enabling greater caring, it is difficult to conceive of a practice of apithology that does not have a coherence in its embodied, intentional and compassionate forms. The conjunction of body.speech.mind is central to an understanding of the dynamics of apithology. Emergent potential occurs in their conscious configuration.

Each practitioner has their own path and practice - and their own timeline. The entry point to practice may also be different for each person. Yet one common feature of success is in the formation of intention. Entering intention is the key that unlocks all doors. The often overlooked element is this exploration must also be collaborative. A community of support provides an important enabler of embodiment. There are some clear reasons for this. It appears that those contributing most move through easiest, possibly because they have already begun to practice. Establishing the space allows their own grace. To paraphrase a traditional aphorism for a new apithological context: "If you want to go nowhere fast, go alone. If you want to go somewhere further, let us go together."

UNIQUE SOLUTIONS

Question #19 - "What's the problem that Apithology uniquely solves?"

This is: "The problem of our reliance on problems." Apithology resolves the primary problem with

problems being that, as constructions of our thoughts, their resolution removes only the tension of a situation, not the forms of mind that led to the situation's origin and cause. Problem solving is what we do. The situation is real, the problem is definitional. The solution is remedial. The form of resolution is determined by presumptions in the question. Each solution then sets up the causes for the next problem, patiently awaiting reification. Apithology re-examines the addictive dichotomy of problems and solutions fundamentally.

Specifically, apithology looks directly at the tendency to pursue the ever receding potential for the alleviation of suffering by the chasing of our present problems into our future, mostly after their causation. It pauses in this never-ending quest ... and asks is there a potentially different approach and what inquiries would be involved to enable this. In this pause, the apithological inquiry may yield nothing of value. This is why the chasing must at the same time also continue. Yet it may also reveal on each occasion a path to resolution of our future problems prior to their formation. A new capacity then results for all. The effect of each occurrence is generative to future potential. The only difficulty is in our present capacity for the holding of a moment, to enable even a beginning. Perhaps the real role of the apithologist, is the creation of this enabling space.

AMAZING PRACTITIONERS

Question #20 - "What types of people are most likely to become: a) attracted to Apithology; and b) amazing Apithology practitioners?"

We feel that apithology is something that people come to. This is often because they already have this orientation and desire to become more conscious of their skills within a community of collaborative and comparative practice. It may also be because they have exhausted one particular approach and are developing the capacity to take a different path or perspective in a renewed ethic of service. There is something about the quality of caring that distinguishes those likely to see themselves as needing to do this role. Strength of integrity without rigidity of identity, seems to be a common quality.

As to amazing practitioners, we are at the very early stages of a vast inquiry. It is the practitioners who are amazed at present at what is before them. One quality

though has appeared early on. This is the quality of unremarkableness. Flawless and beautiful apithology practice is virtually imperceptible. Nothing is done and everything simply occurs as it should, naturally and effortlessly. For how would we hope to intervene in the unfolding of what already is existent in potential? Its practice is more a quality of watchfulness and mindfulness that enables by ensuring all things are present for the potentials occurring. What results is remarkable and amazing. That is because it is simply the process of Life in formation. All that is needed is the most subtle of turnings, with astute timing. We find not much else was ever required. The inquiry that enables this, is of course, vast.

CONCLUSIONS

On reflection into these responses, perhaps in apithology there are no conclusions. Each statement, being the results found on inquiry from experiences to date, is open to challenge as new information becomes apparent. Yet as statements of form, they invite inquiry into their self-discovery which (subject to them being mistakenly taken to be statements of how things must be) potentially disclose a process of inquiry into how things can become. Apithology as a practice does not propose to provide all the answers to every problem. There are much better philosophies more suited to this task. Instead, apithology proposes a way of inquiring into the nature of our questions, seeking unknown and novel emergences, that may surprise and delight. Perhaps, all we can hope to find in this approach, rather than conclusions, are continuously new beginnings.

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NOTES

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