

Appendix One: Ready and Inspired to Create My Cloth (My African Great Story) - Look For Me In The Whirlwind

I greet with awe the morning sun,
 For this may be the day of days
 When some small word of mine could lure
 A mind to probe uncharted ways.

Preparedness,
 Ella A. Frye, *The Clearing House*,
 Vol. 40, No. 9 (May, 1966), p. 558

In this weave I focus on my readiness to complete my studies, the nature of the moment that I am in, how intentions have changed over the course of my study and my commitment to hold myself to account through this living theory thesis.

I am ready and my readiness is embraced as an attendant quality, which is affording me a feeling of preparedness and prompt willingness to inquire. I have that feeling that is characterised by a natural effortlessness to dialogue, much like when Jane Austen writes in (*Pride and Prejudice*, Chapter 15), of ‘a happy readiness of conversation --- a readiness at the same time perfectly correct and unassuming’.

This is how I am feeling as I open this study. It is a feeling that I know. I have had this feeling before. It is a feeling that sparks my imagination, keeps me alive and alert to the challenges of my studies and sustains my freshness as I stay attuned to the contours of the myriad living inquiries that enables this study to breathe. Indeed, it is a feeling that enables me to breathe. It is a feeling when I at my best, as I am now, imagine the universe luminously.

You see...

'How I am now (truly appreciating my soulful being for purposefully doing) is qualitatively different from any sense of 'being for doing' that I have embraced at any other time in my life.'

This is the intriguing self-perception that is at the heart of this multi-media presentation of my work leading towards the completion of my Ph.D. programme at the Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice (University of Bath).

I say intriguing, because this study, initially stimulated by an interest in affirming and improving my professional practice (Whitehead), as contained in my originating thesis title, *(The Making And Un-makings In The Making Of Me, Affirming And Improving The Professional Practices Of An African Storyteller And Educator)*, is now presented with the overarching title of 'My African 'Great Story'.

Integral is my embodiment of the African Voice as a way of being and becoming, embrace of the Great Work as a personal and universe objective, and commitment for the rediscovered African Voice (Okri 2004; Charles 2007) and the Great Work (Berry 2000) to be in the room as one.

Celebrated are the twinned source dimension of my leadership and social action, exemplified in the Paut Neteru (Amen 1990) and Scharmer's Theory U and presencing (Scharmer 2000). In this way, the 'Tree of Life' and 'path to social emergence', Neter and field, warp and weft and roots are enjoined, as I embrace an emergent vital bicultural complementation in the creation of my cloth, My African Great Story.

I have over course of the study built on my original thesis intentions, extended my learning objectives and transformed my thesis and indeed, myself.

Thus, when I say that I am ready, I mean that I am living life as inquiry (Marshall 1999). I am living 'I' as integrated opposites ((Whitehead 1989), I am inclusional. I am taking an attitude to inquiry that assures quality, and in which I am present.

When I say that I am ready, it is a self-efficacious readiness. Bandura (1986, p. 391) defines perceived self-efficacy, as "a judgement of one's capacity [at least partially, one's preparedness] to accomplish a certain level of performance," as an important individual personal characteristic or disposition. Efficacy expectations are one part of Bandura's two-component efficacy model. The other part is outcomes expectations. Through outcomes expectations (Bandura, 1977, p. 193), one understands that a particular course of action will produce certain outcomes, whether or not one can perform the necessary activities oneself (efficacy expectations).

Self-efficacy is a central motivational concept in current psychological theory, and Ashton and Webb (1986, p. 155) think it has the potential to link ideas on intrinsic motivation, notions of personal causation, attribution theory, and expectancy theory in a comprehensive motivational theory. All four theories, like self-efficacy, highlight the importance of the individual's personal control or power to shape events.

It is in the context of my feelings of personal power to shape events that I consider that I have a readiness, which enables me to explore living experiences to the fullest, invite memories of lived experiences, interrogate consciousness in-depth, and to

levels not previously undertaken. I am motivated to reflect on ‘the makings and un-makings in the making of me, as an Educator embodying the African Voice’. I am also prepared to recourse previously travelled living pathways, with a new valuing social living gaze, and to “discover gems of experience” that could guide current and future ‘soulful being for purposeful doing’ (perspective and practice). Furthermore, I am also willing to venture beyond self-imposed boundaries and limits, and to “journey far outside the box”.

My journey has been a compelling over the course of this study, affording a fascinating “freeing” process for me. For now, I want to go beyond the beyond and excavate the hidden landscapes, which may not be apparent in my mind’s eye, and to see what emerges (Polanyi).

This is so much different, yet still connected to how I was when I started out the CARPP journey. Then, I wrote in my transfer paper’s introduction (2002) entitled, *‘Let the Words Flow... Trust In Myself To Find Appropriate Structures On The Way’ the following:*

As I start to write this transfer paper for the umpteenth time, I have promised myself that I will not start again. This will be it. I will pull all my thoughts together and let the words flow. I have an idea of what I would want to write, so as I await the replacement regulations I will focus on what I would like to consider in this paper. I have to say that I feel somewhat uncomfortable, particularly as I do not have a structure in place, as I would like, to give the appropriate consideration to the many pathways that I have had to travel since commencing CARPP 7. Despite this though, I sense that now I have made that decision to start and this will be it, then what I will write, will be all right. I feel now, that no matter how I write and what I want to say and consider is structured, it is the writing, saying and the considering that is of importance, at this point in time. I will trust myself to find appropriate structures on the way. I will see what structures emerge as a result of my writings, sayings and considerations.

I hear myself saying, “that does not sound very academic”, and I remember Jack Whitehead. “Value your embodied knowledge; engage in purposeful living inquiries and illicit your own standards of judgement; and in the context of the academy, appreciate that you may have entered as a student, but view yourself now also as a knowledge creator.” (Phillips, 2002)

I hope that I have sustained that spontaneous and audacious quality evident in the foregoing highlight of how I started out on my studies. However, I feel I have moved away from how I began the CARPP 7 journey, really not knowing what to expect or what I would have to do and feeling somewhat disorganised. Of course, I knew I wanted to follow the programme that would lead to completion of the Doctorate, but what I would I have to do to get there was unclear.

In these early times it appeared as if there would be sufficient time to sort this lack of clarity on my part. However, the search for clarity is not once and for all, it is a continuous journey and time would be premium over the course of the whole study, just as it was in preparation for the completion of the ‘transfer paper’. It seemed but a moment between when I commenced the programme, particularly as I had lost some time, the result of illness, that I had to complete my ‘transfer paper’. I did have some ideas though and I used them in the presenting of my case for the development of a self-study focused on *“the makings and un-makings in the making of me – affirming and improving the professional practices of the African Storyteller”*.

However, I am now much better prepared knowing the academy’s regulations and can appreciate myself more fully as student and knowledge creator. It is with a different quality of confidence that I now write and summon up my thoughts and direct them to wide-ranging objectives and inquiries integral to my studies. I am ready and it is hoped that this is evident in how I have inquired with care, for it is

not with an attitude of wanton abandon that I am motivated in this study. It is a caring attitude that informs how the inquiries are effected and through acknowledging that I am ready for such a challenge, that self-permission has been given to me to act to know, to reflect on my acting to know and knowing and to act to know again, 'living life as inquiry' (Marshall 1999).

There is also permission to appreciatively share my journey, tell my African Great Story, to have dialogue about the nature of my inquiries and findings, to critically explore explanations and meanings, to consider lessons learned and appraise what I have done to improve how I communicate my Africanness as a 'way of being and becoming' to Africans, non-Africans, the academy and the widest community (as I contribute to the Great Work (Berry 2000).

Whirlwind Of An Appreciative Event

You see, I have a sense that I am in the whirlwind of an appreciative moment/event that has and is affording me the opportunity to examine myself in the moment and in motion, purposefully.

However, I say appreciative moment/event somewhat guardedly, knowing that when I inform, "How I am now (my soulful being for purposeful doing²¹) is qualitatively different from any sense of being for doing that I have held at any other time in my life", I know in many ways this "intriguing self-perception" is a truism. This is so, because each moment in life, for me, is a new moment.

²¹ Being for doing ... not separate includes (soul)

I know though that each new moment cannot be wholly appreciated, for there is too much that is occurring relating to self, relations and actions, knowingly and unknowingly, in any particular moment. Furthermore, even if each moment could be wholly appreciated, I am not sure that such a level of detailing would be of value. Yet, that temptation to detail exists. However, I am mindful of how difficult it would be to work with such an inexhaustible collection of information. Indeed, in my view it would probably be incomprehensible, and though the challenge is always towards gathering the fullest information, for effectively inquiring into one's "purposeful being for doing", such a level of detailing may be unnecessary (certainly to commence valuable appreciative inquiry).

There are though, amongst those many, many moments of being new, particular moments when one can appreciate that something different is occurring, possibly the emergence of a new direction for inquiries, a sense of a transforming self or increased understanding for new and improved ways of doing. These particular moments are what I am calling appreciative moments²², and indeed they can be just that, lasting a moment (requiring spontaneity). However, these appreciative moments are also the product of the aggregation of living experiences over time. They are derived from living experiences in motion leading to qualitative transformations. It is the aggregation of living experiences in motion leading to qualitative change that I term an appreciative event²³ (planned).

I consider, that it is these appreciative moments and events that provide the veritable content (generated and being generated) of much import in this study. They provide the springs (selvages) and wells (fells) for purposeful inquiry across

²² Appreciative moment

²³ Appreciative Event: an event that affords inquiry

the landscape of living experiences (that is the large fabric of My African Great Story). The spring (selvage) is the moment. The well (fell) is the event. It is in this dynamic weave of activities that changes in living experiences would be considered, affirmed and result in continuing or new actions.

Thus, my readiness to complete this study is an appreciative moment (selvage), the culmination of an appreciative event (well) and site for inquiry. Also when I remarked that I embraced a way of being “qualitatively different from any sense of being for doing that I have held at any other time in my life”. This too is an appreciative moment, the culmination of an appreciative event and a further site for inquiry. Additionally, when I remarked on my extended focus that now characterises the study. Again this is an appreciative moment, the culmination of an appreciative event and an additional site for inquiry.

Hence, in each of these instances, when changes are noticed in ways of being and activities in the moment, they are appreciative moments. When, they are evaluated as the product of living experiences in motion culminating in qualitative transformations, they are seen as appreciative events. However, whether appreciative moment or event, together they are sites for inquiry.

Indeed, it is in this way that substantive developments and changes in the study have to be seen. Each development being reflective of my particular focus at the time of the change, a consequence of how I wanted to offer explanation of living experiences in motion and the result of increasingly more in-depth inquiries impacting on the study’s scoping and landscaping.

Thus it was not surprising, particularly in regard to the study's title and focus, there have been many development and changes. *"An Appreciative Inquiry, The Makings and Un-makings In The Making Of Me, Affirming And Improving Professional Practices Of An African Storyteller/Educator (The Community In Me And Me In The Community)"* and *"The Makings and Un-makings in the Making of Me – Affirming and Improving the Educator's Professional Practices and Qualities of Leadership (Beyond the Storytelling: Towards a Dynamic African Pedagogy)* are just two of the title changes used prior to arriving at my present purposeful focus.

The many title changes were evidence of inquiries being undertaken, shift in inquiry focus, as well as, the creation of new platforms for on-going inquiries. Yet there were occasions when I scolded myself in being too pedantic. However, I now appreciate those multiple starts as integral to the rigour that I am applying to the study, wanting to share my fullest understanding of living experiences, offering the greatest clarification of those living experiences and to be clear about what it is I want to communicate in the context of my study authentically.

At every level I have asked myself the question how did I get here. This can be evidenced in my explanation of how I came up with my originating title contained in my transfer paper (2002) wherein is noted:

I am thinking again and I am saying to myself, "Hold up! How did I get here? How did I get to 'the makings and un-makings in the making of me – affirming and improving the professional practices of the African storyteller in me'?"

"Hmm! I inhale and then exhale, recalling how initially I wanted to focus my studies simply on improving my professional practices at the Sankofa Learning Centre, without any obvious thought about self-inquiry or sharing perspectives. The focus

on self-study and sharing though would come into dramatic effect, when at the outset of the CARPP 7 journey, each participant had to present and share collages depicting who they were and what they did. I remember having to look deep inside of self, to conjure up images that would depict something about who I am and would be characteristic of my life involvements. Values relating to self, family and community were central to the visual offering that I shared.

As a result of these early on-course experiences I began reconsidering the appropriateness of the focus of my intended studies. Nothing obvious came immediately to mind. However, further on-course experiences presented opportunities for new areas of investigation through the exploration of new concepts or old concepts in new ways. I became familiar with embodied knowledge, embodied values and standards of judgement. I also became familiar with first person inquiry, second person inquiry and third person inquiry. Further to this, I became familiar with living theories, living values and living contradictions.

Of importance here though, were the on-course conditions being created, within which I could share in the way that I share and for others to share in the ways that they share. As a result of these conditions we reached for higher and higher levels of inner conversations and collaborations relating to who am I, the values that I hold and the influences on self.

It is my view that the collaboration of tutors and students on the CARPP 7 programme, is in no small measure, responsible for the positive conditions created for meaningful self-inquiries and the sharing of the content of those inquiries. It is also my view that it is in these conditions that I have been able to blossom. I feel that

I have been able to be myself and in doing so share aspects of self, values, experiences, vision and sense of being. I have also been able to share in the way that I share - the things that I have wanted share – and feel that what I have shared has been heard, listened to and received. I have also heard, listened to and received from what others have shared of themselves, their values, their experiences, their visions and their sense of being.

It is in this context that the inner recall of events and life stories emerged.

Changed Intentions and Transforming Professional Practices

The study has also now developed to become much more than the ‘acting to know’ the makings and un-makings in the making of me, appreciation of the signal events in my living narrative and informing on what I am doing improve my professional practice.

So, in focusing on my life, particularly relating to my living and professional practice I want to depict in the moment, moments in the on-going (dynamic) process of thinking, sharing and acting (cyclical, non-cyclical or seemingly so) that informs on who I am, my relationships, what I do and how I do what I do (through multi-media presentation). However, in what I am presenting in that moment I also want to show that it heralds my transforming, my becoming.

Further, the study is now much more than my formative intention of wanting to affirm how my passionate embrace of storytelling and its educational influence and promise is linked to my authentic Africanness and positive relationship building. Of

course, this is still of critical importance for evidence of how storytelling is emergent in African traditions (“orature - oracy”²⁴) and my own storytelling makes impact throughout the study and the notion that storytelling can contribute to the creation of inclusional relationships and encourage democratic living forms and social formations opposed to oppression in all its guises at diverse levels (family, organization and community) through engaging dialogue is sustained.

Additionally, I give account of how transformations have occurred and how I have arrived at holding comfortably the notion “that where I am or have reached at any particular moment in time is just that (completely). Yet, the scope for positive self-transformations remains a powerful prospect (positive incompleteness). On complete and incomplete I say more later in the section on action research methodologies. It is hoped that my inquiries and own stories give evidence of my transformations taking place.

Changed Purpose, Advocacy and Notion of Community Learning and Action

Therefore the study has also become much more than my early vision of contributing to ‘community learning’ and participation in ‘community action’ that focused my attention and encouraged alignment with my living purpose (to do good, to educate and be active in opposing injustice) and live advocacy (to heal and protect), so as to find better ways through ‘acting to know’ (cycles of reflection and action) and theorising on:

²⁴ Orature - oracy

- What works in the improvement of the educational achievement of black children;
- What works in the education of black parents in their relationship with their children at home, in school and in the community;
- What works in the education of black families as they support and challenge their members and as they simultaneously are supported and challenged;
- What works in the education of the black community as we interrogate our living experiences seeking to find novel ways for its sustainability; and
- What works in the education of the wider community (other professionals) relating to more effective engagement, building better relations and co-creating living forms and social formations that increase the educational achievement and life chances of black children, their families and members of their community (black community) and the wider community.

This is so, because there have been changes in my unique purposes (indicated earlier), which have been reframed over the duration of the study from “to do good, to educate and to active in the interest of community”. It is now appreciated as “to do good, to educate and to be a change catalyst in the interest of the widest community”. “To heal, protect, create is sustained as my live advocacy and the underpinning of my living and professional practice”. The notion of community now extends beyond the human community as I learn to live more “naturely” contributing to the Great Work (Berry 2000)

Hence, I also give evidence of how I have inquired into how I am with my purpose and live advocacy (healing, protecting, creating) co-creating life valuing environments (Whitehead). In this the improvement of my professional practice

through embracing (living) a dynamic Africanness (Addo, 1982) and inquiring into the “makings and un-makings in the making of me” remains integral. There remains a connectedness to my originating inquiries. This is so, because in wanting to improve life in its entirety and living purposefully in the world, the improvement of my living experiences, influencing values and professional practice are central.

Further, I give evidence of how I have inquired into what I am doing to improve how I communicate the African voice in ways that are authentic African, and at the same time understandable to non-Africans, the academy and the widest community. I evidence the values that give life meaning and purpose to what I do as (teacher, community development worker and consultant) with a valuing social living pedagogy.

Dynamic Ways Of Being African

Integral to these inquiries is giving evidence of the inclusional and dynamic ways of being African that attests to a loving spirituality that draw from the recall of early loving childhood living experiences that enabled the embrace of positive identities and responsibility and accountability to family and community; what I have learned and continue to learn about Africa’s glorious past and Africans contribution to world development (Cheikh Anta Diop); and my own living experiences of self in family, co-creating in work environments and performing rites at community events.

Ways of being African too, that draw from early diasporan pan-Africanist liberatory ideologies²⁵; philosophies and practice of Africans in resistance and revolt²⁶ in varied

²⁵ Liberatory ideologies: (Ethiopianism, Garveyism [Up You Mighty Race] and Negritude [Aime Cesaire]);

forms; and the potentiality of my African Humanism/ Living Ubuntu to create Valuing Social Living²⁷ formations and environments.

Influences Outside of the African Experience

However, I produce explanations of the influences outside of the African experience, but connecting with that experience and contributing to my understanding and learning (Whitehead) towards valuing social living and creating valuing social environments. These influences informed on liberatory ideas and included (Karl Basil Davidson [“Black Mother, 1961], Ivan Illich [“Deschooling Society”, 1970 and “Tools for Conviviality”, 1980], Freire [“Pedagogy of Oppressed”, 1970 and “Cultural Action for Freedom”])

These works have importance in themselves, however, their connectedness with the African experiences showed how devaluing experiences extended beyond that of the African experience made valid connections with the experiences of oppressed peoples in a world context. These liberatory ideas brought to attention class oppression, the oppression of women, the oppressive character of organisations, concepts for revolutionary change and revolutionary practice in different contexts. They also evidenced the connections and interconnections with revolutionary social living formations (including alliances) that encouraged and realised my involvement and participation in the building of social living and revolutionary organisations.

²⁶ (Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman [Underground Railroad], Nat Turner, Nanny of Accompong [Maroons], Paul Bogle, William Edward Burghardt Dubois [Souls of Black Folks], Booker T Washington [Tuskegee Institute], Frantz Fanon [Wretched of the Earth], Martin Luther King Jnr, Malcolm X, Angela Davis, Abdel Nasser, Carter Woodson, CLR James [Black Jacobins], Amílcar Cabral [PAIGC], Samora Machel, Josina Machel, Walter Rodney [How Europe Underdeveloped Africa], Walter Sisulu, Claudina Jones, Winnie Mandela, Nelson Mandela and Steve Biko to name a few)

²⁷ (Consciencism – [Nkrumah]; Harambee – [Kenyatta]; Humanism – [Kaunda]; Ujaama – [Nyerere]; Rastafarianism; Kwaanza and that Ubuntu – [Mandela] way of being that Charles has brought into the academy).

Thus, in this social living theory thesis too, I also to inquire into how my valuing social living practice is influenced by liberatory ideas and contributes to how I am improving living with my purpose (building alliances) co-creating life valuing environments (*Whitehead*).

Influence With Co-Creators

Furthermore, I inquire into my influence with co-creators, family members and community, using their own voices to evidence how we have lived. For example, I inquire into our relationships as co-creators as we built relationships with people on whose lives we wanted to make impact and organisations that we wanted to have transformatory impact. I inquire too, into relationships with family members and to evidence their stories of how I have lived family and the nature of my impact on that living social formation. Additionally, I inquire into how I live community and evidence how I am with my community valuing social living and contributing to the creation of valuing social living environments for impact in the world celebrating being African.

Holding My Life To Account

Thus, in this social living theory thesis I want to hold my life to account (*The Makings and Unmakings in the Making of Educator with an African Pedagogy*), by sharing valuing and devaluing experiences and producing explanations of the influences on my learning (*Whitehead*) towards inclusional and dynamic ways of being African that attest a loving spirituality. I also want to show how affirming embodied values (*to heal, protect, create and advocate*) and ways of being (*embracing inclusional and dynamic*

ways of being African attesting to a loving spirituality) appreciating that everyone has a unique purpose in the world (*purposeful self recognition*) inspires me towards co-creating purposeful valuing social living relationships and environments or communities.

Furthermore, I want also to show that it is this dynamic interplay of living my embodied values, now incorporating action and reflection²⁸ and noticing who I am and how I am, my relationships (personal, familial, organizational and communal), what I do and how I do what I do that is the challenge for me, as I seek to express my criticality in clarifying their meanings and forming them into my epistemological living standards of judgment in this social living thesis towards improving life in its entirety as I am increasingly living inclusional, purposeful, valuing and dynamic ways of being African that attest a (life affirming) loving spirituality.

This way of being is passionately embraced as a transformatory living perspective, embodying my ontological values (celebrating Africentredness²⁹) and informing on epistemological living standards of judgment of holistically lived practice for sustainable living and a sustaining world (Thomas Berry, Plotkin).

I am so “proud to be African” building loving relationships, co-creating relevant organisations and caring communities with purposeful intent.

(Read the notes on Wyclef Jean that follows and listen to his celebratory song. “I am so proud to be African”, sharing his story, but an important aspect of the tale that I relate on my way of being too).

²⁸ Action and reflection: increasingly living life as inquiry, exploring the dynamism of inclusionality, appreciating living with integrated opposites [inspired by Whithead's living contradictions] and becoming more naturely

²⁹ Africentredness

That examination of my self-transformations, improving my personal/professional life practices and use of action research methodologies are critical to this study. They are essential pivots that give focus of my action research and through their consideration evidence is given not only of the distance that I have travelled since my commencement on the CARPP 7 programme, but also gives evidence of lived experiences beyond that period. Thus, in terms of my inquiry, questions are posed relating to lived experiences from my earliest years that explore their impact on my being for purposeful doing (the makings and unmakings in the making of me) and how they shape present living experiences. The focus on action research is related to its relevance in making sense of lived experience. Improving personal/professional life practices is the objective. So how my transforming and how action research methodology contributes to such improvements are critical.

However, each time that I focus on the “work” that I need to do to complete my studies leading to a Ph.D. in Action Research and really have an urge to write, review something, to put “pen to paper”, as they say, though, in my case it is fingers to the keyboard.

The urge to work/write does not come without its complexities. This is so, because I want to write too in a way that not only describes who I am, what I do and my purpose for being in the world (“my being for doing”). I also want the write in way that it is inextricably linked to my “being for doing. That is, reflective of who I am, what I do and is a living statement of my lived experiences, embodied values and purposeful actions in the world. Furthermore, I want to write in a way that demonstrates that the very activity of writing itself is “live” inquiring/inquiry/action research. Hence, the varied presentational forms that I use

to reveal/evidence the character, content and influences on my “being for doing” are not an adjunct to the overall of inquiry. They are of critical importance and integral components of the action research methods used to inquire.

Writing/Working in this way, I considered would ensure that what I wanted to say, would be said. That the necessary presentational forms (prose, stories, poems, film and music) pertinent to “my being for doing” would emerge and that the presentational forms (as live inquiries) would complement, add value and assist in the “knitting” of the processes (inquiries and activities) integral to this Ph.D. in Action Research.

In my view, the prose, stories, poems, film and music (the presentational forms) that I have used have allowed me to say what it is I wanted say, how I wanted to say it and have been pivotal in the “knitting” of the processes (inquiries and activities) of this Action Research. They have been and are crucial in the distilling of my thought processes (clarifying, giving substance and affording meaning) for my “being for doing in the world”. They are reflective of my lived experiences and embodied values that offer historical and immanent perspectives (snapshots) that are used to inform present and future purposeful actions. They are integral to the activities used for eliciting purpose for my “action, inaction or just being still³⁰” in the world.

However, as I write/type now, I can acknowledge that I feel as if am beginning again concentrated activity that I hope will lead to the completion of my PhD studies.

Notice I said beginning again. I have been in this place before. Yet, though this is a new beginning and somewhat distinct from other beginnings, I do not consider this

³⁰ action, inaction or being still

new start as disconnected from earlier starts. This new beginning is decidedly connected to previous beginnings and characterises an on-going process of distillation, filtration and reflection on continuous live and lived experiences (inclusive of how I have begun before) trying to make sense of what it is I want to say and convey in this study. Indeed, I have been beginning again, again and again, and each time that I have had the urge to do something / focus / put “pen to paper” as is said, though, in my case it is fingers to the keyboard related to the “work” that I need to do to complete my studies leading to a Ph.D. in Action Research I have had to cast my thoughts back, make sense of them in the present and project them forward – all this seemingly in the same moment. There have been multiple starts.

Yet, I still affirm a readiness towards completion of my PhD studies. This again would not be the first time that I had affirmed such a readiness. This readiness, however, is unlike, the beginning again, again and again of concentrated activity towards completion of my studies. The readiness that I now embrace has been and is no stop – start affair with me.

This is the character of readiness that I bring to this study.... A readiness that was not apparent when I started out on this PhD journey. Now like Tracy Chapman “I want to wake up and know where I’m going”. I am ready.

“I want to go where the rivers are overflowing”

“I’m ready to let the rivers wash over me”

If it's love flowing freely, I'm ready

If the waters can redeem me, I'm ready

I'm ready and this is the spirit within which I initially focus on how I have overcome personal barriers to come terms with being back in the academy and feel sufficiently charged (responsible, accountable) to take positive action focused on the transforming of self. This is of importance for being back in the academy was an area of concern that I had to give attention in order to participate effectively, fully (much different to how I had participated previously) in studies leading towards completion of my Ph.D. in Action research. I am ready. Yes, I am ready.