

EMBA17 – Module 5

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ASSIGNMENT: Individual Assignment: Critical Conversations on
Ethics, Macro Economics, and Organising

COURSE CODE: Critical Conversations on Ethics, Macro
Economics, and Organising

Plagiarism Declaration

I know that plagiarism is wrong. Plagiarism is to use another's work and pretend that it is one's own. Allowing another to copy my work and use it as their own is also plagiarism.

This assignment is my own work. I have not allowed and will not allow anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as his or her own work.

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Signature: *N. Coutts*

MODULE 5: INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENT: CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS ON ETHICS, MACRO-ECONOMICS, AND ORGANISING

QUESTION 1

Your own prior background and views. We all come from somewhere, from some corner of the world. We have been shaped by our families, by our experiences, and by our studies. In this course, we expect to learn more about ourselves from our interactions with others. In this part of the final paper, you are asked to do your best to express succinctly in general terms your viewpoint as of 7:45 o'clock in the morning of May 22, 2016 (the date and hour of the beginning of the course). Perhaps during the course, you will come to understand better what you yourself thought before the course started.

ANSWER

I was born in Durban, South Africa in 1964, to parents of whom one was a teacher and the other a building contractor. My grandparents were of Dutch, French, German and Indian descent which resulted in my parents being classified as coloured in apartheid, South Africa.

Although I was living in what was at that time a tourist paradise, in walking distance to beautiful beaches, play-pools, a year-round fun fair on the beach front, and other beautiful tourist attractions, the constant response as a child to requesting to go into these places, was that it was for "whites-only". This extended to not being able to sit on any bench, board any bus, or use any toilet, etc.

My parents believed that our coloured school-based education system was below par. They, therefore, took it upon themselves to extend our learning through practical teachings. Every school holiday we embarked on road trips, eventually having covered every village, town, city in South Africa.

During these road trips, we were taught mathematics, by playing games based on the car's number plates. Whenever we pulled over to the side of the road, we were given lessons based on whatever was present, this included the soil, rocks, stars, plants, animals, clouds, weather patterns, the engineering feats that went into the dams, bridges, railway lines or roads, and the architectural style of the buildings etc.

We visited the graveyards within the villages/towns etc. to understand the history of the people and to get a sense of major events which occurred, e.g. health related epidemics. We visited every museum or place of interest we were allowed into. While on the road we listened to all genres of music and learned about the history of the particular genre or musician. We learned the basics of mechanics by watching our father fix the car if we broke down along the way. We plotted on maps all the villages/towns we had visited and tracked our respective journeys.

Back home, my mother recruited the services of a private music teacher to teach my siblings and me classical piano. We were the first family in the neighbourhood to own the entire set of Encyclopaedia books, a television set, and the first to own a computer – the Commodore 64. Growing up we were taught to play, cook, bake, clean, iron, mend, knit, sew, crochet, ride bicycles, motorbikes and finally drive a car.

My parents were very involved in the so-called “struggle” as my uncle was a politician for the then “Labour Party”. I suppose it was no surprise that I married a journalist, who was the Unrest Correspondent during the turmoil in the country.

During the political instability, I witnessed events of which I've spent many years trying to forget what I saw. I lived “the impossibility of politics”. I've witnessed first-hand the impossibility of governing to meet basic needs and to live well. I've witnessed first-hand the separation of politics from ethics and education.

I've lived, and am living through interesting times. But it wasn't a curse, instead, it's been an adventure. An amazing adventure which brought me to the EMBA and to this course. I thank you both, Gavin & Howard.

QUESTION 2

The solution to the mystery. The second lecture poses a mystery to be investigated. Why is it that at this point in history there is a large and growing movement for social responsibility? What are its motivations? Why is ethics becoming an integral part of many business models and competitive strategies? Why has it become the hottest topic in academic research on business?

ANSWER

The industrial revolution was preceded by social, economic and political changes. The impact of this revolution was an increase in the standard of living of the general population and an increase in the population.

Fast forward to today, and introduce the digital revolution into this equation. It was another socio-economic revolution from a Schumpeterian perspective. One of the effects of the digital revolution was an information age, facilitated by computer networking, the internet, and mobile phones, amongst others. The socio-economic impact was greater interconnectedness resulting in easier communication and the transparency or exposure of information.

This transparency and exposure of information allowed the people, who suddenly found themselves living in this global village, to join the dots. To connect causes and effects, and witness the unintended consequences. What also became evident was the connection and relationship between the companies, its societies, and its ethicalness.

“It’s in a company’s best interests to take good care of its economic and social environment, meaning its suppliers, its employees, its customers and the places where it operates.” –Franck Riboud, CEO

“In this complex global business environment of the 21st century, companies of every size face a multitude of ethical issues. Businesses have the responsibility to develop codes of conduct and ethics that every member of the organization must abide by and put into action. Fundamental ethical issues include concepts such as integrity and trust, but more complex issues include accommodating diversity, decision-making, compliance, and governance.” *(Kenneth V. Oster, List of Ethical Issues in Business)*

Now introduce the consumers' voice, being expressed through the various mediums, especially social media platforms. This has heightened the awareness of the emerging disparity between rich and poor. It's also been the platform used to mobilize communities to hold businesses accountable. Information can no longer be controlled by a handful of publishing houses, as these publishers are losing their credibility of producing authentic information. Bloggers and peers have usurped the reporters and journalists. Peer reviews are now held in higher esteem than any information which the business perfectly crafts.

This has forced companies to not only be accountable and responsible for the unintended consequences of their production of goods or services and its effects on the environment, which can today be measured but also to take cognisance of its people. The company's people includes the employees, the customers, and the wider communities aligned to its business either geographically or as a result of the impact of the business' mode of production.

There are many case studies where organizations are leading the way in this movement for social responsibility. Starbucks for example, have positioned themselves as “a world-class company with a conscience” where global social responsibility supporting ethical sourcing, farming communities, recycling, waste reduction, opportunity for young people, and many other worthy causes, has not only changed the meaning of coffee, but also the meaning of conducting business.

And so, the mystery unravels.

QUESTION 3

Unbounded organization as a realist worldview. A short definition of “unbounded organization” is: “aligning the organizational ecology: getting all actors in the activity system (local and national/international) to work in alignment with the goals of the societal enterprise.” In this course, we will have conversations about many facts, about the views of many authors, about many contemporary issues, about many historical events and processes. At least in the minds of the lecturers, there will be a thread running through it all connecting the first word of the first conversation with the last word of the last conversation. What ties the seventeen classes together? This is a connect the dots challenge. We (the lecturers) should, however, acknowledge that we may not be as coherent as we think we are. We may be more muddled and less clear than we feel. We hope you will feel free to criticize us and our “unbounded organization” idea.

ANSWER

The first words of this course began with “feelings of confusion” and ended with “ethics, and a resulting liberty, equality & fraternity”. Through all the confusion there was always a light, either depicted as words, i.e. “confusion is the door, that wisdom comes in through”, or a tool i.e. the geometric shapes, circles and boxes, which constantly anchored the mind and re-orientated our bearings amidst all the variety, confusion, and complexity of the world around us.

But the constant theme which ran through the various lectures and conversations, and which was approached from various perspectives, was unbounded organization: “aligning the organizational ecology: getting all actors in the activity system (local and national/international) to work in alignment with the goals of the societal enterprise” and ethics.

Our survival as humans, especially during the hunter-gatherer phase, was due to the inter-connectedness of our ability to self-organise, to develop language and ethics, because language, human forms of sexual attraction, stories, and rituals gave human groups ethics and therefore coherence, enabling cooperation in gathering, hunting, child-rearing, and other vital functions. *“There is no community without a community story.” “Today we can build community worldwide because all humans have a story we share.” “It is the earth story.” Tom Berry.*

Cultural animals can learn technologies and pass them on from generation to generation by education. These were the homeostatic responses to natural challenges that made it possible for culture, therefore ethics, therefore humans, to continue in existence.

Human beings, the cultural animals, the ethical animals - embedded, biologically within our evolution was our ethicalness. This was presented through a systematic historical approach, beginning with a realist metanarrative of the history of nature, continuing with the history of culture, and culminating in the rise of the modern culture of business and government with its ethical and macroeconomic problems, now seen in a realist light. *“Because no human group can survive without morals. Every human group generates the rules it lives by. - Emile Durkheim (1857-1917).*

The legal framework of the modern economy forms the foundations on which business and other principal institutions of the modern world are built. This legal framework and security were especially necessary for making economic decisions. While pertaining to the rise of the modern world, macroeconomics is about what causes the wealth of nations?

Is it time to re-evaluate the role of business and ourselves as managers in recreating a new earth/human story? A narrative which now gives new meaning to our beliefs and creates new experiences and a new way of being. It is a great responsibility, but each one of us can make a difference.

QUESTION 4

This course presupposes a prior course in macroeconomics you have already taken. Occasionally ideas considered in that course will come up again in this course; for example, the gold standard, foreign direct investment (FDI), debt. It would perhaps be fair to characterize the prior course as empirical and quantitative. At the end of this course you should have an ethical perspective on macroeconomics and on organizing or at least you should be able to articulate an ethical perspective if you choose to regard macroeconomics and management from an ethical point of view. This is another connect the dots question. More than asking you to repeat what you have learned, you are challenged to reflect on what you have learned in the two courses, to relate them to each other, and to synthesize them. This course will seek to understand the causal powers that generate the phenomena that are empirically observed and quantitatively measured. It will go beyond the dilemmas and trilemmas of economics to engage with the wider contexts of ecology, of the historical evolution of modern culture, and of social psychology. Our general viewpoint (of which the impossibility of simultaneously stabilizing the value of the currency and generating sufficient employment serves as an emblematic example) sees that the problems of macroeconomics have no satisfactory solutions. Economics is a dismal science. It is a science in a box. Management, in contrast, is not dismal. It is a science of organization. It thinks outside the box. Humanity can organize solutions to its problems. In the words of Peter Drucker, one of the great founders of management science, "You cannot predict the future, but you can create it." The same part of the final paper that asks you to synthesize what you have learned from the two courses also whether you understand the claim that what is not possible for economics is possible for management and whether you find it persuasive.

ANSWER

Macroeconomics can be defined as the “branch of the economics field that studies how the aggregate economy behaves”, by examining the phenomena of “inflation, price levels, the rate of growth, national income, gross domestic product and changes in unemployment”. “It focuses on trends in the economy and how the economy moves as a whole.” As such it “deals with the structure, performance, behaviour and decision-making of the whole, or aggregate, economy, instead of focusing on individual markets”. (Investopedia)

Major trends which came out of our lectures received on Macroeconomics was:

- a) The possibility of a collapse of the current macroeconomic view, as a result of a flawed system where most of the economic theories and principles that we've lived with are proving to be incorrect and unsustainable.
- b) The reason for this emergence was encased in much data and world history.
- c) Macroeconomics is limiting as a decision-making tool impacting on many lives.

The Ethics, Macroeconomics and Organization literature, on the other hand, suggests organizing things differently with a great emphasis on ethics and the influence of behaviour and philosophy.

If we question values of freedom and human agency, we see the workings of society as institutions made of rules. Creators of cultures, language, etc. We are living in a culture which has been created by humans and favoured by nature.

Modern ethics began arguing for freedom against kings and priests and evolved in the direction of calling for a social morality that would guarantee basic social and economic rights to all, like health care, education, employment, pensions.

What is ethics? Ethics are morals, but also the branch of philosophy that studies the justification of morals; Ethics, therefore, asks “Why these morals and not some other morals?”

Moreover, ethics requires that humans be free and that their freedom consists of their capacity to act from the concept of law. The true principle of ethics is “autonomy” i.e. the free rational being giving itself its own law which is to act from the pure concept of law.

As Macroeconomics, does not seem to be in a position to posit a solution for our future, it would be up to management to create a future for business and the people of the country, in which ethics particularly will play a huge role.

My experiences and tensions of being a manager in the corporate sector were that I saw unethical short term decisions made which were detrimental either to the staff, or sustainability of the business, or both, but these decisions were being made to achieve bottom line economic targets so that massive bonuses could be received.

Since the manager is only asked to account for his current term and is being rewarded within that financial year, the managers are driving businesses down to make a quick and handsome return, then they move to the next company. New managers are then left having to fix the errors of the past and forego the bonuses.

For unbounded organization to be effective in organizations, in getting all actors in the activity system to work in alignment with the goals of the societal enterprise, this new way of thinking, and behaviour would need to be reinforced from the top of the organization. Secondly, current remuneration structures, especially of senior and executive managers, would need to be relooked. Adopting an unbounded organization mindset should encompass an alignment within all facets of the organization as well, as it wouldn't be able to be partly introduced, while the old system is still in progress.

Unbounded organization in practice would need to be singularly and clearly defined to promote a new clarity while eliminating the old options and aligning to the new values.

QUESTION 5

The end of work. Although speaking of “the end of work” is an exaggeration because it is not likely that all work will end, the phrase is a commonly used label. It labels the tendency for more and more of what humans used to do for a living being done by robots, 3D printers, automated farming, IT, and in general by a steady stream of new technologies made possible by exponentially increasing knowledge. As the market-value of the human body and brain as factors of production plummets toward zero, the outcome might be a world like that depicted in the film Blade Runner where a few people own the technologies (in the film the technologies include robots indistinguishable from human beings) and exclude everyone else from their prosperity. Or it might be a paradise where humans devote themselves to art, sports, and music while intelligent machines minister to their every need. The purpose of including it in the final assignment is to ask you to apply what you have learned (or what you have concluded from your reflections) to an issue that requires rethinking the societal enterprise. You may be able to find a little time to learn more about this issue quickly on the Internet. (Search under “Jeremy Rifkin” and “Robert Reich.” This will lead you both to them and to their critics.)

ANSWER

Humans, at the moment, are the only species who have to pay in order to be able to survive, i.e. for their basic needs of food, water, shelter, clothing etc. to be met.

There is something very sick in that.

Before the industrial revolution, there wasn't this life and death attachment to selling labour, so as to pay for needs and wants. This commercialization of labour has created a society of people on hamster wheels. Going faster and faster in a bid to earn more and more, to be able to purchase things they don't have the chance of enjoying because they are so busy working.

It resulted in a society which is disconnected from the earth, from nature, from what is normal and natural, and even disconnected from their own feelings, body, and creativity.

Crafts and artistry have generally been reduced in stature and replaced with people who are in a constant state of doing and following.

Great philosophers and thinkers have reduced in numbers because 'work' has eroded the time needed for thinking, reflecting and observing.

Even if robots, 3D printers, automated farming etc. is introduced, there is one element which cannot be replaced by a robot, or a computer, or a printer, and that is the energy and spirit of the human being. An example is that although we already have automated massage chairs which deliver a high-quality clinical massage, the therapeutic and healing element beyond the clinical massage, is lost by the absence of the human quality and the corresponding hormones released with human touch.

Similar examples are witnessed when babies are in medical incubation centres where human touch is excluded compared to when human touch is included.

It would, however, be wonderful for humans to do what they enjoy as opposed to what they have to do to earn a living.

I think it's time for the embedded ethics to rise to the surface in humans. For humans to get back in touch with the cycles of nature, and the interrelationship of nature with their bodies. For humans to no longer be dependent upon cash for their daily survival. For surpluses to be shared and dignity and respect restored to all. And it can be done.

Already organizations exist which trade using time as a basis. There is a village in the states where no money whatsoever is used and all work is voluntary. People in the village have on the contrary not resorted to laziness, they have rather volunteered to do the projects they love, increasing the energy and intent that goes into everything they do. It's not that people have stopped working; the work has just taken on a new meaning and has been disconnected from money.

QUESTION 6

The sixth topic is hope and hopelessness. One conclusion that might be drawn from the study of macro-economics and ethics today, and in general from the condition of South Africa and the world today, is that the outlook is bleak and there is not much if anything we can do to improve it. In general, but especially in the light of the discussions in this course, do you feel tempted to resign yourself to being a pessimist? What directions should thought and action move in to transform what many take to be a hopeless outlook for the future into a hopeful one? Notice that the question does not just ask for an objective assessment of the prospects. The ethical question what attitude we should take might be answered by saying we as leaders should adopt an optimistic attitude not because it reflects an accurate prediction of what the future will be, but because it is the right thing to do.

ANSWER

Yes, people in South Africa are currently feeling a sense of hopelessness and frustration. The frustration is especially being felt in the middle class. They are trying to do the right thing, but it's not leading to an improvement in their circumstances.

It is sad to realize that this is the same South Africa, which not too long ago, lived a life of hope, tolerance and even empathy under the leadership of Nelson Mandela. The country is experiencing a total lack of trust and confidence with the current president. The people have witnessed corruption waste and the effects of selfish decisions of the highest order, amongst its political, government and parastatal leaders, while they are being squeezed financially to a point where there is nothing more left to give, or cut from the budget.

But the people go on doing what they have been doing, because they are emotionally, mentally and physically drained in their bid to pay for their needs to survive. They are living lives where they are working abnormally long hours, taking work home, not being able to create a work/life balance, and where they don't find the time to think as they are so busy doing.

They are cut off from their connection to the earth and fear losing their jobs, so they continue holding on for dear life. When they can't any longer, and if they are in a position to, they emigrate. Hoping that the grass would be greener on the other side. But, grass is normally greener when it is fed manure.

South Africa is ripe for change. It's ripe for new leaders, who would lead differently and offer hope to the people of our beloved country. Leaders who don't perpetuate doing the same thing but expecting a different result. Leaders who are prepared to change a system which is not working, not just step into a current situation and be a new face perpetuating old ideals.

During South Africa's apartheid years, and the subsequent struggle for freedom, we had an older generation too scared to change the status quo, despite the unfairness, the inequality, and the lack of dignity and respect which was promulgated during this time. We had to wait for that generation to pass on. The youth at that time mobilized and immersed itself in the struggle for freedom from oppression. What I came to realize, however, was that we were so busy with the struggle, that we failed the next generation by not leaving sufficient home based mentors for them. This vacuum was filled by the likes of Opera, Dr. Phil, and heaven help us, the characters of TV soap operas. This generation either became followers or was so determined to have their say in everything, that they contributed to the vomit pit of social media without much thought.

We as leaders should now adopt an optimistic attitude, not because it reflects an accurate prediction of what the future will be, not only because it is the right thing to do, but because we have stood up, given it some thought, some organization, and some ethics, undertaken discourse, listened, reflected and then guided the people of our country to work in alignment with the goals for the betterment of all our people.

A second struggle? I thought I had hung up my coat. Ethical unbounded organizing, here I come.

QUESTION 7

The seventh topic concerns specifically what you as an individual or as a member of a group or movement you choose to adhere to can and should do. We will suggest a general scheme for contributing to growth points where modern culture is already transforming itself to make a better adjustment to reality.

There are ways to jump on bandwagons that are already going somewhere. In religious terms: Do not ask what to do with your life. Ask what God is doing and join it. A first step is to ask where there might be an overlap between what needs to be done and what you can do. For what message are you the right messenger? For what followers, could you be a leader? A second step is to look for messages, or ways to frame messages, that people will understand. There is no point in talking to ourselves. If people cannot understand a message they cannot possibly act on it. A third step is to select from the many things that people understand the themes that have legs. What is there energy for? What initiatives are attracting resources? There is no point in me constantly pushing my own pet idea if I am not getting any uptake showing that I have found a growth point that moves the energies of others. The fourth and most important point is whether what you can do is really making a difference to solve the problem. We are not necessarily contributing to getting the human species off the endangered species list just because we find a way to run a profitable business, or get a large government grant, or win an award for being an outstanding citizen, or get rave reviews from people who say coming to our workshop changed their lives. All of the above may be indicators that we are meeting a need and performing a useful social function. But the physical bottom line questions are: Are we really meeting needs? Are we really helping our culture to function sustainably and joyfully in its physical environment? Are we moving toward a fully nurturant society where we align across sectors for the common good?

ANSWER

As an individual, I am a member of a group of neighbours which have formed a street association. I offer leadership, administrative support, and out of the box thinking and suggestions to find solutions to the problems not only faced by the neighbours, but also the problems of the surrounding neighbourhood.

We supply employment to two asylum seekers and their extended families. We have “adopted” these families and rally support amongst the neighbours to cover these families’ needs. The two men who we employ maintain the cleanliness of our street and also fulfill a security function. Their wives do housework for different homes in the street. They bring their babies with them to work and one of the residents was honoured with being asked to be the Godmother of the one baby, who was also christened with the resident’s first name. We have sponsored one of the men through driving school, and have taught both men to read and write English. (Their native language is French).

Additionally, we have adopted the park at the end of our street, and look after the maintenance and upkeep of the park, the kiddies play-ground, the massive old trees, the benches and tables and also the ablution facilities. Recently we have started vegetable gardens in the parks in our suburb and offer free produce for anyone in the neighbourhood, including the people who live on the street, to pick whatever produce they personally need. It is not monitored in anyway, and we have not encountered any destruction or abuse of the facilities.

Additionally, in our street, is the Head-Office of an NGO, catering to the needs of homeless people. The residents in the suburb purchase books of coupons from various retailers in our suburb. When a beggar knocks at your door, you can issue the beggar with a voucher/s which entitles the beggar to a hot meal, or a paid for night at the shelter, or it can be exchanged for clothes, shoes, etc. This encourages conversation between the resident and the beggar, and restores some of the beggar’s dignity. It’s through the conversation that the resident determines which of the vouchers the beggar needs.

All residents in the street are in a Whatsapp group, which is used for security purposes, to inform your neighbours of any surplus products which you might have and are willing to part with, either for free or for a nominal fee dependent upon the product. This group chat allows us to assist each other in any way we can. To look out for each other’s pets, cars, homes, etc. and to celebrate or congratulate each other on any achievements or milestones.

The project has been so successful that property prices have increased in the street, and properties are now sought after by new home owners. Additionally, compared to the rest of the suburb, we boast the most secure street in the neighbourhood.

Although our street is fairly short, we have eight of our residents who are neighbourhood security observers. We patrol the suburb in pairs at night, on a voluntary basis and at our own expense for transportation and phone calls.

Our neighbourhood hosts its own carnival each year. This carnival has grown in size and status over the past few years and has become the event not to be missed, on the annual calendar.

We hold memorial services in our parks, for neighbours who have passed on. We honour their memory by either planting a tree in their honour, or purchasing a bench with a name plaque in commemoration of the deceased neighbour. We host “Carols in the Park” during the Christmas season, and share food treats with our Muslim neighbours on Eid. In essence, we have started developing inter-faith rituals of neighbourliness and are transforming to make a better adjustment to our current reality.

There are three extended projects which I’d like to launch as an addition to our current neighbourhood projects. They are:

1. Developing old age parks within our current parks, to give the elderly in our neighbourhood a safe, social, and physical space to allow them to exercise and maintain the health of their bodies.
2. Our neighbourhood has many restaurants and shops, which are all supported by the inhabitants. I’d like to establish a “Pend-It” program where those who can afford, can pay for either an extra meal, or an extra cup of coffee, or an extra garment, for someone else who is needy and cannot afford it.

3. We are a neighbourhood of many families with many pets, interspersed by many elderly folk, most of whom had grown up in the village. As these pets are generally left alone when their families go to work and school, and the elderly are sitting in their homes, lonely, I'd like to establish a buddy system, where the elderly can "foster" a pet for companionship during the day, and the owner-family collects the pet on their way home in the evening.

I believe that all our current projects in the village are growth points which are changing the way the people of the village interact with each other. The extended projects have not been implemented yet, but are on my agenda to tackle as soon as my studies are completed.

The projects which we have implemented in our village has contributed towards solving our security problem. Security issues were high as we have two railway stations running through the village. So, people were robbed or attacked and the perpetrators normally got away via the trains or the railway subways.

The increased neighbourliness, care, empathy, sharing and cleanliness of the neighbourhood were the unintended consequences of trying to cope with the security problem. We are helping our culture to function sustainably and joyfully in our physical environment, and I'm very honoured to be serving an active part in this change.

QUESTION 8

The eighth and last challenge of the final assignment is to reflect on your own learning process during the course. How did you approach it at first? What role did learning from other students play? Were there light bulb moments when you suddenly understood something you had not understood before? Did the circles and squares help? Did you prefer to remain silent and think and let others do the talking? Would you do something differently if you had to take the course over again?

ANSWER

At first I was cautious and uncertain as to what would emerge from this course, basically because I had never previously merged the concepts of ethics, macro-economics and organization within the same melting pot. This resulted in my preference to initially remain silent, to think, and to listen to the various viewpoints raised in class.

But very soon, I realized, that I was living and practicing an alternate way of being which resonated with some of the concepts and ideas being presented. Additionally, I was living an ethical practice which as a manager, met with various disharmonies within the corporate environments in which I previously worked. This has led me to hopefully seek more harmonious pastures in the non-profit and non-government sectors, as potentially a better fit for my moral and ethical beliefs and value system.

The circles and squares were especially helpful in focusing my attention amidst the confusion of the various conversations and the volume of information presented.

My light bulb moment, occurred to me, in that I finally realized the framework of the bigger picture and the intricacies of the various connections between the diverse fields of study and philosophies which had resulted in the tensions I had been grappling with for many years. I realized that my focus was too narrow in attempting to understand the disharmony, and once I zoomed out, I was then able to see the inter-connectedness of my life, my feelings, my culture, my environment, my relations, my survival, my history, and my future. Namaste.