Caring, Information Control, and Emotionality: Fieldwork Trade-Offs

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Epiphany, a turning point in one's life related to "life experiences that radically alter and shape the meanings persons give to themselves and their life projects" (Denzin, 1989, p. 14), came for the author in the final stages of completing her dissertation. She had claimed in her dissertation proposal that she was going "to document the daily interactions of staff and residents at a halfway house for ex-offenders," implying she would present a "realist tale" characterized by objectivity, focus on the commonplace, "native" perspective, and researcher omnipotence (Van Maanen, 1988). As the field tale began unfolding, the author realized such an "epistemological stunt" was impossible. She wrote to her dissertation chair that her methods section might be "a little too subjective, or, given my theoretical leanings . . . more existentialist than I realized." Eventually, this methods section became the author's dissertation about "becoming involved." The following narrative represents a reflexive version of that "life project."

As a researcher, my career has been theoretically guided by a mixture of Marxism, symbolic interactionism, and variants of "underdog sociology." It has been methodologically informed by a radical view of participant observation. This view, influenced by existentialism and ethnomethodology, recognizes that human action, including research, is powerfully influenced by emotionality. Therefore, proponents of this view seek ways to penetrate rational presentations of self through direct personal experience (Johnson, 1975).

CARING: ENTREE TO MEMBERSHIP

I began my research at Halfway House by offering to be a volunteer teacher. My commitment to a pedagogy defined as "problem solving" rather than "banking deposit" (Freire, 1984) was well suited to the stated goals of the Halfway House program—"to reintegrate the ex-offender by promoting self determination." This offer identified my style of intervention as a caring one characterized by such practices as interacting, facilitating, socializing, and listening (Griffin, 1991, p. 119). This style of intervention also demanded that

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I remove possible barriers to communication by expressing my human self (Goffman, 1959).

During conversations with residents, I drew from my childhood experiences in an abusive and alcoholic family to express empathy. During interactions with young male residents, I capitalized on my personal interest in rock music to present myself as "cool." With staff, I expressed my eagerness to learn, as well as to do some of their busywork. And with Bill (pseudonyms used throughout), the executive director, I emphasized my research interests in the substantive area of deviance. Within a period of 6 months, I was genuinely comfortable with all members of the setting. Nevertheless, my emerging fit placed me "on the side" of residents for three reasons.

First, my duties as a volunteer included social practices that were related to being responsive to resident needs—giving out late dinner plates, taking phone messages, and doing GED (high school equivalency) tutoring. Second, as a naive observer engaged in these social practices, I was offended by what I perceived to be the abuse of power on the part of staff, illustrated by such incidents as Breathalyzer tests given upon entering the house, room searches when residents were not present, and coerced class attendance. From these early observations I concluded that interactions between staff and residents were gamelike and unfair.

> It seems like there is a game between staff and residents. I have witnessed "kidding" conflict which turns serious whenever the staff member of the interaction wants it to. This keeps residents off-guard all the time and seems a way of undermining self-confidence. It seems this "verbal jousting" can end in a losing game for residents. (Field notes, April 22, 1987)

Third, with no well-defined responsibility to the organization, residents perceived me as a "sincere" listener, not a "paid" one (Reinharz, 1991, p. 181). Therefore, they were more likely to engage me, rather than staff, in friendlike conversations (Wharton, 1991). In these conversations residents revealed to me three kinds of information: (a) their violent pasts (assault, rape, and murder), (b) their current rule-breaking behavior at Halfway House, and (c) their questionable relationships with staff.

> In conversation Mary, a probationer, mentioned that Gary, job director, is hitting hard on Belinda, a parolee. Mary said that Gary told Belinda that if she told anyone he would deny it. As Mary said, "Who is going to believe a con?" Mary also said that Belinda was torn by the fact that he drove her around [Metro]; got her a job; and bought her dinners. (Field notes, April 14, 1987)

As both a researcher and a member, this access to "guilty knowledge" presented several ethical dilemmas. First, it contradicted the information Bill, the executive director, had given me in my orientation interview. He had specifically emphasized the fact that "we only admit nonviolent offenders." I could only conclude that Bill might be keeping other pertinent information from me. Second, when residents talked about their in-house rule-breaking behavior (drug/alcohol use, false sign-outs, and relationships with other resi-

dents), it was clear that they viewed their behavior as acceptable and expected me to see it in the same way. This was flattering in terms of acceptance, but it forced me to revise my image of residents as victims. Third, Belinda's harassment situation was blatant proof that abuse of power existed. As a caring and just person, I should have exposed this fact. Fourth, I had to weigh reporting guilty knowledge to staff with maintaining relationships with residents. Given my assessment of how staff used information, which included withholding it, I chose to align with residents. This alignment was made with some reservations.

> There must be a way to remain humane while still being somewhat savvy to the residents' game of creating a moral self. I know these people play games. There must be a way of reaching a balance where you can deal with them respectfully and still be fairly effective in your position without doing what I've seen done. (Field notes, April 6, 1987)

By making the decision to keep guilty knowledge to myself, I proved to Mary and, by association, other residents that I could be trusted. But, I did pay psychically for this trust. Because I allowed Belinda's harassment situation to continue, keeping this specific secret compromised my sense of justice as a feminist. I found solace in the fact that as a volunteer I had no real power to alter the situation. At best I would trigger an investigation; at worst I would place Belinda in an untenable position. After all, "residents lie."

My comfort level in regard to fit was short-lived. This was because I accepted the paid position of resident supervisor. By assuming this position, my emerging fit with residents was compromised. Specifically, fitting in by expressing care had to be weighed against fitting in by expressing competence as an agent of social control.

COMPROMISE: BALANCING CARE AND COMPETENCE

Resident supervisors "monitored and documented" the daily movement of residents. They were responsible for such tasks as signing residents in and out to determine whereabouts, taking periodic census counts, observing and documenting any use of alcohol or drugs on or off premises, and regularly searching rooms for contraband. As a result of this monitoring activity, they wrote up incident reports. These reports usually led to sanctions from caseworkers.

While performing the duties of resident supervisor, I emphasized the practices of a helping agent over those of a social control agent. For example, working the desk was a less controlling activity than walking the facility. I gained a reputation among residents for being "nice" and among staff for being "soft." I was comfortable with these labels.

Soon after becoming a resident supervisor (less than 3 months), I was offered the position of assistant caseworker. I was again placed in the position of social control agent. I had two primary duties as an assistant caseworker. First, I was to collect assessments from current residents and record what I collected in their files. Assessments were token payments intended to imply responsibility. Uncollected assessments became documented proof of moral failure. Second, I was expected to set up files for new residents.

During orientation interviews, incoming residents and I negotiated what would become their permanent records at Halfway House. This negotiation was necessary for two reasons. First, many incoming residents entered the program carrying only their "papers," with "supplemental material forthcoming." These papers were documents listing classification (probation, parole, pre-parole transfer, mandatory supervision) and conditions of probation/parole, such as mandatory weekly attendance in AA meetings. Second, many residents were illiterate and needed my assistance in completing their Halfway House forms. Typically, these negotiated records were designed to be a ledger of sorts, balancing moral credit (completed programs while incarcerated, ongoing family relationships, marketable work skills) with moral discredit ("instant offense," past drug and alcohol use, poor work habits).

My style in these interviews, as in past interactions, continued to be informal and friendly. And, as had happened before, incoming residents shared guilty knowledge with me. For example, residents often admitted to having a beer or two before they checked into Halfway House. Because all residents, regardless of classification, had "AA stips" requiring sobriety, this was a serious infraction of release conditions. Discovery of this infraction was supposed to lead to an incident report and then sanctions.

> New fellow came in on M.S. [mandatory supervision]. I checked him in and he came across as cooperative, freely talked about self, etc. Bottom line is that he had had three beers before he came to house. Carl, a caseworker, gave him a Breathalyzer (.06 or .08). Carl chewed him out. Alcohol/drugs are not on his papers but now he has to attend AA (in-house Wednesday nights) per Carl. (Field notes, April 21, 1987)

Unlike Carl, I did not report drinking infractions. I told new residents after their interviews that they should just go to their assigned rooms until the alcohol wore off. In contrast to Carl, I had defined Halfway House as a new beginning, not as an extension of incarceration. I acted on my definition and had therefore begun to practice an "ethic of rebellion."

ETHIC OF REBELLION EMERGES

This ethic, premised in the writings of Albert Camus, suggests that care and justice are not mutually exclusive, but are, rather, interrelated (Bartlett, 1992, p. 83). Such a premise eliminates the dualism between caring and justice

implied in the debate surrounding the works of Gilligan (1982) and Noddings (1984). This debate centers on two contrasting views of moral decision making. One view, linked to a feminist voice, places morality into a context of "conflicting responsibilities" as they emerge in social relationships (Gilligan, 1982, p. 19). Such an "ethics of care" is contextual, narrative, and relational (Lauritzen, 1992). A second view, linked to a masculinist voice, places morality into a context of "competing rights." Such an "ethics of justice" is abstract, objective, and defined by separation (Lauritzen, 1992). The consequence of this debate is to create the illusion that care and justice are not related concepts. Camus dispels this illusion by establishing the interrelatedness of these two concepts in his definition of rebellion. Specifically, rebellion is "an action that simultaneously rejects injustice and oppression and affirms human dignity" (Bartlett, 1992, p. 84).

Although the action of keeping secrets may seem a vulgar interpretation of Camus's definition of rebellion, it was an appropriate action in context. Information control in its various forms—acquiring, revealing, altering, documenting, and keeping—was the focus of all interactions at Halfway House.

> I came in Friday to finish an intake interview. The resident I was to meet was not in the house nor was he at the number he had signed out to. Because he is a pre-parole transfer and was "missing" for two hours, escape procedures should have been instituted. They were not. When he did show up, about an hour later, he claimed that he had left a message with a woman at the front desk. I was on duty but I do not remember taking the message. The staff accepted his claim. This incident today was dramaturgy at its best. He was quite indignant at the claim that he was out of line with house rules, but kept his cool. Although I am feeling very insecure because of my lack of practical experience, I do think the things that I've been reading all along—Goffman, symbolic interactionism, and construction of reality—certainly apply to what's going on in this house. (Field notes, April 6, 1987)

THE GAME OF INFORMATION CONTROL

The ultimate consequence of staff-resident interactions was a contest, or game, of information control. This game did not fit the criteria of a board game—nonserious, bounded in time and place, rule-guided, and composed of interdependent moves. It was more a game of strategy requiring situational decision making (Goffman, 1969, p. 90). This was a game with serious overtones; it was ongoing, it had flexible rules dependent upon players and situation. And its utilitarian ends were often accompanied by emotional stagings to establish dominance on the part of staff or to establish irreverence on the part of residents.

As an observer, I began to realize that the variability of this game in terms of seriousness was directly linked to the fact that we had a mixed population of residents. This mixed population was not divided into groups according to their social characteristics: age, gender, race, ethnicity, and sexual orienta-

tion. The major distinction between these groups was their relationship to the threat of incarceration as defined by the state.

Probationers had sentences that did not include confinement, but conditions of confinement could be imposed by court order. They were therefore viewed by staff as "halfway-in." Parolees had been confined in the state prison and released to Halfway House on their parole date. They had been determined unlikely candidates for direct release into the "free world." They were viewed by staff as "halfway-out." Pre-parole transfers had also been confined in state prison, but due to prison overcrowding and the fact that they had proven themselves worthy of release, they were released to Halfway House before their parole date. Therefore, they were viewed by staff as "halfway-back."

In regard to information control decisions, probationers had an advantage over parolees and pre-parole transfers for two reasons. First, they often entered Halfway House with incomplete or no records and were therefore in a position to conceal information pertaining to personal history, past offenses, and instant offense. Second, conditions of probation were informally monitored by staff and county probation officers. Informality led to a great deal of tolerance for disruptive behavior and a reduced emphasis on information control.

In contrast, parolees and pre-parole transfers entered the Halfway House program after their records were received from the state. They therefore had to reduce the relevance of known stigmatizing information. In addition, the monitoring of conditions of parole was closely scrutinized by state evaluators through formal audits (monthly and annually). Formal scrutiny from external evaluators limited staff autonomy. External evaluation affected caseworkers the most because they kept the resident files that were reviewed during these audits. Given the organizational focus of this game, it was only natural that my membership responsibilities would eventually move me from the role of observer to that of game player.

GETTING INTO THE GAME

Two months after I became an assistant caseworker, a full-time caseworker was unexpectedly fired. Because I had been doing assistant casework, I was able to assume some of her cases. As a temporary caseworker, I was admitted to staff meetings and had direct contact with administration and parole/probation officers. These membership contacts not only increased my access to information, they placed me in a position to practice my ethics of rebellion.

One of my early experiences as a caseworker was participation in on-site hearings. These hearings were conducted when those residents classified as pre-parole transfers broke house rules. I had observed pre-parole transfer hearings as a volunteer. They were very disturbing because of the degradation

practices that surrounded them. Specifically, those residents who were charged with an infraction were handcuffed and put on display in the front office. One by one they would be called before a committee composed of Bill, Sharon (the program director), Mr. Walker (the parole officer), one or more caseworkers, and the state Department of Corrections officer. When before this formidable committee, residents would attempt to defend their moral character by means of strategic interaction.

As a caseworker involved in a hearing, my duties were to gather information that either supported or refuted a resident's claim to moral credit and present it to the hearing committee. I was excited about this opportunity to express care and competence.

> Two of my clients were up for charges. One had a gambling charge and the other had come back to the house on Sunday evening drunk. I said that if he gets through this hearing he should consider marriage counseling. I also said that he cannot use his wife as an excuse for drinking; it's going to get him sent back to prison. (Field notes, May 11, 1987)

As I relate Edmundo's situation going into the hearing, my notes reflect the adopting of a client-staff member relationship. The very fact that I use the phrase "my client" illustrates a change in perspective from less involved to more involved staff member. In addition, my response to Edmundo's immediate problem—a drinking spree—was one based on "recipe knowledge." A caseworker responds to a client's rule-breaking behavior by counseling in terms of a behavior-consequence format. This form of counseling represents a type of caring driven by practicality. Edmundo was guilty! A Breathalyzer test had been taken and it was positive. The best I could hope for was that the committee would give him a second chance, which they did.

In contrast, I went into Eddie Ray's hearing believing that he was not guilty. There was no physical evidence, only Art's (resident supervisor) suspicion that gambling had taken place. I clearly had the "good case" (Marquart, 1983).

> The majority of the day was devoted to the five men who had been involved in the gambling incident in-house. Prior to the hearing, my client, Eddie Ray, insisted that they had not been gambling; that he was just returning money he had borrowed. I believed him and I went before the hearing committee and testified to that fact. As it turned out after several "interviews" with the five of them—taking them in Bill's office one at a time, sending them back out, and repeating the routine, none of which I was able to witness—three of the five (Eddie, Cal, and Bob) finally admitted that they had been gambling. Eddie later apologized and told me that the dice they had been using were very tiny and they flushed them down the toilet. I was obviously hurt. (Field notes, May 11, 1987)

Hurt was followed by emotional turmoil. I was trying to reconcile the paradox of staff members claiming to care but using the tactics of prison guards. I was struggling equally hard with the fact that residents acted like cons—manipulative, secretive, and untrusting. And, of course, I had to come to terms

with the possibility that expressing care and competence might not be possible in a setting like Halfway House.

> I have simply got to pick up on this lying better. My concern for residents turned to humiliation by the end of the day when I realized just what a fool I had made of myself in front of staff; and, of course those "rednecks" from SDC [State Department of Corrections]. I've lost all credibility. I don't think I have to be as mean and inconsiderate as other members of the staff; but, I certainly don't have to be nice. Nice isn't the route to go; it just pegs you for someone to take advantage of. I'm still feeling very upset. I went in Friday for a couple of hours. I didn't talk to anyone, including Eddie; just did what had to be done and left. I do feel very embarrassed and I do feel as though everyone is laughing at me. It could be I am blowing this all out of proportion. This whole thing isn't going too well. (Field notes, May 11, 1987)

REFLECTION ON EARLY MEMBERSHIP EXPERIENCES

The naivete of the rapport I believed I had established with residents in my early membership experience had disintegrated. Ironically, this painful discovery illustrated that my membership role had changed. The residents perceived me as an actively involved staff member and therefore a potential protagonist in the game of information control. I could no longer be engaged in interactions in which information was given without consideration of how that acquired information might be used. Even worse, active membership involvement had not led to a "higher level of trust and acceptance" (Adler & Adler, 1987, p. 50). Rather, it led to expulsion.

> Bill just notified me that they hired a male parole officer for the caseworker position and that I will work until Friday. My stomach is tightening up. I feel on the verge of tears. I am trying to rationalize what to do next. I feel out of control again. How can I stay on? I feel desperate in regard to my thesis. I feel hurt that I didn't get the job even though I knew I was not a serious candidate. I am shaken. I know I didn't fit. I need to scratch out a role so I can stay on in some capacity. Screw it! (Field notes, May 26, 1987)

I dropped off the Halfway House payroll for 4 months. I took no field notes for the same period of time. I taught a summer course on deviance at Metro University. During this same period I returned to Halfway House as a volunteer GED teacher. I had very little contact with staff, most notably because weekend staff were reduced to two resident supervisors. In addition, I had minimal contact with residents because many were either on weekend passes or chose not to come out of their rooms. When not tutoring, I was a passive listener to whomever wanted to talk to me. In short, interaction with members was primarily social, data gathering was nonexistent, and emotional connection was shut down.

WHY RETURN? THE CALL OF THE FIELD

Two factors contributed to my return to the field—one situational and one affective. First, contract obligations with the state had become more specific in regard to life skills requirements. Bill needed a qualified teacher, fast. I was available. I had teaching credentials. I reiterated my desire to teach. Second, being in a setting perceived as dangerous by outsiders (my family and friends) fulfilled my emotional needs as a field researcher. Just as "rule breakers are seduced by crime," so are researchers (Katz, 1988, p. 3). Specifically, I realized that I viewed "normal research" (laboratory experiments and surveys) in the same way residents viewed "normal life." It was boring, unexciting, and unchallenging. I was eager to return to the field and reestablish myself as a good faith member.

DOING IT ALL: ENTREE INTO COMPLETE MEMBERSHIP

My return to Halfway House can best be described as total immersion. Over the next year I became responsible for teaching life skills (including GED), handling a small caseload of GED candidates, and doing resident supervisory duties when necessary. As teacher, caseworker, and resident supervisor, I related to other staff as a status equal, "sharing in a common set of experiences, feelings, and goals" (Adler & Adler, 1987, p. 67). But even under these new structural conditions, I was unwilling to align myself with staff unconditionally. As a teacher and caseworker, I was convinced that I was in a position to humanize Halfway House policy.

When interacting with staff and administration (Bill), I often took an adversarial role. I resisted policy that emphasized social control. My behavior was tolerated because of the variety of functions I served and because I was liked. Being liked is a much more emotionally charged state of being than simply having rapport with the subjects. Being liked meant that I was cared about and that I cared in return. This kind of caring also brings a great deal of tolerance into relationships. I could act like a pain in the ass and vice versa, but, like a pseudofamily, we learned to tolerate each other's quirks.

In regard to my relationship with residents, total immersion placed me in a position to beneficially influence their attempts at moral character building. As a teacher and a caseworker I was in a powerful position to control information.

PROBLEM-SOLVING PEDAGOGY IN CONTEXT

A major information control feature of teaching at Halfway House was attendance records. These records, checked by caseworkers and recorded

weekly on "chrono sheets," were significant at two levels. One, they were perceived as a social control measure because class attendance was mandatory. Two, compliance with this social control measure, indicated by attendance, was evidence that residents were "working the program."

A second major feature of information control related to teaching was my style of implementation of the state-mandated life skills program. This program was designed to transform felons into model citizens. According to parole board guidelines on life skills/adult literacy, the goal was that these model citizens have a positive self-image, be able to communicate well with others, set goals (short- and long-term) and meet them, maintain good relationships, explore educational possibilities, be able to understand paychecks, follow a budget, keep balanced banking accounts, understand the principles of credit and use credit wisely, have a working knowledge of insurance, be able to comparison shop, pay attention to warranties, have an awareness of first aid and safety at the job and at home, know how to extinguish fires, understand the basics of rational emotive therapy, and be knowledgeable about the physiological and psychological effects of drugs and alcohol. Given the attributes of most of the residents—poor, illiterate, and unemployable—the goals of the program were ludicrous. In contrast to state standards, resident standards of good citizenship were much more modest and realistic—"get an apartment, get a job, get a car, get out of here." To balance the tension between state demands and resident reality, I encouraged residents to think of the big picture with regard to their lack of personal control (Gornick, 1978, p. 48). I used popular media as my lead-in to the big picture.

Specifically, I sought out television programs, films, and documentaries that could be interpreted by residents as having symbolic meaning to their everyday experiences. As they observed how others solved problems, even if these solutions were couched in fantasy, residents were able to make imaginative connections to their coparticipants on the television screen. This use of popular media did prove effective. For example, an insightful discussion on spirituality was precipitated by a documentary on Christian rock music. Similarly, cultural awareness on the part of Hispanic residents was raised by viewing the talk show "Geraldo." The topic of the show was the success of Hispanics in Hollywood. Most significant, the use of popular media made life skills fun and a little less coercive. But any successes I had in class were often neutralized by the context in which they were taking place.

> Halfway House incidents seem to be promoted by anger directed at the attendance of in-house programs, particularly life skills. Social control on my part has increased in the form of pleas (explaining rationale, who the guest speakers are, fact that it is parole board mandate and not caprice of staff), in the form of threats (denial of passes and/or free time), in the form of perks (free time, shorter classes), and in the form of bribes (food and pop in class). (Field notes, June 18, 1988)

To offset my frustration directed at the coercive nature of the program and my disappointment directed at noncompliant residents, feelings began to influence my record keeping and my teaching style.

FEELINGS TRANSLATED INTO POLICY

If I liked a resident, my rationale was, "Why not give this person a break?" Of course, the reverse was also applicable. If I disliked a resident, I was in a position to hassle. For example, if a resident signed in and left class early, I could either ignore it or make a notation. The notation could be a supportive one, such as "left for AA meeting," or it could be a damaging one, such as "left class without permission." Occasionally a resident attended class in its entirety but forgot to sign in. For those I liked, I would make this my concern by catching them after class or signing on their behalf. For those I disliked, I would ignore the oversight and let them deal with the consequences.

Like and dislike had to do with a resident's ability to present a self that showed a desire to work the program. A major part of working the program was to not "cop an attitude." Slovenly body language, smirking facial expressions, and challenging language were all signs of copping an attitude. Ultimately, copping an attitude undermined my ability to relate to residents, as well as challenged my competence as a staff member. In both circumstances, strong feelings were generated and my self-identity as a caring and just person was compromised. As did other staff members, I had to come to terms with the fact that residents could push my buttons. And in response I could be petty, vindictive, and arbitrary.

In a similar way, classroom behavior on the part of residents influenced my mood and consequent controlling practices on my part. If a life skills class went well (full resident participation, minor disruptions), I would feel quite generous and have no need to penalize any one miscreant. Conversely, if the class went poorly (residents talking, sleeping, drifting in and out), I would note every inappropriate act I witnessed. My frustration would cause me to write a series of incident reports, issue verbal reprimands, and complain directly to caseworkers. Each of these actions precipitated social control measures by other staff and served as an outlet for my frustration. Finally, simple fatigue brought on by the pressure of doing too many things at once led me to let things slide. When this occurred, I did no follow-up regarding who deserved moral credit or discredit.

DOING CASEWORK IN CONTEXT

As a caseworker, my ability to control records and therefore impute moral credit was even more significant. My main information control duty was to

document the fact that residents in my charge were following program objectives—being employed, remaining clean and sober, and attending life skills classes. The most important of these objectives was obtaining employment. If a resident was not successful in finding employment, I had two contrasting options for documenting this fact. If it was my estimation that a resident was working the program, I would write: "Mary continues to apply herself in the program while seeking full-time employment." An alternate way to document the same fact for someone I perceived as not working the program was to write: "Mary is not exerting much effort in attaining full-time work." I would follow this statement with a notation that the resident was given a verbal reprimand and I would use a series of documented behavior flaws to establish a rationale for sanctioning this resident by, for instance, denying her a weekend pass. I would use these two contrasting report strategies—"pitch" versus "denunciation"—in the daily log, staff meetings, or conversations. Ultimately, my assessment of the resident, influenced by emotionality, would be translated into life-altering actions.

> I realized, after much personal involvement, that two women probationers on my caseload had been "jerking me around." May kept coming up with schemes to lead the easy life. Specifically, she kept finding men who were going to support her. She refused to finish her GED even though she was obviously bright enough to do it. And, she was constantly "getting sick" and going to Metro hospital. As her caseworker I had reached my limit and "terminated her neutral." She had been in the program for over six months. The other woman, Tillie, was also "screwing up." The man she was hanging around with was an ex-resident supposedly dealing drugs out of the wrecking company where she was employed. What put me over the edge with Tillie was the fact that I went to court with her and testified that she would pay her restitution; but, when it came time to pay she admitted that she had spent the money on this man. In addition, she got pregnant! This was her third pregnancy; her previous two children had been adopted. I expected Tillie to be "rational" about her situation, to realize that she was not in a position to get pregnant. Freedom of choice to me as a liberal feminist meant only having children when material conditions were optimal. I realize my views on this client are not politically correct; but, to me, her act was an irresponsible one. It had nothing to do with a political statement about the right to choose. She got pregnant because, as she put it, "The pill might make me sick." Tillie was "terminated" from the program negative . . . (Field notes, November 10, 1988)

The decision to terminate both of these women from the program indicates how ethics are influenced by feelings. As stated earlier, if one practices an ethic of rebellion, doing justice is guided by a concern for promoting egalitarian relationships. Unfortunately, in the context of Halfway House this concern made one vulnerable. And, as before, my commitment to care was perceived as a weakness, not a strength. The main difference was that in my current position I had the power to retaliate. My emotions were mixed. I was hurt, angry, and—most of all—sad. The social structure at Halfway House was not changing, I was. Again I sought resolution to my problem by distancing myself from membership responsibilities that did not allow me to express care.

In short, I dropped my caseload and focused my energy on teaching. Despite the structural drawbacks, teaching did allow me to be a caring person.

> Shirley has not got a good reputation. And, it's because part of the time she's authoritarian and part of the time she acts likes she's really interested.... There's a difference and I think it's in the personalities. You've got a, well, you want to communicate back and forth with residents as equal and try to be friends. Carol really don't care if they're her friends. She may care whether they gain anything from the program or not, but, she doesn't care if she makes friends. (Interview, David Vines, peer counselor, April 9, 1990)

Over the next year, I continued to teach life skills, but I was slowly phased out by Bill. Bill's action was precipitated by the loss of the state contract regarding pre-parole transfers. This loss presented a considerable cut in funding and loosened the state's grip in terms of program requirements. Bill was able to meet these requirements with volunteer teachers. Eventually, my ties to Halfway House were sufficiently weak that I returned to academia, no longer divided by my loyalties (Ebaugh, 1988, p. 10).

CLOSING STATEMENT

Academic readers may be placed into two categories—social science and collegial (VanMaanen, 1988, p. 26). If the field researcher indulges herself in narrative flights of fancy, social science readers will dismiss her entire work. I have so indulged myself, and so in kind will dismiss the social science reader. Collegial readers are field researchers familiar with the writing traditions of ethnography that include reflecting on such research issues as caring, information control, emotions, and ethical decision making (Richardson, 1990). This work has remained true to those traditions. In addition, I have documented the impact of increasing involvement upon the researcher and, consequently, the research process. Collegial readers should be interested in my account of becoming involved. It is with this presumption that I also end my story. I submit its contents to the evaluations of my colleagues. I make this statement to declare my psychic return to academia and to mark my physical withdrawal from the field. Although I will always reserve a part of my psyche for the men and women of Halfway House, it is time to become an "ex."

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