ONCE UPON A TIME WE SAW

THE SERVICE SYSTEM as the solution for people with DD. Aim: to be complete and comprehensive. It controlled all resources especially the money.

"I told you the community doesn’t care."

THE COMMUNITY as unpredictable and nontherapeutic. People with DD needed to be protected from it.

"See. We offered to help, but those professionals ignored us."

EARLY STRATEGIES:

WE SERVE BETTER IN INSTITUTIONS

THE SERVICE SYSTEM WORKED LIKE A VACUUM CLEANER

Identify and draw them in

WE SERVE SOME BETTER IN THE COMMUNITY

THE SERVICE SYSTEM WORKED LIKE WHITE CORPUSCLES

Identify and surround

(Some surrounders, however, discovered some families and networks doing better than they could—but not always.)

SMALL COMMUNITY NETWORKS HELPED PEOPLE THEY KNEW, TOO.

FORMAL SERVICES

INFORMAL NETWORKS

Then came some BATTLES

"It’s our money? WHACKO!"

"We are the experts?"

"Pow!"

"Mano!"

"We can do better!"

"We deserve the money?"

"Carrump!"

NOW COMES AN OPPORTUNITY... to be playful and serious with this oversimplification... to cease playing "either-or" games for a time... to ponder these contrasting tendencies.

SERVICE SYSTEMS

Have values and limits.

Aim for orderly management.

Thrive on counting things and making reports.

Survive on money from above.

COMMUNITY NETWORKS

Have values and limits.

Defy orderly management.

Thrive on stories about real people.

Can do some things with little or no money.

Thrive on capacity assessments.
Develop perfect plans—on paper (like diagrams of football plays).

Cannot be democratic

Move as consensus dictates.

Thrives on democracy, citizenship and neighborliness.

Surveyors try to catch the system doing things wrong—and correcting.

Surveyors can only search for people or groups doing things right—and reinforcing.

Humor tends to be ironic (and it’s usually tacked on agency bulletin boards).

Laughter, celebrations and singing can be unabashed, free and from the heart.

Usually take a distanced view of tragedy and injustice.

Can provide support systems around people suffering tragedies and injustices.

Deviance can be controlled. Deviance can multiply. Creativity can be multiplied.

Creativity can be controlled.

Real networks are small handfuls of people who mobilize on behalf of a person or group in trouble. Their resources: little or no money, time, energy, telephones, mimeographs, a comradeship, a strong determination to help, and a fierce hunger for honesty and fair play.

Devolve committees, task forces, advisory groups—never networks (as community organizers see them).

NOW COMES THE TOUGHEST PROBLEM OF ALL —THE BUILDING OF MEDIATING STRUCTURES THAT FOSTER

A COMMON MISSION
AN APPRECIATION FOR EACH SIDE’S CAPABILITIES
BRIDGE BUILDING AWAY FROM THE SERVICE SYSTEM AND INTO THE COMMUNITY
(Watch for John McKnight’s ingenious portrayal of a bridgebuilder—a professional or a citizen with a special knack for blending a person with disabilities into ordinary neighborhoods and associations.)

To be attached to the subdivision, to love the little platoon we belong to in society, is the first principle (the germ as it were) of public affections.

Edmund Burke

In his classic study of suicide, Emile Durkheim describes the “tempest” of modernization sweeping away the little aggregations* in which people formerly found community, leaving only the state on the one hand and a mass of individuals, like so many liquid molecules,* on the other.

Peter Berger and Richard Neuhaus

Megatrend *4: Powerful informal communication networks are replacing hierarchical structures.

Megatrend *5: Self-reliance is replacing institutional help. Megatrend *7: Advances in technology (high touch) are being met with a compensatory human response (high touch)

John Naisbitt

Our new directions, this year, will not come from a shining knight on a white horse—not even one whose saddlebags are filled with jelly beans.

William Rukeyser

These ideas do not belong to me. They came from pondering a framework presented by John McKnight, and from listening to Lou Brown. Marsha Forest. Charlie Galloway. Wade Hitzing. John O’Brien, David Schwartz, Jeff Strully. Betty Vincent, and Robert Williams