

# Interiority as the Cutting Edge between Theory and Practice: A First Person Perspective

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The three realms of meaning: practical knowing, theory and interiority provide a framework for understanding the epistemological challenges confronting action researchers. Action researchers have two external horizons: that of practice and that of theory. Practice engages with the world of practical knowing, where the challenges are the successful completion of practical tasks. Theory engages the realm of scholarship as action researchers seek to develop understanding of, for example, the dynamics of organization and change. Interiority involves shifting from what we know to how we know, and is a process of intellectual self-awareness. Interiority goes beyond practical knowing and theory, not by negating them or leaving them behind, but appreciating them and recognizing their limitations. Interiority is the integrating factor that enables action researchers to hold both, to appreciate the value of both and to move from one to the other appropriately. It is a process at the cutting edge of integrating theory, practice and research.

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At a conference dinner two years ago, I was asked what my theory of my engagement in organization development/action research was. Quite spontaneously, I replied that it was about integrating practical knowing, theory and interiority. Whatever about the surprise expressed by my dinner companion who asked the question, I was surprised by own answer. I was not able to develop my answer on that occasion, and I made a mental note that some day