

Being Open To Transformations

Attending solely to the pain, heart break and difficulty of our work in supervision can obscure and mystify the contribution this work brings to our lives as community workers and as persons. More than being sustained, we are often *transformed* in beautiful and at times sacred ways by our work with clients.

Liberation psychologist Ignacio Martín-Baró was a Jesuit priest and liberation theologian who believed in the possibility of psychologists taking active positions of justice-doing. Martín-Baró said "to achieve the psychology of liberation demands first that psychology be liberated" (1994, pp. 25) He was the first psychologist to impress upon me the possibility of psychology resisting abuses of power and the replication of acts of oppression. Ignacio Martín-Baró was influential in challenging state powers, and was assassinated in 1989 by agents of the Salvadoran government along with six of his Jesuit brothers, their housekeeper, and her daughter. Following his murder Martín-Baró's writings were posthumously collected under the title: *Writings for a Liberatory Psychology* (1994). Martín-Baró speaks eloquently of the possibility of relational transformation in our work as,

"An opening toward the other, a readiness to let oneself be questioned by the other, as a separate being, to listen to his or her words, in dialogue: to confront reality in a relationship to and with but not over him or her (sic), to unite in solidarity in a struggle in which *both* will be transformed" (my emphasis, 1994, pp. 183).

- How is your life & your relationship with yourself different for being engaged in this work across time?
- What knowledge, teachings, and understandings have you received from the people we work alongside? From co-workers?
- How has this work transformed how you see the world? How has it enriched your analysis?
- How has this work informed your relationship with other folks? Our professions? Society?