Welcome to Meetings with Remarkable Educators. Each podcast is a dialog between me, Ba Luvmour, and an educator who sees the greatness in their students, and touches the whole of their being. These educators defy generalizations. So, here’s a bit about what they’ve done, and how I came to know them.

At an Aikido workshop at the recent Holistic Learning and Education Conference, the instructor demonstrated an interactive move for protection against an aggressive action. We were then told to pair with our neighbor and practice. I hesitated, adverse to immediate physical contact with strangers. But when I turned to meet my neighbor, I experienced an immediate sense of trust and wellbeing. His bright smile and open demeanor welcomed me, and I relaxed.

So this was the Sam Crowell that I had heard of for many years, but little about. Only later, did I learn of his many accomplishments, his joy in family life, and his world-wide influence in bringing holistic education to fore. Begin a conversation about education, and Sam lights up. Inquire into the importance of sustainability, social justice, and spirituality in education and you may need sunglasses. So brilliantly, does his knowledge and passion shine.

I cannot mention all of Sam’s accomplishments here, but I will put them in the show notes, accompanying this podcast. For, they reveal both the scope of holistic education, and Sam’s extraordinary influence. I encourage you to read them. Briefly then, Sam is Professor Emeritus at California State University, San Bernardino. He’s founder of the Master’s Program in Holistic and Integrative Education, and is also a founding member of the Network in Spirituality and Education. Currently, he serves as a doctoral faculty member at Cal State, and is an affiliate faculty of the UNESCO Chair for Education for Sustainable Development, with the Earth Charter at the UN Chartered University for Peace in Costa Rica.

Sam is also faculty at the SelfDesign Graduate Institute, and an invited adjunct professor at St. Michael’s College in Vermont. Sam’s personal vision is to live a life of love and service through his presentations, teaching, writing, and creative projects, he aims to facilitate experiences that help others to integrate holistic and open systems, perspectives of science, learning, and sustainable culture in their lives, and organizations, cultivate practices and perspectives that nourish the inner life, and awaken one’s personal vision and dreams, grounded in loving service, and to experience spiritual transformation and engagement in the creative arts, nature, and community.

Meetings with Remarkable Educators
Copyright © Ba & Josette Luvmour, 2018 • ba@luvmourconsulting.com
Sam writes in the field of education, social change, and personal development, where he explores the implications of a transmodernist, holistic world view. His books include, *Emergent Teaching, A Path of Creativity, Significance, and Transformation; The Re-enchantment of Learning; Educating Toward a New Cultural Mythology, An Analysis of Three Scientific Metaphor's, and A Global Ethic for an Interconnected World, Toward a Sustainable Future and the Wellbeing of All.*

Sam is part of the Full Bright Specialist Program, and is the recipient of both the Outstanding Teacher Award, and the Outstanding Professional Accomplishments Award.

Well, this is a pleasure. I mean, I know we've seen each other in passing, and over the years, and we've both been involved in all this for quite a long time. So, let's just start talking about Earth Charter. Tell me about it.

Sam Crowell: Oh, wow.

Ba Luvmour: Well, actually, what I really want to know is, what's the draw in you for this?

Sam Crowell: Right. There's a story behind that, of course.

Ba Luvmour: Oh, great.

Sam Crowell: Of course, as there is with all of this. Yeah, I founded a program, first of all, in holistic and integrative education at a state university, and we had done a lot of interesting things, but we were continuing to grow and learn, and look at the field of holistic education, and try to decide, "What is it?" From our experience, and the experience of our students. I felt that there was something that wasn't being addressed, sometimes, in holistic education, and that was the social component. Not the sociability component, but the society at large; our engagement in service and activity in the world. Where does that fit in holistic education? I knew it fit, but I didn't know exactly where.

I wrote a small grant for a Professor's Across Borders program, to study education for peace at the United Nations University for Peace...

Ba Luvmour: You wrote that?

Sam Crowell: I wrote a little grant for it, yes.
Ba Luvmour: But, you started that Professor's Across Borders program?

Sam Crowell: No, no. I didn't start it. I started the Holistic Ed Master's program at our University.

Ba Luvmour: I see. So, Professor's Across Border's was already happening?

Sam Crowell: It was a little program, yes, that as faculty and professors, we could apply to.

Ba Luvmour: I see.

Sam Crowell: So, I got support, and I went down to look at the Peace Education program, because I thought, "Well, this fits perfectly with holistic education." I realized once I was there, that the grounding and the foundation of that program was the International Earth Charter, which I had never heard of before. "This is interesting," I felt my heart resonating with these words that started talking about the community of life, and that we are planetary citizens, and to approach the communities of life with understanding, compassion, and care. That resonated so deeply with me, and I wanted to somehow incorporate it in what I was doing.

So I went back to the university, incorporated some peace education into our curriculum classes, and our holistic program. It went well, but I still wanted to get more into what this Earth Charter really was. I was fascinated when I learned its history, that from the Rio Summit in Brazil, they were trying to create...

Ba Luvmour: What year was that summit?

Sam Crowell: It was 1992, and from there, for about seven years, they tried to create, "Is there a possibility for a vision that the world could share, that would take us into the 21st century, and would affect the way we are with one another, the way we are with the planet, and how that affects the way we live, and our sense of being?"

Over that period of time, they developed an incredibly inclusive process with indigenous people, with cultures, political ideologies, and everyone else, and crafted this beautiful document, and I was hooked. I don't want to go on and on, but this is what drew me in.

Ba Luvmour: That's what drew you in. What have you done with it?
Sam Crowell: Okay, so I started, I was excited, and I said, "I gotta share this with you." My first inclination was to share it with my students, who were also excited. Then I shared it with other students, and they weren't so excited. I realized, "What am I doing here? I'm a holistic educator, and I'm talking about a document. And documents are documents, who cares?"

So, the whole thing is, "What does this mean? How does it affect our lives?" So, slowly we began asking that question, and incorporating it into our very culture of respect and care for one another, of this sense of love for living systems, and for the earth and the planet, and our experience in it, leaving a legacy of beauty and sustainability to our children, and their children.

The other pillar deals with social and economic justice, because how can we have a sustainable future if we're unjust and unkind, and inequitable to the world. That was almost the capstone of critical theory. Then the peace and non-violence, and wellbeing, and the spiritual qualities of what that means, those are the things that we started incorporating more and more into our program, into our identity as a program, into what we did, and how we served the community. It just kept growing, and I found that when it was infused into the culture, that there was nothing to teach.

Ba Luvmour: What do you mean, "There was nothing to teach?"

Sam Crowell: The Charter was a living entity within us.

Ba Luvmour: Oh, I see. Not to teach the document, you mean?

Sam Crowell: Right.

Ba Luvmour: So, what happens to you, as you're going- this process takes years in your school?

Sam Crowell: It took me years, but I'm slow.

Ba Luvmour: What's happening to you, as you're doing this?

Sam Crowell: As I'm doing it, one of the things I think is, when you feel committed to something, you want everybody to feel the way you feel. And that's a trap. It's a trap in certain ways, because there are expectations involved. Rather than sharing the sheer joy of what's pulling your forward. It's as if what's drawing your forward, and these ideas, these values, these inclinations draw me forward, and bring out the joy inside of me. When I share that, other people can
take that for what it is, and as they become familiar, they have to find their own connection. Not my connection, you know?

So, my connection is mine and it's a commitment. It's something that ... I decided to retire early and work with, because I'm committed to it. It resonates deeply, as a spiritual quality within me.

Ba Luvmour: So, what are you doing now, then?

Sam Crowell: Well, I'm now doing Master Classes at the University for Peace, at the Earth Charter Center, and sharing that. I'm doing a series where I'm developing...trying to develop an Earth Charter Pedagogy, that deals with values-based on these understandings, and infuses these into a culture of any educational setting. I'm working with teachers and educators, and others, to sort of discover an experiential quality. Taking it out of the abstract and "How do experience these in the body? How to you embody these values naturally?" And then, "What does that mean, when you're in an educational setting, how can you then embody that as a community?"

And so, as I'm doing this, I'm learning from other people as well, from their experience, and finding that all settings are different, their complex. Some are restrictive, some are open. But we find our own way of what's natural, and what's doable, and what's feasible in our context.

Ba Luvmour: Can you give us some specifics? I mean, you know, we talked about values and interpersonal life, social justice, reverence, reverence for earth, reverence for self, interlocking natural systems, et cetera. Can you give me some specifics? Or give us some specifics about how all that works?

Sam Crowell: Yes...

Ba Luvmour: So let me try paint it. So, you're working a teacher, or a group of educators, or you're working on the pedagogy. What are some of the specifics that you're actually sharing?

Sam Crowell: All right. One of those is how we do pedagogy itself. I see learning as a very embodied process, very inactive process, with an "E." And we're constantly in connection with the world, and the environment around us. So the first question is, what is that environment, and what does it look like, feel like? How do we experience it?
So when I work with teachers, one of the things I do is create rituals. How do we create community in a classroom with rituals? What do those rituals look like? I usually start off with saying... "Down is the earth, up is the sky. They are my friends, and here am I. Good morning." It brings joy and laughter, and then I say, "I've just taught you the Earth Charter. We're connected to the earth, to the cosmos, to one another, and to ourselves, trying to constantly look and cultivate what this relationship means to us, and raise those questions into the world." That's one of the ways.

And then, as we look at learning, learning is not an information processing. It's creating meaning out of information for our lives. We can give people information, but we can't give someone meaning. We have to find that meaning within ourselves, and we have to discover it. How do you create learning environments that help us discover meaning? If you apply this to the Earth Charter, to caring for the communities of life, what does that really mean to you? How can you experience it? How can you create experiences that allow us to have a conversation about what this means, and how it affects us? How we internalize it, and how we feel when this is absent from our lives?

So, that's an example.

Ba Luvmour: Do you find that for some people, meaning itself is a difficult process?

Sam Crowell: It is.

Ba Luvmour: A difficult process, or a difficult engagement, I guess?

Sam Crowell: It is. So, if I just were to talk about meaning that would be the case. One of the things we do, I do is, I create experiences through which, we then process. And then meaning comes out of the process...

Ba Luvmour: Discover what meaning is?...

Sam Crowell: Yes. Looks like, feels like, tastes like sometimes.

Ba Luvmour: Right, so it's not an imposed meaning onto a given event...

Sam Crowell: Exactly.

Ba Luvmour: It's an emergent meaning.
Sam Crowell: It's an emergent meaning. My latest book was *Emergent Teaching, [A Path of creativity, significance, and transformation]* so that sense of... if you create the space for something to happen, and then process and hold that space, something magical happens, and that's what happens. Something magical! And it comes out, and we share it. We understand it from the deep subjectivity of our lives and stories.

Ba Luvmour: Well, I’m just so impressed. I just sit here at these podcast interviews and bathe in pleasure. I have to tell you, Sam, it's just... WOW. I knew it, I knew when I said I’m going to go do this that there was going to be some real, immense payoff.

Sam Crowell: You know, that’s so true because, when you hear stories from other people, I know I get so inspired. I’m inspired by seeing you do the podcast. This is wonderful. You're bringing these stories into the world, and it's so great.

Ba Luvmour: It's Teaching Story Time.

Briefly, teaching stories invite us to see the world with a new perspective. Often featuring a wise person, a wise fool, or a trickster animal, they can be humorous and often have many shades of meaning shining throughout the story. I have told teaching stories for the past 40 years, and I love them, and I have to tell you, each time I tell one, I learn much more myself. This teaching story is called, *A Fishy Story.*

Once, a renowned philosopher and moralist was traveling through the wise fool’s village, and asked him where there was a good place to eat. The wise fool suggested a place, and the scholar, hungry for conversation, invited the wise fool to join him. Much obliged, the wise fool accompanied the scholar to a nearby restaurant, but they asked the waiter about the special of the day.

"Fish. Fresh fish."

"Bring us two," they requested.

A few minutes later, the waiter brought out a large platter with two cooked fish on it; one of which was quite a bit smaller than the other. Without hesitating, the wise fool took the larger of the fish and put it on his plate. The scholar, giving the wise fool a look on intense belief, proceeded to tell him that what he did was not only flagrantly selfish but that it violated the principles of almost every known moral, religious, and ethical system.
The wise fool listened patiently to the philosopher's extempore lecture and when he was finally exhausted the wise fool said, "Well sir, what would you have done?"

"I, being a conscientious human, would've taken the smaller fish for myself," said the scholar.

"And, here you are," the wise fool said and placed the smaller fish on the gentleman's plate.

Can you find meanings in this story, about education? If so, send your insights to ba@luvmourconsulting.com. A three person panel will select the most relevant stories, and they will be read at the end of the subsequent podcast. Again, that's B-A at L-U-V-M-O-U-R C-O-N-S-U-L-T-I-N-G . com

I look forward to your insights, and to learning from you. Those insights selected will receive a copy of the award-winning book, so valuable for parents and educators, *Grow Together, Parenting as a Path to Wellbeing, Wisdom, and Joy* by Dr. Josette Luvmour.

Yes, we have the same last name, and we are married, and we have been working together in holistic education for more than 30 years. But that's not the reason I offer this book. Check out her many accolades, and the book reviews on our website...


You know, my own work in this way has been so... I've spent so much time internal looking and have been so inspired. Just reading like, [William] Blake, who said, "I got down on the earth, and called the worm mother." I mean, I've hugged earth, and earth has hugged me back. I've tried to bring it forward in the ways I've tried to bring it forward. I realize how narrow, necessarily narrow, that has and had to be. So hearing these different expansive approaches and the different communities that you work with...[sigh]...what's the big challenge in all that for you?

Sam Crowell: You know, that's an interesting question. So I have to pause just a moment. I think the challenge always for me, it's not so much a challenge, but... a true joy is to connect. Because when I'm working with anyone, if there's no connection then there's no message. There's nothing to do. So, how to create relationship? Always, I get nervous about this. I don't take it for granted. I think that's what I'm trying to say. Relationship and connection is a joy; but to me, it's also a foundation. Creating that foundation of connection, and
trust, and real true sharing, is always a challenge. A positive challenge.

Ba Luvmour: Yeah, and in order to do that, there has to be this space between.

Sam Crowell: Yes.

Ba Luvmour: And so, there's a wonderful inner self-observation, in what one brings to that, and is ... I'm going to use the word "disciplined," which is something I haven't done before, in the sense of disciple to our own inner understanding, as to what really allows that space to be there.

Sam Crowell: I think that's true, yes.

Ba Luvmour: I have to do that.

Sam Crowell: I think that's very, very true. Sometimes people ask, "What do you talk about?" And I said, "I don't know. I haven't met the group yet." I said, "Whatever I share has to come out of that process of sharing." And so, where I know what I can say, so it's not necessarily being prepared for content. It's being prepared, I think it's an inner preparation, to clear out my own stuff, you know? And to be as receptive and open as I can be, and to learn, and to truly engage. You must find that, in doing these, I would think.

Ba Luvmour: Again, this is ... You're the sixth person I've ever done it with. And so far, resoundingly so. But of course, I've done it with many, many teachers, and children...

Sam Crowell: Over the years.

Ba Luvmour: Right. And that's one of the gifts that working in Natural Learning Relationships brought to me, because I had spent many, many years in retreat and semi-retreat, and I didn't see the spiritual essence of relationship. I didn't, and I'm looking back, I can see the arrogance that was in me, in judging what relationship was or wasn't, and who was or wasn't worthwhile. This last 30 years of working in this way has...I just can't believe the incredible spiritual essence in relationship.

Sam Crowell: I understand.

Ba Luvmour: It just knocks my socks off. It wasn't my nature. My nature was more, "Okay. Shut up. Go within. Listen. Get out of your own way."
Sam Crowell: Yeah. I can relate to what you're saying, as I think my early experiences also were very withdrawn. And I think, well I know I'm an introvert by nature, yet I feel most alive in the classroom, in relationship. But, my natural tendency is to be a contemplative.

Ba Luvmour: Yeah.

Sam Crowell: And to really process things alone, in silence, or in nature, wood, whatever, but alone. So, relationship, it is a joy but it doesn't come naturally to me.

Ba Luvmour: Oh, this is so interesting to me. It really is. Do you ever find yourself yearning for the contemplative life?

Sam Crowell: Oh, very much. Well, I live in the mountains, so I seek it out. I can tell also that if I'm too public in my activity I start to feel drained. So I very much, I have to have a very strong spiritual practice to just sustain me. That actually went into my work in education for sustainability. You know, what do we need for our own sustainable wellbeing? How do we need to engage in spiritual practice of whatever kind? Not a specific practice.

Ba Luvmour: Yeah. I live next door to my daughter, son, and grandchildren.

Sam Crowell: Joy.

Ba Luvmour: It is unbelievable, and to have been with them from the first breath in their life, and as a grandparent...but, as right there.

Sam Crowell: Yes, yes.

Ba Luvmour: But still, at times, I go, "Well, maybe a little contemplative time, more contemplative time, is called for here." But, they're ages 7 and 11 now, and the four of us are so close, that we're actually now beginning a conversation about how we can each cut out more opportunities there. Because, I do find myself yearning.

Sam Crowell: You know, my granddaughter's age 9, and I've started writing a book. Her name is Lily, called Lily's World. It's not based on the Earth Charter, but I'm doing a meditation on the Earth Charter, both from a Western sense of that word, meditation, and an Eastern sense. So, thinking about her, and connecting my life with her life, there's something unbelievably special about that.
Ba Luvmour: I know! The gifts are right here! They're right here. One of the things I trumpet over and over is, “children are not a cost center.” They’re actually your place of awakening.

Sam Crowell: That’s so true. Yes, that is so true.

Ba Luvmour: I work enough with parents to see that they do that all too often.

Sam Crowell: It's easy to fall into those traps. So to just disregard, or dismiss, or not take seriously ... It's the children who have so much to teach us about ourselves.

Ba Luvmour: Did we ever think when we started on this, that the transformation for us would be so intense? I did not.

Sam Crowell: I didn't at all. That sense of Entheos¹, you know, bringing out, and bringing forth the God within. I still feel that so strongly, and I thought it would be diminishing, but I find it's actually increasing. My energy level is diminishing at this stage of my life but not the enthusiasm. Not the passion I feel for this work.

Ba Luvmour: Hey, podcast listeners, sometimes words are just not what's going to happen on this podcast, let me tell you. Because right now, just this ... I have no other words but "sweet." So, what do you want us to know? I know you spoke about carrying forward, and what do you want? Like, if you're going to infuse people to become Holistic Educators, what do you want them to know?

Sam Crowell: I think that being a holistic educator is the most natural thing in the world. There are philosophical aspects to Holistic Education, of course, but it is the way we are. It is the way we learn. It is the way we become human beings and more human. It's magical, but it isn't something that has to be forced, or imposed, or learned any special way. It's just a recognition, an awareness of our true nature. That we are spiritual, that we are social, that we have emotions, and are emotional beings. We relate to nature, and to the environments around us, and we make sense and meaning and intelligence of all of that, just naturally. That's what we do. It's who we are.

Ba Luvmour: That is so well said. So often we'll see children who are responded to, and related to with and within wellbeing, and in their whole selves...and they'll say or do something spectacular. But it'll look spectacular to us, but it isn’t to them.

¹ Entheos: En meaning within, and Theos meaning Spirit. Entheos is originally the root word for enthusiasm.
Sam Crowell: Right.

Ba Luvmour: I had a jaw dropping moment once, when I had this family that I was working with...and actually they ran a small school. The family came to visit us with their three children. This one girl [their daughter] was 10 years old. She went out into the Manzanita bushes. The berries were coming off. And, just in the course of the afternoon she made a Manzanita berry necklace for me. This is early days for me. She gave me this necklace, and I said, "Oh, I don't deserve that." And she said, "Why not?"

She just couldn't understand that this is just a natural movement among people who care for each other. And I was caught in my bullshit. "Why not?" And I thought I was being magnanimous and I was being a total idiot.

Sam Crowell: It is such a natural process. Sometimes I use as kind of a secondary title for presentations, *Teaching What Really Matters*. When you start to wonder and question that, you find that it's much more than what is typically taught. I think I was Jerome Harste, I used his quote quite a bit, that there are two questions that all curriculums should address in some way. (1) “What kind of person do I want to be? And (2) What kind of world do we want to live in?” If we encounter those questions as a community, and we're sincere about those questions, they take us places. They just do.

Ba Luvmour: *Meetings with Remarkable Educators* is a production of Luvmour Consulting II, LLC; Copyright Ba and Josette Luvmour, 2018.

Our sound engineer is Demetri Young, our webmaster is Nathan Young, and our all-important media maven is Cleo Young. All podcasts are transcribed with show notes, and can be found at LuvmourConsulting.com/podcast/

Ba and Josette Luvmour would also like to thank SelfDesign Graduate Institute. We teach there, and at SelfDesign, we nurture each learner's ability to explore inner and outer worlds, and discover his or her own deep understanding and vision. Go to the SDGI website and see for yourself... that's www.SelfDesignInstitute.org.

This is Ba Luvmour reminding you that holistic relationships with children leads to joy and self-knowledge, with the adults in their lives. With respect for you, and for children everywhere, see you next time.

*Meetings with Remarkable Educators*
Copyright © Ba & Josette Luvmour, 2018 • ba@luvmourconsulting.com