

Butterflies – A journey from Chaos to Interconnectedness.

By Catherine Quinn

My colleagues and I are engaged to work with a group of Primary 7 students. The students are in their final year of primary school, soon to be making the transition to secondary school. It is a mixed group of 10/11 year old boys and girls. Usually there are between 45-50 participants. This is the largest group of participants that we have had the opportunity to work with on a community music project. I have found this to be both exciting and challenging. The workshops are about making connections, inspiring potential, and bringing hope where there is none, through music. I seek opportunity to tap into not only the potential within each individual but the potential of the entire group including my co-facilitators. It is my wish for the group to function at its fullest potential and enjoy the creativity and beauty that arises out of this. This journey of growth and development that we are all on together reminds me of the metaphor of the caterpillar turning into a butterfly. It is without a doubt a journey befitting a time for transformation, new beginnings and paradigm shifts for both the group and facilitators alike.

At some point in time we all have seen a Butterfly enter our space, their random movement and unpredictability makes them an enigma to behold. We gaze at their beauty, we admire their gentleness, and we smile at their flitting from one flower to another, or whatever it is that catches their eye or attention. We wonder at what they may be thinking as they move from place to place. This was very much my thoughts as we began our work with the group. Many little butterflies fluttering around in our community music activities, all with their own flight paths, all unique, colourful vibrant and beautiful in their character and expression. It was beautiful and yet so chaotic and unpredictable. Holding a focus with these lively young people was stretching me and my colleagues. The students all had different values, beliefs, realities, and yet we as their facilitators had to design a strategy and a plan that would enable and unite the group as a collective through musical connections. Holding the vision of creating a better understanding within each individual, in the group, and in ourselves we journeyed through the transformative workshops all learning and growing together. I wondered at times how we would bring about togetherness, unity and connection amidst such chaos. How could we collectively as facilitators, through music, touch the participants, and each other, in a way that enabled us all to feel that we are all part of something bigger? How could we impart the wisdom that our contribution to the life we are living has value and meaning in every single moment no matter what reality we are living, what challenges we face, or our perception of the diversity we feel exists between us? The truth was and is obvious, we are all the same, all connected. Sometimes it is an uncovering of this truth, a breaking forth from the "cocoon" that needs to happen before we realise this. We may very well be at different stages of development, evolution or enlightenment within our life journey, but this does not change the reality that we are all growing through experiencing, through "being".

All the challenges we faced with the group were chaos to me, right before my very eyes was the butterfly effect. There were so many variables, caused by the sum of many tiny pulsating and unique beings. I couldn't help but feel the reverberations of all this wing flapping in the group. I struggled as I tried to create the connections

within the group. I continued in my belief that we should never underestimate even the impact of the tiniest input. A small change at one place in a complex system can have large effects elsewhere. I love the mythical story "A butterfly flaps its wing in Beijing and creates a Tornado in Florida". I might never know the impact but I believed it was and is possible. The flap of a butterfly's wings in one part of the world can set off a storm somewhere else in the world! This is exactly what was happening in the group. Storms were happening inside of me, inside of them and inside the facilitators. How could I make a paradigm shift in the energy and feel of the group to a more positive one, how can I contribute to meaningful transformations for us all. If The Butterfly Effect explains how the breeze produced by a butterfly's wings could set off a series of reverberations that over time have a tremendous effect on weather patterns thousands of miles away. What effect were we having? One could choose to see this as chaos, I prefer to view it as the interconnectivity of the universe.

I began to imagine the impact of our flutter of butterflies from week to week. I started to dream of the potential, I focused on paying attention to the tiniest of details. I imagined all of us, as we send out love vibrations, reverberating around the world. I became a transformational leader, leading by example out of a firm belief that every thought, feeling, word, and action are all forms of energy. What we think, feel, say, and do in each moment comes back to us to create our realities. I began to move in my community music group solidly rooted in this my belief. Everything that I wanted for the group, I created in myself first and then I allowed the gentle flapping of the butterfly wings to do what it does. I began to show the group and the facilitators how much I value and love the connection with them, how they impact on me and make a difference in my life. I endeavoured to deepen in my self-awareness of how I impacted on them and ensure this was positive in every possible way.

I began to notice all the beautiful developments of becoming a butterfly and getting wings to fly –getting back to our "True" selves, discovering who we truly are. Perfect. In order for me to have a deeper awareness of the different individual stages of each unique participant, the stage the group was performing at and the stage the group of facilitators were performing at, I reminded myself of how this beautiful creature came in to being, and I used this understanding to foster the connections. I applied this metaphor to deepen my understanding of all the dynamics at play.

The journey of a life starting off as an egg, then hatching into a caterpillar, the chrysalis, then the becoming, the Butterfly with its beautiful wings to fly. The ultimate transformation. This was what I envisioned for us all. This life cycle is all stages along the way, all vital parts of forming a Butterfly and to be valued and part of the process. The same dynamic was true of the group. In my haste to realise this potential I forgot to embrace the beauty of the chaos, we are all growing together. I quickly realised that if I ever happen upon a chrysalis hanging in nature, and notice movement in the chrysalis I know that a Butterfly was nearing its birth. No matter how excited I might feel about this birth I would know to never assist the birth, for if I assist the birth, the escape from the chrysalis the butterfly will never fly. Being a butterfly myself, I know too well that the struggle of the Butterfly inside the Chrysalis is a part of the strengthening of its wings. This struggle of the butterfly assists the blood flow throughout the wings so that the Butterfly will be able to fly. In the struggle there is the Hope. For me this encapsulates the Musicians Without Borders aims, we want to encourage the growth in everyone so all may fly, we also have to watch the

struggle and encourage the effort needed to transform from where we are to something more.

By actively leading under the “law of one” by forming our vision, mission, dreams and goals as a collective with the understanding that everything is the same energy expressing itself in different forms. By living my truth, the knowledge that everything is connected to everything else and ultimately all is an expression of the same whole or energy, transformations happened. Paradigm shifts in our realities emerged like butterflies from cocoons. We all began to flap our wings in a way that makes a positive contribution to humanity. We aligned in combined thoughts, feelings, words and actions towards the creation of our collective consciousness, and this creates the world we see before us. We become united as one in love vibrations.

By creating this understanding in the group, by enabling all those whom we wish to touch to see and realise the beautiful potential that sits between us every single moment in time we begin to make music together. Amazing musical connections by butterflies who are emerging with wings that will undoubtedly ripple across the lands. When we create music in this way it is no longer a cacophony of noise, distractions, and disruptions. We are united with our group and with each other as leaders and now we begin to inspire new leaders. Like any symphony written for the most accomplished orchestra needs a conductor, our groups need facilitators equipped in the art of directing towards the transformations we wish to see in the world. The primary duties of the conductor are to unify performers, set the tempo, execute clear preparations and beats, and to listen critically and shape the sound of the ensemble. Here in the music, I find the answers to all my questions. We need to conduct ourselves and conduct our groups and show them what is possible, let them hear the music, let the butterflies flap their wings to the music that unites us.

Making music brings with it the opportunity to bridge the gap between expectations and reality. Like the butterfly we come into the present moment and we move with what is in this moment. This is where we begin to make a difference in hearts and minds. There is no boundary, no edge, willing to go anywhere and meet anyone where ever they are, making the connection. United in the music or the rhythm so that in the uniting together we all become more than we would normally be through the connection, the synchronisation, motivating, and accepting each other in the moment. The butterfly never asks the flower why it is a particular colour, it just appreciates the beauty in every flower. Music helps us to be like the butterfly, to enjoy and appreciate the music and beauty we create.

Like the butterflies with their own unique flight paths, not all the musicians play at once but when they come together they are beautiful and they make music together in the perfect moment. We can come together in the realisation of the potential, by communicating what it is we are trying to achieve, we can create a shared vision, we can begin to understand one and other and finally we can make beautiful music together. Like the butterfly's journey from egg, caterpillar, chrysalis to butterfly so too as community musicians we will be many things, sometimes the musician, sometimes the conductor, sometimes the composer, wisdom is in knowing the “truth”, in knowing what we are at any given moment in time.

Like the butterfly, musicians without borders have no boundaries and each bring and embody hope. Both are living proof that beauty, hope and magic can emerge out of any struggle. The butterfly is nature's way of reminding us that there is hope. When

the caterpillar is no more the butterfly exists in ultimate freedom and beauty, so too does the music in our hearts when we feel we have nothing else to connect us. Butterflies like Musicians without Borders bring hope where there is none. They bring hope through the making of musical connections. Hope carries with it a magic. How beautiful. I too bring hope to all those who need to be reminded that they have wings that they too can fly.

The story of how the caterpillar transforms into the butterfly has long been used as a metaphor for the process of transforming states of consciousness from one dimension to another, from knowing something on the surface, then undergoing a deep experience that leads to a whole new capacity and perception. This was my process, I was beginning to look beneath that which was being presented to me, I was deepening in my capacity and perception of the group and like the butterfly with every transformation there is always, effort and some pain as we move towards using our wings.

I applied this analogy to the group and to myself. This enabled me to see it all in a whole new light. In this light I began engaging in the process of creating an inspiring vision for the future of the group, for me as a facilitator and with my peer facilitators. I knew in order to work towards this vision I needed to look closely at ways that motivate and inspire the group so that they too want that vision for themselves. Through effective transformational leadership comes the bringing together of the skills needed for this process, the realisation of the potential that exists leading us towards the unfolding of all our wings. Wings that allow us to fly high using the energy that comes from the music we create together. The music being “the wind beneath our wings”.

Butterflies don't concern themselves with what they have achieved, with what they have done or with who they are, they just be, they enjoy the journey and the connections they make along the way. By their very being they create beauty, magic, hope, freedom and change. They are a beautiful reminder of the potential that sits within us all. This is my journey from chaos to interconnectedness.