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The Celebration of Barney Glaser: A Personal Perspective

Andy Lowe

Over 30 years ago, whilst I was running the PhD research methodology program in the University of Strathclyde Business School in Glasgow Scotland, I first met with Barney Glaser. I had just had a book published with two other authors entitled "Management Research." The publishers, Sage [to save money], had produced a double-sided flyer to promote the book. On one side of the flyer was our book and the flip side was another book authored by Evert Gummesson from Stockholm University. Neither Evert nor I had ever met so we independently decided to contact each other for a future possible collaboration. During the course of our conversations, it emerged that Evert was a friend of Barney Glaser and had been his guest at his home in Mill Valley California. I asked Evert to forward Barney's contact details because I wanted to invite him to Scotland so that he could give a seminar to the PhD researchers and faculty in the Strathclyde University Business School in Glasgow. It is worth remarking that it was Evert, a few years later, who successfully proposed to Stockholm University that Barney be awarded an honorary doctorate for his services to research methodology. Although Barney has no idea who I was he immediately said yes to my request to coming to give a seminar providing two conditions were met. Firstly, he would bring both his wife Carolyn and his son Barney Jr. Secondly, Barney required me to make an undertaking that he would not tolerate any kind of rhetorical wrestle from academics. I mention these two conditions in the context of getting a deeper understanding of Barney Glaser's three main concerns. Firstly, his family were the key thing in his life. He had never made any kind of academic visit to the UK previously and he wanted it to be shared by some members of his family. Secondly, he did not want to waste his time taking part in any of empty intellectual rhetoric; rather he just wanted to make sure that people understood the nuances of the Grounded Theory method.

The third issue that emerged during his visit to Scotland was he unlimited generosity. He and his wife Carolyn invited me to come and stay them in California any time I was able. I was very happy to take up this invitation many times.

An important legacy that Barney was always eager to retain is the Sociology Press. He was fully aware of the capricious behavior of most publishers. Publishers frequently just pulp any title if the sales statistics fall below their desired target. The Sociology Press is vital to minimize the contamination of the Grounded Theory which GT remodelers are doing. For more on this check out this YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCy5IRUeqwb2ITjbT7rkuszg>.

Barney's generosity was boundless. He always took calls from any genuine PhD researcher who needed immediate help and guidance. Many of his replies Barney captured in his book entitled *A Cry for Help*. Another of the driving forces behind all of Barney's intellectual activities was his insistence in pushing the importance of the intellectual autonomy of all the PhD researchers he came across. He empowered me to retire early because working full time in an academic environment was dumbing me

down. he said to me. The path to discovering one's own intellectual autonomy, Barney Glaser explained, comprised of four essential things. Firstly, the important of always maintaining an appropriate moral stance. Secondly, Barney always displayed due humility when presenting his ideas. Thirdly, Barney never suffered fools gladly because all research must be characterized by academic rigor which avoids frippery. Fourthly, perhaps most importantly, he understood that the grounded theory perspective was the vehicle which systematically revealed how to discover our habitual tendencies. In a way it could be said that GT reveals is what we all do without even knowing it. Barney frequently declared that all serious GT scholars should endeavor to be the custodians of legitimate GT and not be seduced by the various attempts to remodel GT.

The GT community should be wary of betraying his legacy. The continuance of Sociology Press is a vital importance in maintaining his legacy. The strongest memories I do have about Barney is that I was so privileged to have been in his presence. His lasting legacy will his relentless pursuit of understanding the human condition in such a way that we also might be to share his insights.

About the Author

Andy has a PhD from Glasgow University in Scotland and an MBA from Aston University in England. The first half of his working life was in managerial positions in international service companies based in Europe and the US. He has had a close working relationship with Barney for the last 30 years. In the second half of his working life, as an academic, he has delivered GT research seminars and supervised PhDs all using the GT method in the US, Europe, Asia, Africa, South and Central America and Australia. He has held academic positions in the UK, Sweden, Denmark, Finland. He is currently an external academic auditor for the EU Legitimation of Newness and its impact on EU agenda for change [LNETN] project. He is the joint author of a new title to be published by Macmillan in winter 2023 called "The Art of Theory Building".