A guide to cybernetics and social activism in everyday life -- *A takeoff of Larry Richards ASC 2010 provocation: The formulations below are offers for initiating or triggering a new way of thinking or new way of conversing. They are an attempt at clear language without yet being communicative. Once they become communicative, they become aphorisms or slogans, with little value except as propaganda (which is to be avoided). The idea is that each of these (and more) would be on a page of the guide. On that page would also be a link to social activism (or cybernetics). These links could take the form of poems, pictures, texts, stories, jokes, riddles, puzzles, games, magic tricks, etc.*

I played with Larry's concepts, language and positioning while adding some of [me]. -- jlombardi@jLombardi.net

1. Cybernetics does not seek ultimate truth or a unified meta-theory, rather fosters incompatible and opposing ideas.
2. Cybernetic inquiry accounts for the observer, his or her languaging and assumes neither objectivity or subjectivity.
3. Cybernetics resists ideology when focusing on constraints [and possibilities] rather than causes [and effects].
4. Cybernetics is neither a science nor philosophy although it may inform these modes of inquiry and others.
5. Cybernetics distinguishes itself by the questions it asks, be they first, second [or third-order] questions.
6. Cybernetics offers a vocabulary for talking and thinking about dynamics, relations and behavior.
7. Cybernetics offers a trans-disciplinary language for exploring, designing and solving problems.
8. Cybernetics is the art of maintaining equilibrium in a world of constraints and possibilities.
9. Cybernetics is the art and science of manipulating defensible metaphors.
10. Cybernetics is the science and art for understanding, understanding.
11. Cybernetics cures all temporary truth of eternal triteness.
12. Cybernetics is ways of thinking about ways of thinking.*
13. Cybernetics is exploring the circularity of circularities.

I cannot NOT apply cybernetics. (Richards)

Four pillars/cornerstones of cybernetics:

process [dynamics and content]
variety/constraints [and possibilities]
circularity/recursivity [and insistence]
observation/participation [and performance]

Cybernetics challenge #1: an alternative to conscious purposiveness, yet preserve self-awareness and intention [Desires]. (circumventing problems of dysfunctional designs, self-criticism, over-trying) Suggestions: values/desires as constraints, deliberate thinking, instantaneous remembering.

Cybernetics challenge #2: an alternative to reward-oriented hierarchies. (overcoming problems of oppression, cruelty, dominance, scarcity of resources) Suggestions, paradoxical structures, alternative clocks, networks of conversation, [peace as a need.]

Design I: A is better off when B is better off, AND B is better off when A is better off.

Design II: 1. Every action taken does not decrease, preferably increases, the participation of the other. 2. Everything can change (including these rules if it can be done within the rules)-- Richards, ASC 2010

1. Cybernetics does not seek ultimate truth or a unified meta-theory, but rather fosters incompatible and opposing ideas.

   Dialectics when language functions as a biologic so that noises are invitations and invitations are _____.
   Discourse --> Dialectics -- > Conversation, a particular type of dialogue, starts with asycrynicity moves toward syncrynicity.

2. Cybernetic inquiries account for an observer, his or her languaging and thinking assuming neither objectivity or subjectivity.

   I cannot NOT apply cybernetics.

   One beauty of (cybernetics) is that it embraces individuality, recognizing at its core that observing is fundamental. For it is I who constructs his or her experiential world and it is I who is responsible for it, within the constraints in which they emerge.

3. Cybernetics resists ideology when focusing on constraints [and possibilities] rather than causes [and effects].

   Generating and designing at least triadic relations and dynamics helps me escape the trap of causality.

4. Cybernetics is neither a science nor philosophy although it may inform these modes of inquiry and others.

   social problems require second and third-order solutions, cybernetics is about social change when shifting thinking, transforming history and designing alternative languages(ing).

   Transforming history: a change in history such that no traces of the change remain in the new, otherwise it is an addition.
   Languaging: the coordination of the coordination of actions [the recursive coordination of co-ordinations of *actions.]*
   Two tracks of language: descriptive and orientative; what one says and what 'what one says' does.

5. Cybernetics distinguishes itself by the questions it asks, be they first, second or third-order questions.

   First-order focuses on relations (causal ways of looking): communication, control, self-regulation, homeostasis, etc….
   Second-order focuses on relations, dynamic complementarity (triggering way of looking): conversation, autonomy, organizational closure, autopoiesis,…..

   Everything said is said by an observer to an observer (who may be herself/himself)
   [Two observers, the nucleus of any society, three observers the nucleus of humanity]

6. Cybernetics offers a *vocabulary* for talking and thinking about the dynamics, relations and behavior.

Dynamics: when change (not entity) is fundamental; a pattern of changes; the domains of experiences.

Relations: when the states of one entity (concrete or abstract) constrain the possible states of another; a pattern of possible states of behavior; the domain of explanations [not experiences].

Trivial machines: input predicts output, state-determined, history independent.

Non-trivial machines: outcomes not predictable. Three types: incompletely observable (state-determined, history-dependent), non-linear dynamic (structure-determined, history independent), observing systems (structure-determined, history dependent).

7. Cybernetics offers a trans-disciplinary language for exploring, designing and solving problems.

Responsibility: awareness of our likings and disliking (desires) with respect to the consequences of our actions.

Freedom: alternatives and choices, Individual freedom: awareness of one's likings and disliking of one's likings and disliking (desires of desires) with respect to the consequences of one's actions, social freedom: awareness of our likings and disliking of our likings and disliking (our desires of desires) in relation to the consequences of our actions.

Time: a human invention. A cybernetician is a craftsperson in and with time [and space].

Ethics: increase alternatives, dilute power

Technology: the means to solve problems, including problems not yet invented. [paradox is obvious]
All technology mediates human interaction. When can technology facilitate conversation with a society?

8. Cybernetics is the art of maintaining equilibrium in a world of constraints and possibilities.

We live in language, with all the dilemmas, biases, inconsistencies, and paradoxes therein entailed -- without complaint. However, we may lament the constraints language imposes on ways of thinking and being in a world possibilities.
When reflecting it might become more apparent that we need a new honest language in which peace is a need.

Radical Constructivism is about rational ways of thinking about knowing. Irrational questions, questions that require responses that are not based on experience are referred to as undecidable questions: questions only we can decide [questions we must decide]? What questions are NOT questions that only we can decide? Rational ones? RC is about rational ways of thinking….

9. Cybernetics is the art and science of manipulating defensible metaphors.

When is a defensible metaphor.

10. Cybernetics is the science and art of understanding, understanding.

I understands that I understands according to his or herstory of living and acts accordingly.

11. Cybernetics cures all temporary truth of eternal triteness.

Things are what is said about them in the social world.
Suspend beliefs; embrace desires. For anchors, replace beliefs with passions.
Times of truth and consistency; moments of art when logical domains collide.

12. Cybernetics a way of thinking about ways of thinking (of which it is one, [which makes thinking a choice]).

Thinking: an unfolding of a set of concepts and the connections among them, way of thinking: a pattern of unfolding.
Fate; dying, the decay of variety. Life; the retardation of decay. Art?

First-order cybernetics: focus on observed systems. (The observer selects system, then disengages as participant.
Second-order cybernetics: focus on observing systems. (The observer selects system, chooses to participate.

Observed systems: observer selects "external" clock.
Observing systems: observer acknowledges alternative clocks.
Observer observing systems: observer acts in ways that reflect alternative clocks

13. Cybernetics is about the circularities of circularity.

System: change of state, elements, structure (pattern of relations), invariance ("organization"), closure (mechanism of circularity) [organizational closure], possible stages of a system: disorder, experimental, speculative, reflective, administrative.

Conversation is propelled by a preference on the part of the participants for recurrent interactions. A primary role of conversation is not communication, but rather the maintenance and creation of distinctions. Conversation, a dynamic interaction between participants so that the dynamics move from asynchronicity toward synchronicity. Asynchronicity in conversation: when participants operate with different clocks, with or without awareness of doing so. Synchronicity in conversations when participants operate with a similar external clock often without awareness of doing so.

Social activism: observe, compose anomalies, perform a provocation, coordinate avoidance, enact design, repeat, [insist].
Turning an anomaly into a provocation is a creative act limited only by one's listening, ingenuity and timing. A cybernetician a craftsperson in time, listening for and cooking-up anomalies, pointing at paradoxes, inconsistencies in logics = opportunities.

I use the term **dialectics** when I want to speak about an idea and its opposing or incompatible ideas that function so that they might generate new ideas. I use dialectics as an alternative to the grand scheme -- BIG clock. [I use dialectics when opening a spaces for other points of views.]

Philosophy is about thinking about thinking (epistemology) whereas **cybernetics** is about ways of thinking about ways of thinking of which this is one, as such it is oriented toward thinking as a *choice one makes.* [autopoiesis, closure, second-order: self-organization, self-regulation, self-awareness, circularity, the cybernetics of cybernetics...]

How can I use cybernetic concepts, **relational and dynamic** in ways that orient and invite people to generate the social (concepts) necessary and needed to partake social transformations?

How can I use cybernetics to construct and perform new kinds of social systems that are desirable?
How do I problem pose in ways that generate conversations without violence and/or dismissal?
How can I instigate provoke going beyond floating hierarchies based on experiences?

cybernetics is not

cryogenics
reductionistic
success oriented
interested in causes
statues set of fixed ideas
objective or subjective