**Looking back but thinking forward: embracing action from within………...**

**David Higgins**

I find myself writing my final editorial as I depart my role of co-editorship at a time of great personal crisis, it is something we all experience in our lives at some point, how we cope, come to terms and live through such moments requires great courage, support and our ability to act and learn through the experience. For me, at this moment and time, such learning takes courage. Over the past few weeks the word “courage” has become for me a very powerfully and deeply meaningful word, an expression to enact. A lot of the things we do in life requires us to draw upon our courage to act, to “take action”. For example, the opportunity to undertake co-editorship of this journal for me, took courage, I doubted my ability to undertake such an important role. I recall my first attendance at the Action Learning Conference in Ashridge in 2015, I was so nervous, but the feeling of warmth I experienced from the people I met that day will never leave me, it’s not a feeling you can really ever truly describe other than the feeling that comes over you when you feel comfortable in people’s company, a place where you can take a breath and feel secure – I will never forget that day, the emotions I felt and experienced, to all the Action Learning community, those who are with us and those who we will always remember, I want to say THANK YOU it has been a privilege, just simply being welcomed into the community is and was such an honour for me.

So, my final words: in this developing arena that is Higher Education where competition for publications is high, finding a place where you can truly be yourself and express yourself is becoming unique. I guess this is a value I have always seen in the journal, in our refereed papers and especially in our accounts of practice, which are truly inspirational, finding that balance between theory and practice is something I do not see happening in many journals but yet we have managed to get that mix just right in OUR journal, maybe because we seek to give voice, to offer writer the courage to write about what is really happening out there, to embrace what went well and what did not go well through how we account for our actions, choices and judgements. In this issue of the journal we are introduced to several interesting papers. The first paper by John Edmonston explores the difference between two different ethe, neoliberalism and action learning. It considers two historical modernities and the emergence of a third, situating action learning and neoliberalism within this framework. The second paper by Yonjoo Cho seeks to explore the success factors of a leadership development programme using action learning for self-governance members in the city of Bucheon in Korea, as well as the distinctive features of action learning for community development in comparison with action learning for business. In the third paper by Cheryl Brook explores aspects of social and political history as the project unfolded, including the notable scandals in hospital and social care which occurred around the time of Revans’ work, starting with the Ely hospital scandal in 1967. Integral parts of this journal are our Accounts of Practice and Book Reviews which demonstrate not only an articulated understanding of learning in action and inquiry but also the means to which practices are oriented and crafted as we engage and act in the moment. In this issue, we are presented with three accounts of action learning practice and four book reviews.