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“Something Hidden, Go and Find It, Go and Look Beyond the Ranges:”
Privilege, Disability, and Empowerment

Thank you for inviting me to share my personal memories of Jay B. Nash in the 1950s, how he influenced my lifelong thought and action, and how many of us, in the margins, are trying to keep his philosophy alive and vigorous as we create new models, new knowledge, and new experiences for ourselves and others. Before I begin, however, I wish to express special appreciation to Sarah Rich, Susan Hudson, and others associated with the College of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation at the Texas Woman's University (TWU) in its golden years (1950s-1980s) before its HPER status as a College was eliminated by upper-level administration as well as its long-standing and much beloved Recreation Department.

This presentation is dedicated to them and to the many others who have shared adventures with me and responded to the call in the title for this speech: **“Something hidden, Go and find it, Go and look beyond the ranges.”** These words come from Kipling but were a favorite of Jay B. Nash, whose nickname when I met him in the mid-1950s was *Ranger*. This nickname fit Nash because he was forever searching, seeking, and striving: using body, mind, and soul (and certainly all of his sensory modalities) to move beyond the ranges for the bits and pieces that might make life more whole and more unified. The ranges Nash sought to look beyond were not just mountains, but symbolically were often aspects of status quo: existing knowledge, methods of inquiry, beliefs and practices, prejudice and discrimination, and certainly closed or nonreceptive minds that just stay the same decade after decade.

Jay B. Nash's (1886-1965) roots were in an integrated, unified, transactional, and interdependent health, physical education, and recreation profession. Today, Nash might be an outsider or on the margin, distanced from the separate specializations, except for a strong drive to bring them together into cooperative, collaborative, interdependent structures for the common good of those we serve. How often I heard Jay B. Nash say:

He drew a circle and kept me out,
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout,
But love and I found a way to win,
We drew a circle and took him in.

Nash (p. 104) citing Markham.

What kind of circles do we unintentionally draw? When for instance, does specialization begin to limit communication, interests, and compassion? For instance, today, how close are recreation specialists who serve primarily the general public and those who serve primarily the disability population and their families? The same question, of course, should be asked of our health specialists, physical education/kinesiology specialists, and dance specialists. The worst year of my life was 1973, when the American Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (AAHPER) accommodated the growing HPER specializations by reorganizing as the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education and Recreation with seven independent associations, all competing for resources. Having been influenced strongly by Nash and mentors before him, I found it extremely hard to identify with separate organizations that, in my mind, tended to weaken the unified whole that our forbearers founded. My thesis is that we have become too specialized, no longer able to interact effectively outside our immediate circle, and no longer caring very much. Something is missing from our lives, and we need to go, search, and find it. Every poem means something different to each of us, so let me share how the following lines affect me.

He drew a circle and kept me out. To me, this refers to the separateness of recreation and physical education and of general education and special education.

Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout. This became me and many of the pioneers in the adapted physical education and therapeutic recreation professions. Note that adapted physical education (APE) is not the same as the broader *adapted physical activity* (APA) used in most of the world (Hutzler & Sherrill, 2007) and in my textbook (Sherrill, 2004). APE is school-based, whereas APA serves persons of all ages in all settings and their families.

But love and I found a way to win. This reminds us of Jay B. Nash's philosophy as *The Hopeful Traveler*, the title given Nash's biography by Jessup (1980).

We drew a circle and took them in. The personal meaning here is in the questions: what circles are we drawing with love? Who knows about our circles? Who cares? This leads me into the opportunity to tell you about something very dear to my heart: the relatively new international, interdisciplinary, and crossdisciplinary field of *adapted physical activity* (APA). This rapidly growing profession, science, and body of unique knowledge includes all physical activities, as well as the states of mind, related to leisure, recreation, sport, dance, health, fitness, physical education, nutrition, rehabilitation, and well-being with content taken from all program areas and applied in all physical activity settings. Moreover, APA has designated its target population as "the others:" those who are typically excluded, ignored, or underserved by general recreation (GR), general physical education (GPE), general education (GE), and the like. "The others" include family members and others who wish to include and to be included.

Clearly, APA did not create the age-old division of human beings into served and underserved groups, privileged and not privileged, able-bodied and not able-bodied, sick and well. This division is as old as history, exists in some form in every culture, and relates largely to power and resources (Charlton, 1998; Singleton & Linton, 2006). No matter what we do, I believe that this division will always exist because history shows that there will always be the powerful and the subordinate, oppression and privilege, prejudice and discrimination. Professionals in APA (as well as in the specialized areas of therapeutic and inclusive recreation, adapted physical education, physical therapy, dance therapy, and disability sport) will always be needed. These specialists will always seek strong affiliations with the “parent organizations” such as the National Recreation and Park Association and the National Education Association, if they are made to feel welcome. As Nash would say, “We travel hopefully.”

So ends my introduction. Today’s reflections are organized into four parts (a) Reflections on traveling hopefully and the ways Jay B. Nash influenced my becoming; (b) Privilege, the excluded, and the underserved, and (c) Disability and empowerment.

Reflections from the Margin: A Case Study of Becoming or Why I am Captivated by Jay. B. Nash

Like many of you, I have been privileged in my lifelong professional development. My hometown, Logansport, Indiana, had a wonderful Parks and Recreation Department in the 1940s, when every day, all summer long, all through middle school, I walked to a nearby park and participated in programs conducted by recreation personnel. I was privileged in that Logansport, which had wonderful Girl Scout leaders, who made available long hikes, nature study, and primitive camping to all who wanted it. When I chose an undergraduate major in health, physical education, and recreation at the Texas Woman’s University, the travel to Texas on a train all by myself in 1952, experiencing the culture shock, and trying hundreds of new things with new people in new settings was, for sure, the adventure that Jay B. Nash linked with happiness (see Nash, 1953, Chapter 4, “The Happy Person Seeks Adventure”). Throughout my undergraduate years, I participated in theory and practice courses in Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (several courses in each area), and I developed strong appreciation and commitment to their integrated, transformational unity (another idea emphasized in all of Jay B. Nash’s writings). The unity of health, physical education, and recreation was analogous to the unity of mind, body, and soul. They simply couldn’t be separated (another strong belief of Jay B. Nash, perhaps because of the times in which he lived (1886-1965), but maybe because he saw the future in ways that others have not.

Cohen Bowers, who had studied with Jay B. Nash at New York University, was one of TWU’s undergraduate instructors and exposed us, with joy and enthusiasm, to Jay B. Nash’s philosophy of happiness, recreation, and leisure. Like Dr Nash, she loved

camping in primitive settings and sponsored a campus Outing Club that took at least one overnight trip a month. Anyone could go, if we signed up ahead of time and made a nominal contribution toward food. Some of us went every time. We were **engaging** in deeply meaningful experiences: (using *our activity drive* in new adventures), *working together* to assure good and timely food cooked over a campfire, creating new objects by whittling and weaving, picking berries, fishing, digging latrines, and clearing paths in primitive woods and lakes settings. How we loved that *sense of belonging* to a group with similar interests and to the ecological culture of stars, campfires, birds, trees, mammals, and even the Texas snakes! The overall experience, Bowers would reflect, as we sat around the evening fire, was the essence of Jay B. Nash (1953, see Chapter 5, "*The Activity Drive*," Chapter 6, "*Man Must Belong*," and Chapter 7, "*Man Must Work*"). Nash had a special love of campfires and often alluded to their roles in fulfilling these basic needs: engaging in wholesome activity that is self-determined, working, and belonging.

In any ordinary group, Nash (p. 106) said,

There are at least two significant ways in which we acquire a sense of belonging. One is through work and the other through creative recreation. The belonging concept is usually based upon achievement and no man can grow to cultural stature without it. . . . The **definition of recreation** on its highest level centers around those activities [experiences] which may become a spiritual outlet for man's creativity, when work no longer supplies satisfaction. Recreation then becomes a must, a human need, a need for the individual to attain stature, a need to tie him into his group and to bind society together for cultural experiences.

This was the belief system I carried to Puerto Rico in 1955, where I took my first fulltime job: teaching at the University of Puerto Rico at Rio Piedras and volunteering weekends as waterfront director for the island's Girl Scout Camp, which held 2-day outings all year long and privileged me to a lot of fantastic persons who taught me Spanish and, as much as time allowed, their native culture. By the way, I went to Puerto Rico alone, knowing absolutely no one, seeking adventure. Among my most significant adventures are those that occurred when prominent visitors came to the island and needed a host for several days to show them around. Yes, you guessed it: Jay B. Nash and his wife Emma showed up! The entire Puerto Rican faculty spoke English quite well, but they didn't enjoy whole days in English, and most of them didn't know much about Jay B. Nash.

I was privileged to spend several days with the Nashes, sightseeing and dialoguing, but mostly listening and hero worshipping. I was just 20. Nash was back in the USA from a Fullbright Professorship in India taken immediately after retirement from 23 years as Chairman of the Department of Physical Education, Health, and Recreation of the New York University. Nash said (p. 193) that "the man who retires at 65 can enjoy 15 years of full living." When I met him, Nash was 68 or 69: he would live

about 10 more years, dying of a heart attack in 1965 at age 79. He had retired at age 67 and was fully living, taking-on part-time employment, still integrating work and recreation, traveling hopefully, and insisting that recreation and leisure are necessary ingredients in everyday living:

A healthy man is one who works and recreates. True leisure is not something different from or opposed to work. Because it is the *complement* to work, those who are not employed cannot enjoy themselves. They do not have true leisure; they have idleness. You can enjoy true recreation only when you also have work. (p. 207)

Note that this passage emphasizes *complementing* work with leisure, and vice-versa, and thus **presents** a different perspective from that taken by many adults who see work and leisure, as well as recreation, as separate entities and seek to balance the two. *Complementing* something is very different from *balancing*. Just as Nash favored integration of health, physical education, and recreation, so also he promoted integration of work and leisure. Nash deeply loved all aspects of his work in health, physical education, and recreation; indeed, he could not separate himself from the whole. As a Departmental Chair, he believed he was free to choose how he used his time and to find meaning, joy, and satisfaction in the day-by-day activities for which he was salaried. I recognize that not all Department Chairs can do this. But Nash belonged to the privileged few, perhaps because he was willing to fight for this freedom to be and to do his personal best and to cope with the consequences. His arguments for the freedom of self-determination on the job and off may have been overpowering for those with different philosophies.

Consider this definition of *leisure* by Dattillo (2002, p. 6) and how Nash may have been able to achieve the state of mind, the experience, and the process so often associated with leisure during what others considered his work:

Leisure integrates elements of activity and time, but more importantly emphasizes the person's perception that he or she is free to choose to participate in meaningful, enjoyable, and satisfying experiences. As individuals get in touch with the positive feelings, control, competence, relaxation, and excitement associated with the leisure experience, they will be intrinsically motivated to participate. . . . Leisure, then, is an experience, a process, and a subjective state of mind. As a state of mind, leisure transcends time, environments, and situations. To fully partake in leisure is to express talents, demonstrate capabilities, achieve one's potential, and experience a variety of positive emotions.

How do I remember Jay B. Nash at age 68 or 69? He was so down-to-earth, unbelievably comfortable to be with, so appreciative of everything we said and did.

Nash asked that we call him by his nickname, “Ranger,” which seemed to come from his reputation as a pusher, an adventurer, and a goal-seeker. He often punctuated dialogue with memorized poetry, some of his own and some from others as in this poem (p. 73) by Kipling:

‘There’s no sense in going further __it’s the edge of cultivation.’
So they said, and I believed it __broke my land and sewed my crop __
. . . . Till a voice, as bad as Conscience, rang interminable changes,
On one everlasting Whisper day and night repeated __ ‘Go:
Something hidden. Go and find it. Go and look beyond the Ranges__
Something lost behind the Ranges. Lost and waiting for you.
Go!’

I never asked Nash why his nickname was Ranger, or how long he had had this nickname, but I believe it was derived from his lifelong quest for newness and adventure. In his writing Nash often states that “life is continually going on, a mastering and a conquering process. . . . Ironically when the achievement comes, it is not the highest peak __ there is another beyond. And if life is to be full, there must be other ranges beyond to master.” (pp. 72-73) Nash applied this philosophy to ideas as well as actions.

Nash was a TALKER! He asked questions about everything and then, he followed up with more questions. He seemed genuinely interested, but I wonder now if he was teaching me to question, modeling a deeper perception of the common (as well as uncommon) things we take for granted. If you remember the epilogue of Nash’s *Philosophy of Recreation and Leisure*, you know that Nash asked participants to visualize a banquet setting where the speaker called attention to objects and inquired if anyone “knows from personal experience anything about the labour involved?” (p. 219) For example, the speaker noted: “Take this tablecloth to begin with. It is of most exquisite workmanship. It involves weaving __to go further back__ bleaching, smoothing, designing. It is a damask linen, beautiful, and most pleasing to the eye.” The question followed, “Have any of you ever contributed to the making of such beauty?” Moment by moment, the speaker focused on the pottery in the room, the flowers, the mural paintings, the drapes, the walls, everything. Each time he paused, there was silence. Finally, in exasperation, the speaker asked, “Have you made or could you make anything in this room?” The silence continued until a young Galilean emerged from the crowd, walked to the table, raised the cloth, and “made bare the corner and the carved oak leg of the great table.” Nash’s final words in *Philosophy of Recreation and Leisure* were from the Galilean: “Yes, I could make the table __ I am a carpenter.” (p. 222).

What a way to end the book! Through personal contact I learned that Nash valued workmanship in the making of concrete objects as highly as that in the creation of ideas. He especially valued crafts done by the hands but, perhaps above all else, he treasured the capacity to become involved in the products of others, freely expressing interest and appreciation. Learning to ask questions and to sustain meaningful dialogue! He was a privileged professional, and you and I also have been privileged.

Privilege: The Excluded and the Underserved

In the social studies, including such subspecializations as disability studies, gender studies, and race studies, a *privileged group* is imaged as “white, male, heterosexual, nondisabled, [predominantly English-speaking], middle-class or higher” (Johnson, 2006, p. viii). From a social change perspective, “people from privileged groups perpetuate oppression through individual acts, as well as through institutional and cultural practices. They have access to resources, information, and power that can either block or help facilitate change” (Goodman, 2001, p. 2). Often, when I say this, challenges especially amazement and denial) come from the audience. “Oh, it’s not like that any more; think how much progress has been made. Hey, look what Obama has achieved! I know a lot of Black-Americans and their lives are as good as mine.”

And so it goes. When, however, any of us become truly involved with the Black community or any other traditionally subordinate groups, we come to understand that many of them see things differently. Yesterday, David Paterson, who is legally blind, was sworn in as New York’s first Black governor. The media is having a heyday: “Black pride rising for Paterson.” “Just watch this blind man lead New York.” “Paterson will shatter stereotypes as governor.” Although there are 10 million blind and visually impaired Americans, many people have never seen one of them in a leadership position that carries so much responsibility, or in any professional role at all. The unemployment rate for such persons is approximately 70% despite tremendous electronic supports that enable all kinds of job skills. Kuussiston, in the *New York Times* (3/15/08), noted: “It’s a safe bet that Mr. Paterson’s visual impairment will be harder for the public to understand than his race.” At the same time this story is breaking, the Brite Divinity School at Texas Christian University here in Fort Worth is reconfirming and justifying its plans to honor Obama’s longtime controversial pastor, Rev. Jeremiah Wright, who leads a large, predominantly Black church in Chicago. Among the videos recently aired by television stations is Rev. Wright stating: “Racism is how this country was founded and how this country was run . . . Americans believe in white supremacy and black inferiority and believe it more than we believe in God.” Yet, we have often heard this kind of talk from “insiders” struggling for empowerment of their various disadvantaged groups. Or maybe we only hear it if we are the insiders challenging the glass ceiling, tokenism, or lack of voice and representation!

Many of us oppress by doing nothing, just going along with the stream. We oppress by denying architectural, social, vocational, and aspirational access. We corroborate with such oppression each time we climb stair steps into a location that does not provide an alternative means of entrance; each time we plan a conference and select only nondisabled persons to be keynote speakers, officers, organizers, and managers; each time we purchase products from companies that employ only nondisabled persons; each time we fail to use universal design in our planning. We also oppress by failing to offer supports and accommodations to the 5 to 10% of our

students with disabilities (visible and invisible) enrolled in universities (Barfield, Bennett, Folio, & Killman, 2007) and in employing them, once they graduate.

But, we travel hopefully. Professionals in therapeutic recreation and in parks and recreation, as well as in leisure education, leisure counseling, and leisure programming, oppress less than many citizens. In fact, recreation persons are generally among the first to create accessible playgrounds, inclusive practices in use of public spaces, and family involvement.

Disability and Empowerment

Meanings of disability, as well as establishment of nomenclature, are socially constructed and thus vary by history and time. In most countries, legislation is the source of dominant terminology and used to classify for eligibility or entitlement to special service and supports. For example, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 led to widespread use of *handicapped* (e.g., mentally or physically or socially handicapped) and designation of programs as Recreation for the Handicapped or Sports for the Handicapped. In 1990, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) replaced the earlier law, indicating that *with disabilities* was the new accepted terminology and the concept of handicapped was out. The World Health Organization (WHO), following a medical model, in 1980, specified impairments, disabilities, and handicaps as official vocabulary and carefully defined each. In 2001, however, WHO (influenced by worldwide changes in thinking and trends toward integration of medical, sociological, and ecological concepts) drastically changed its classification model, eliminating the concept of handicaps altogether.

The new WHO Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health in 2001 introduced the importance of context and emphasized that all classification must take into account the fact that functioning is an ongoing interactive person-environment process. *Impairments* are now defects in body functions and structures, such as significant loss or deviations. *Disabilities* are activity limitations severe enough to interfere with, or prevent, the performance of activities of daily living, including learning and recreation skills. *Participation restrictions* are barriers or constraints to accessing resources, accommodations, and supports necessary for engaging in recreation, education, work, and other life activities. These definitions supported philosophy of the worldwide disability movement, which emerged in the 1980s in response to the United Nations' Declaration of the International Year of the Disabled in 1981.

This disability movement, which has much influenced by own philosophy, continues to grow stronger and more verbal. Led by activists, scholars, and professionals, the movement identifies academically with social studies and has gained acceptance in many universities of a subspecialization called disability studies. Charlton (1998) presents a substantial theory of oppression, specifically in relation to disability, and promotes empowerment as the pathway for overcoming oppression. Their motto,

“Nothing about us without us!” summarizes the principle that achievement of power enables them to speak for themselves, rather than to be unrepresented or represented by able-bodied persons who cannot know their wishes. This is particularly important in professional preparation (preservice, inservice, continuing education) in which students need to see persons with disabilities (as well as other nonprivileged groups) in roles as faculty and administration. Not as guest speakers but as professionals in tenure-track employment! The principle applies to all settings, but is extremely important in the general education (parks and recreation) learning experiences, where disability receives little attention in course content, practica, and textbooks.

Nonprivileged or minority groups need *inclusion*, with respect and dignity, in many groups: (a) family groups, (b) groups of their own kind like wheelchair or blind sports where they can participate and compete at levels of their choice, (c) advocacy groups, (d) inclusive recreation groups with a ratio of about 2 persons with a disability to 20 without disabilities (the same proportion as in society at large), (e) government councils, organizational boards, and caucuses and (f) numerous other groups with various mixtures of diversity. Some groups offer easy access, but empowerment strategies must be used to gain acceptance in other groups (Shor, 1992). In some ways, empowerment seems to be an integral part of group dynamics, an area in which recreation people have tremendous strengths. Like Nash, recreation in general has always stressed the feeling of belonging and the act of making friends as outcomes of active participation in healthy, enjoyable, freely chosen activities. These are the two goals that children with disabilities and their families aspire toward most. These goals are important also to specialists in therapeutic recreation and adapted physical education, who by primarily serving nonprivileged groups, are often unintentionally (I hope) lumped together and discriminated against in the same manner as the minority groups. Like people with disabilities, they are often perceived as “less than” others with careers in predominantly able-bodied parks and recreation. In time, this perception and the feeling of separateness from desired groups may affect self-concept and motivate career changes. Something more in the mainstream!

Sometimes all of this seems intangible. Certainly it is hard to put into words, but something is missing. I have always believed that *recreation (or leisure education) is the soul of physical education*. Physical education/kinesiology misses you, even if they are not all aware of it. And don't you sometimes miss them? Until the spirit of recreation/leisure states of mind infuse the general public, the emphasis on physical activity and cardiorespiratory exercise is not going to work in reducing the nation's level of obesity and sedentary living. Recently, the media has been trying to scare the baby boomers into exercising by informing them that research indicates that one out of eight of them will develop Alzheimer's disease. Added to this, research is now finding that exercise, more than nutrition and practicing challenging mental activities or anything else, will prevent Alzheimers. So, will baby boomers exercise more? Not unless they are helped to acquire a state of mind that prioritizes enjoyment of physical activity, to belong to a partnership or group that supports daily healthy physical activity, and to

gain easy access to safe and aesthetically pleasing places for a wide variety of diversified activities. These are among the things that I believe Parks and Recreation does best. But so many people don't know this!

So, I conclude these remarks, with one of Jay B. Nash's favorite sayings: *Go. Something's hidden. Go and find it. Go and look beyond the ranges.* And, when you go, take me with you, please. And share it, forcefully, exuberantly, passionately!

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