I first met Rick Snyder 20 years ago at a Nags Head Conference, sponsored by Bibb Latane. The general theme was Personality and Health. I learned much that week. Chief among my lessons was Rick's initial thoughts on hope, which included his ideas about the agency and pathways components, illustrated on transparent overlays with those early Apple graphics of big-headed male figures that looked like lost souls from Easter Island. But I got it. And, I got an advance copy of Rick’s Hope measure. I also learned that Rick loved to play basketball and that he loved to sing “Wild Thing.” He kept pestering me all week to play that song on guitar so he could sing.

Over the years, I managed to see Rick many times at APA conventions, occasional invited talks, and we worked together on several projects. In light of lessons I learned from him, both personal and professional, and the current studies reported in this newsletter, I want to leave you with the following observations that I am sure Rick wants us to remember.

Think theoretically and think critically.

Rick enjoyed the world of scholarship and theory, and he loved those moments when Mother Nature smiled upon our data and made us look smart. Many have forgotten, however, of his distaste for Barnum statements, something he found particularly irksome in the clinical realm.

…but think broadly.

Rick would want our research to be theory-driven. He would want our research to inform, advance, and test the boundaries that define our horizons. Indeed, Rick took the hope model to new frontiers in field and experimental studies, and reported them to professional audiences. But in the last decade of his life, he shared with me his realization and appreciation for taking our scholarship to people in general, for writing for the popular press, and getting our work into the larger marketplace (including Barnes and Noble). He realized the time was right for a positive psychology and he responded in kind, and he encouraged several of us here to be come along. And this leads me to my next point:

Bring the next generation along with us.

Rick told me that working with junior colleagues was a source of great joy in his life. This includes students, of course – he was renowned for his mentorship of doctoral students at the University of Kansas – but he often went out of his way to help junior colleagues, like me, at other institutions. This included professional advancements (as when he invited me to be an Associate Editor for the Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology which was my first position of this nature), and it included personal, face-to-face time.

Those of us who received the blessing of his being should pass that legacy on to the next generation of psychologists. And in that, we should also remember that Rick would have us:

Keep perspective, but bring out the best in others.

From all I saw, Rick loved people, and he would always look for the good (despite being keenly aware of our issues and occasional failings). He laughed at my stories of my slightly politically incorrect grandmother down on the farm in rural Florida (“…that’s the kind of grandmother you want!”). He loved the human spirit. He wrote a personal note to the young woman whose experience with a disability I discussed in a chapter for his book on hope in 2000. He was moved by the account and they were moved by his kindness and gift.

Similarly, as a colleague, he saw the good and the potential in our various disciplines. He spearheaded the social-clinical interface because he realized how we benefit each other to reach a greater good at a time when academic squabbles – as they often do – kept us artificially divided.

He reached out to clinical colleagues to have a greater appreciation of theory, based in the rich observations of everyday people, to expand our understanding of everyday behavior and motivations.

Rick reached out to social colleagues to understand better how they think, organize ideas, develop theoretical and testable notions, and to share his ideas for using these approaches to understand problems that impede the good life.

He reached out to us, brought many of us together, and brought many of us here. Rick brought out the best in us. And we are better for it.