

# What do we mean by generative?

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**Practice Notes** are short easy to follow articles to clarify primary concepts in apithology theory for novice practitioners.

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## GENERATING HOPEFULNESS

Prior to knowing apithology we may rightly rely on hopefulness to generate a desired outcome. We willingly adopt novel qualities as attributes to give our ideas distinctiveness. We may also associate our unspoken hopes with a virtuous trait, without knowing precisely what this might mean (or what it may require of us). When learning apithology, one such hopeful attribution is seen in how we use the word 'generative'. This term can be used as a generic label for the good things people want to make even better. In apithology the generative has a more definable quality. It is discoverable by inquiry and is identifiable in each new discovery. Within apithology practice there is a conscious process of investigation for the formation of generative attributes. Instead of opinions, these are structured inquiries into knowable qualities. Meaningless attributions lead to discourse preclusions.

## THREE EXPRESSIONS

To know the generative in apithology it is essential to distinguish this understanding from three expressions in common usage. The *adjective* 'generative' primarily relates to the ability to produce or reproduce (i.e. to 'beget'). From one thing, something else is produced, naturally. For example, in linguistics generative forms in complex language are produced by simple syntax rules. A second less common use is of 'generativity' as an *adverb*. Just as we might like to describe a sustainable approach as having sustainability, or a creative person as having creativity, so too we may attribute a generative idea as having 'generativity'. This is not actually a word listed in most dictionaries, being more a label of convenience. The third common use is of 'generativity' as a *noun*, being a term used by psychologists, Erik and Joan Erikson in their nine stage theory of adult development (1959, 1998). Technically, the term generativity is the counterpart to stagnation, being the virtuous expression of their seventh adult life stage.

Strength in this stage may require three elements of caring; 'to be care-ful' (in restraint), 'to take care of' (in charity) and 'to care for' (with compassion), doing so in a caring for other generations (Erikson,1980, Evans,1967). Apithology looks to generativity slightly differently (and more expansively) beyond these three common expressions. The generative in apithology also involves a three-fold caring, being a caring for humanity's potentiality. It looks further than a single person's life-stage, towards humanity's wider life aims. This difference is fundamental to apithology practice.

## THREE GENERATIVES

As guidance, there are three components in apithology theory necessary for actions resulting in a worthwhile enactment. These are a *generated* difference, from *generating* interactions, towards an envisaged *generation*. Each component is necessary for an action to be generative. These three delineations hold a three-fold conjunction as an apithological trichotomy. They form a tension of relations leading to resultants that are 'generational'. The 'result of the resultant' forms a contributive benefit. This form of caring is not only generative, it is often benefiting of future generations. Being a bit less technical, in apithology practice being generative involves the practice of holding intentions well beyond wishful projections or hopeful expectations. The test for this is simple and natural. The potential 'presently present', must be 'actually actuated,' while 'forming new forms' of future enablement. What results from these discernments is a vastly richer landscape of generative potentials and humanistic appreciations. While initially indistinct, knowing how the generative is looked at in apithology, allows us to look well towards our future generational legacy.

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