Preface

Lately it occurs to me what a long, strange trip it's been.
—The Grateful Dead, "Truckin' "

Authors generally write the preface after completing the book. Thus, while writing this preface marks a stopping point, at least for now, in my journey through principles-focused evaluation, you, the reader, are at the beginning of this book. To help you get oriented, I thought it would be useful to provide a brief overview of the journey: how principles-focused evaluation emerged and its development so far. In so doing, I should note that this book assumes some familiarity with program evaluation basics, like traditionally defining evaluation as rendering judgments of merit, worth, and significance; the distinction between formative and summative evaluation; logic models and theories of change; and standards for evaluation (Yarbrough, Shulha, Hopson, & Caruthers, 2010). Understanding those basics will help in making sense of the specific niche, purpose, and contributions of principles-focused evaluation.

Developmental evaluation first emerged as an option within utilization-focused evaluation (Patton, 2008, 2012). Principles-focused evaluation then emerged as an option within developmental evaluation. This book elevates it to a full-fledged, distinct evaluation approach with its own niche, framework, and focus. Chapter 5 explains the relationship between utilization-focused, developmental evaluation, and principles-focused evaluation in more detail. Here's an overview.

Developmental Evaluation as Context

Developmental evaluation focuses on evaluating innovations in complex dynamic environments. Innovation is a broad umbrella that includes creating new approaches to intractable problems, adapting programs to changing conditions, applying effective principles to new contexts (scaling innovation), catalyzing systems change, and improvising rapid responses in crisis conditions. Developmental evaluators track, document, and help interpret the nature and implications of innovations and adaptations

as they unfold. They gather data about the processes, outcomes, and contexts of innovation, and help extract lessons and insights to inform the ongoing adaptive innovation process. How do innovative programs and initiatives adapt within and navigate the turbulence and uncertainties of complex systems change? *They adhere to principles.*

Principles-Based Initiatives Led by Principles-Driven People

Principles inform and guide decisions and choices. They do so by telling us how to act. Principles-focused evaluation examines (1) whether principles are clear, meaningful, and actionable, and, if so, (2) whether they are actually being followed, and, if so, (3) whether they are leading to desired results. Principles are derived from experience, expertise, values, and research. Principles-based initiatives are led by principles-driven people. This book will examine, explain, and elaborate these themes. But first a note on language.

I refer to principles-based initiatives, principles-driven people, and principles-focused evaluation as a way of distinguishing the primary role of principles in each case. The meanings are straightforward. Principles-based initiatives, including programs, projects, collaborations, and change efforts of all kinds, base what they do and why they do it on guiding principles. *Initiatives* is a generic term encompassing the full variety of change endeavors but most often takes the form of programs for evaluation purposes. Principles-driven people are motivated by deeply help values expressed through principles that translate values into behaviors. Principles-focused evaluation makes principles the focus of evaluation. But *these language designations are arbitrary,* a matter of preference, not operational significance. One could just as easily refer to principles-focused initiatives, principles-based people, and principles-driven evaluation; or principles-driven initiatives, principles-focused people, and principles-based evaluation. Or one could refer to them all in the same way: principles-focused initiatives, principles-focused people, and principles-focused evaluation. I have chosen to distinguish the role of principles for people, initiatives, and evaluation by referring to principles-based initiatives (programs), principles-driven people, and principles-focused evaluation. Bottom line: These are stylistic preferences, not substantive distinctions.

So then, returning to substance, principles-based initiatives are led by principles-driven people. That's what Frances Westley, Brenda Zimmerman, and I found in studying major social movements that successfully solved problems and changed systems. In *Getting to Maybe: How the World Is Changed* (2006) we reported what we found, that social innovators are motivated by a strong sense of calling, based on deeply held values. They see some social or ecological problem and act. These are people who look at the way things are, find the status quo intolerable, and want to make a difference. They engage based on their principles.

Principles-focused evaluation has emerged as a major inquiry framework and focus for developmental evaluation. For example, in their insightful volume *Evaluating Complexity*, Preskill and Gopal (2014) advise, "Look for effective principles of practice in action, rather than assessing adherence to a predetermined set of activities" (p. 16). Studying the implementation and outcomes of effective, *evidence-based principles* is a major new direction in developmental evaluation relevant to addressing complex problems in a rapidly changing and turbulent world.

Principles-Focused Evaluation

Principles-focused evaluation has now evolved from a type of developmental evaluation to an evaluation approach unto itself. That's because principles constitute a distinct *evaluand*, a specific and unique focus for evaluation. Evaluation, we say,

"grew up in the projects." The profession's origins were in evaluating projects, and, from my perspective, we remain in the grip of a self-limiting project mentality. Such tools as logic models and SMART goals work well for project evaluation. They do not work well, in my judgment, for different kinds of evaluands like evaluating mission, strategy, advocacy, policy change, social and ecological systems change, complex dynamic interventions, and principles. The new challenges for evaluation as a transdisciplinary profession have to do with new units of analysis and broader areas of focus for evaluation, what we call the *evaluand*, that is, the thing evaluated. Chapter 4 discusses the challenge of new evaluands and the corresponding need for matching evaluation approaches.

Principles-focused evaluation informs choices about which principles are appropriate for what purposes in which contexts, helping to navigate the treacherous terrain of conflicting guidance and competing advice. What principles work for what situations with what results is an evaluation question. Thus, from an evaluation perspective, principles are hypotheses, not truths. They may or may not work. They may or may not be followed. They may or may not lead to desired outcomes. Whether they work, whether they are followed, and whether they yield desired outcomes are subject to evaluation. Learning to evaluate principles, and applying what is learned from doing so, takes on increasing importance in an ever more complex world where effectiveness depends on adapting to context. Principles guide adaptation.

New Directions in Evaluation

In doing workshops and webinars on both developmental evaluation and principles-focused evaluation I get asked how (and why) I identify these alternative types of evaluation. Well, I don't just sit around dreaming up new approaches. Quite the opposite, these alternative approaches are responses to my evaluation clients' needs and interests. I am a full-time independent evaluation consultant. I aim to design evaluations that meet my clients' evaluation and decision-making needs, which is the heart of utilization-focused evaluation. My professional standing and livelihood depend on doing so effectively, ethically, credibly, and responsively. Developmental evaluation emerged as a response to innovators, and funders and supporters of innovation, who needed and wanted an evaluation approach specifically attuned to the processes and challenges of social innovation in complex dynamic systems. Principles-focused evaluation has emerged from consulting and working with principles-driven people implementing principles-based initiatives who wanted and needed an evaluation approach that focused on principles. This book is the result. It's a response to the evaluation needs of a specific group of primary intended users, those for whom adhering to principles is the core of how they engage in their attempts to make the world a better place for people in need and to ensure the sustainability of ecological systems.

The distinguishing characteristic of principles-focused evaluation is the focus on principles as the object of evaluation, as the evaluand. Three core questions bring the utilization focus to principles-focused evaluation: To what extent have meaningful and evaluable principles been articulated? If principles have been articulated, to what extent and in what ways are they being adhered to in practice? If adhered to, to what extent and in what ways are principles leading to desired results?

Overview of the Book

Part I of this book introduces principles: what they are, why they matter, and their niche in program development and evaluation. Part II presents the GUIDE framework for effectiveness principles. Effective

principles provide meaningful *guidance* (G) and are *useful* (U), *inspiring* (I), adaptive *developmentally* (D), and *evaluable* (E). The chapters in Part II explain, illustrate, and illuminate each criterion (represented by each letter) in the GUIDE framework. Part III presents six case exemplars of principles-driven initiatives evaluated by principles-focused evaluations. Three of the exemplars are completed evaluations and three are still under way. Part IV turns to principles for evaluations and evaluators, including reflections and insights from three experienced principles-focused evaluators. Part V aims to be practical and practice oriented, offering tools and checklists to use in conducting principles-focused evaluation.

Contributors to the Book

While the book is inevitably dominated by my experiences and perspectives, I learned from editing *Developmental Evaluation Exemplars* how important and informative it is to include the experiences and insights of others, including the occasional skeptic and nay-sayer. Thus, I want to express special thanks to the colleagues who contributed directly and insightfully to this book with their reflections. I introduce each of these contributors at greater length where their perspectives are shared. Here I want to acknowledge and thank them for their contributions, and alert readers to these delectable embellishments.

- Chapter 9 includes a dialogue about principles with a longtime colleague and friend, and distinguished adult education scholar, Stephen Brookfield.
- Chapter 13 describes the varied and important contributions of principles in every aspect of the work of a youth-serving organization in Minneapolis. Heather Huseby, Executive Director of YouthLink, and Nora Murphy, the principles-focused evaluation consultant to YouthLink, highlight the utility of principles.
- In Chapter 16, John Wilson, a community organizer based in southern Africa, has contributed examples of grassroots principles-focused organizational development and evaluation from his work. I met John at a meeting of the Global Alliance for the Future of Food, where we found we had shared interests in principles as a source of inspiration and evaluation in community-based organizations and programs.
- Charmagne Campbell-Patton, to whom this book is dedicated, and about whom I will say more shortly, contributed Chapter 17, "Inspiring Principles: Distinguishing Overarching Principles from Operational Principles."
- Chapter 19 provides an extended case example of the developmental, contextual, and adaptive nature of principles through a citizen journalism initiative that involved adapting both facilitation and evaluation principles in an open-space event. Yve Susskind and Peggy Holman teamed up to write the chapter in a creative, interactive, and dialogic format. Yve was the developmental evaluator for the initiative described. Peggy Holman led the development of the initiative and is an experienced facilitator as well as author of *Engaging Emergence: Turning Upheaval into Opportunity* (Holman, 2010).
- Chapter 20, on simple rules and minimum specifications, spotlights complexity concepts with developmental implications for principles-focused evaluation. Glenda Eoyang and Royce Holladay, leaders of the Human Systems Dynamics Institute and longtime colleagues in Minnesota, contributed their expert perspectives. Mark Cabaj, an experienced developmental evaluator based in Canada, added his own connoisseurship reflections to the conclusion of the chapter.
- The Epilogue includes reflections and insights by the pioneering developmental

evaluator and author Jamie Gamble (2008) on the relationship between developmental evaluation and principles-focused evaluation.

Part III also draws on the experience of editing *Developmental Evaluation Exemplars,* which affirmed the importance of providing in-depth case exemplars. Thus Part III presents examples of principles-focused initiatives with principles-focused evaluations. Each chapter illustrates a different approach to and purpose for principles. These examples show what focusing on principles looks like in practice for both change initiatives and evaluation of those initiatives. Three of the exemplars report on evaluations that have been completed: evaluation of the implementation of the Paris Declaration Principles for International Development Aid; program-level principles for working with homeless youth; and community-level principles for a community-based anti-poverty initiative in Canada, Vibrant Communities. The case presentations are derived from their final reports and interviews with those involved, as well as my own involvement. I conducted the meta-evaluation (evaluation of the evaluation) of the Paris Declaration principles evaluation featured in Chapter 25. I consulted on the design and interpretation of the youth homelessness program evaluation highlighted in Chapter 26. Mark Cabaj and Jamie Gamble helped me adapt the Vibrant Communities case example, Chapter 27, to fit the purpose of this book. *My experiences with these three exemplars of principles-focused evaluation are the bedrock of this book*. Indulge me in reiterating and emphasizing this point: without the Paris Declaration Principles evaluation and the youth homelessness program evaluation, there would be no principles-focused evaluation book. The relationships that formed with the people involved in the Paris Declaration and youth homelessness evaluations have sustained this writing effort over several years. Moreover, my interactions with Mark Cabaj and Jamie Gamble about their experiences evaluating Vibrant Communities as a principles-driven initiative enlarged my understanding significantly and took me beyond my own limited experiences and perspectives.

The other three exemplars present ongoing and still-developing principles-based work: the Global Alliance for the Future of Food, a collaboration of major philanthropic foundations (Chapter 28); The McKnight Foundation's Collaborative Crop Research Program, an international agricultural research program working in Africa and South America (Chapter 29); and the emergence of agroecology as a new interdisciplinary field of scholarship and practice (Chapter 30). The chapters are based on their progress reports, interactions with key leaders, and developmental evaluation experiences with principles-focused evaluation, and my consultations with them. My thanks to the Global Alliance for the Future of Food and The McKnight Foundation for giving me permission to share their experiences with principles-focused programming and evaluation. Ruth Richardson and Jane Maland Cady have been especially visionary in articulating principles as the foundation of the collaborations they help lead and in using evaluation to further develop and strengthen the effectiveness of those collaborations. I have had the privilege of consulting with both the Global Alliance and The McKnight Foundation on their initiatives, and in doing so, have deepened my understanding of principles-focused evaluation through work with these ongoing, global collaborations. All of the people I've worked with in those collaborations have contributed to the ideas and practices presented in this book. Marah Moore, the evaluator for The McKnight Foundation collaboration, has been an important fellow traveler on this journey for several years now. Ernesto Méndez, whom I met through The McKnight Foundation work, is at the forefront of agroecology; he provided the research, his own and others, that is the basis for Chapter 30.

Part IV, "Principles for Evaluations and Evaluators," includes three chapters that take readers inside the practice of principles-focused evaluation. Ricardo Wilson-Grau, the creator of Outcomes Harvesting, presents Outcome Harvesting principles in Chapter 32. Donna Podems, an independent evaluator based in South Africa, shares her experiences and reflections as a principles-focused evaluator in Chapter 33. Nora Murphy, the principles-focused evaluator of the youth homelessness programs featured in Chapters 13 and 26, reflects on how her personal principles for living intersect with her principles as a principles-focused evaluator. An independent reviewer of the book, one not given to hyperbolic praise, who provided critical feedback with a discerning eye and a commitment to speak truth to the author, wrote of this sequence of chapters, "I was BLOWN AWAY by this section and particularly the three voices introduced at the end. All three are like a symphony coming to a crescendo!"

Acknowledgments

Acknowledging the many people who have influenced my thinking and practice beyond the direct contributors to this book just noted is daunting. You'd have to look at all the prefaces to all my books to begin to get a sense of the many people who have contributed in some way to this latest manifestation of my evaluation journey. I've been at this work for nearly five decades. Colleagues, clients, students, friends, family, supporters, and antagonists have all contributed. Acknowledging that long lineage of influence, I'll just highlight a few of the people who have contributed most directly to this book while I was writing it.

Randi Roth, Executive Director of Interfaith Action of Greater Saint Paul, and former Executive Director of the Otto Bremer Trust, has been engaging with me around the ideas that have finally taken shape in this book for a decade now, from the perspective of her deep engagement with the youth homelessness evaluation and, more recently, Project SPIRIT, an African American after-school program. Shanene Herbert, director of Project SPIRIT, both broadened and deepened principles-focused evaluation with her leadership in directing a principles-driven program (see Chapter 22). Over a 2-year period, the senior staff of the Blandin Foundation engaged with me in reflective practice focused on principles embedded in the foundation's strategic framework and theory of philanthropy (Annette, Fauth, & Ahcan, 2015; Patton, Foote, & Radner, 2015). Working with Steve Rothschild (2012) on his book about principles for nonprofits provided momentum for this book on evaluating those principles.

Among evaluation colleagues, Kate McKegg and Nan Wehipeihana, my co-editors of *Developmental Evaluation Exemplars,* have long been on the leading edge in practicing principles-focused evaluation in New Zealand. The insights from working with Kate and Nan are embedded deeply throughout this book. Stewart Donaldson provided the first opportunity for me to do a workshop and webinar on principles-focused evaluation through the Claremont Evaluation Center professional workshop series. After only a brief discussion with Stewart, he immediately grasped its niche and purpose, and urged me to create and offer the first principles-focused evaluation workshop. I did so in 2013, and have returned annually ever since. Several other evaluation colleagues have been encouraging and have provided feedback as the book developed: Tanya Beer, Julia Coffman, Miriam Fultz, Meg Hargreaves, Jennifer Jewiss, Jean King, Leah Moses, Patti Patrizi, Hallie Preskill, Patricia Rogers, Jamie Radner, and Kay Sherwood.

I owe special thanks to Publisher and Senior Editor C. Deborah Laughton at The Guilford Press. When I first told her about the focus of this book, she immediately understood its niche and potential

contribution. What I've said about working with her on previous books merits repeating: She is a consummate, hands-on, meaning-focused, clarity-of-message-oriented *editor*. Yes, an actual *editor*, someone who improves chapter titles, quality and clarity of writing, and helps separate the wheat from the chaff *in service of readers*. Editing is becoming a lost art in academic publishing. I'm not talking about copyediting (ensuring consistency of style and correct grammar). I'm talking about editing that makes a book better, that supports book authors in deciding what to keep, what to discard, and how best to present what is kept. Deborah has a keen editorial eye, an astute editorial mind, and a willingness to spend time applying both. She also has a diplomatic editorial tone in offering suggestions and an irrefutable rationale for those suggestions she offers: to improve the experience for readers.

Serendipity also visited and contributed while I was writing. Out of the blue I received an e-mail inquiry from Glenn Page, who had been in a few of my training workshops and serves as both Developmental Evaluator in Residence at the Centre for Environmental Change and Human Resilience (CECHR), University of Dundee, Scotland, and Principal at SustainaMetrix, his consulting organization. Glenn had noted my comment in *Developmental Evaluation Exemplars* about principles-focused evaluation emerging as a major inquiry framework and focus for developmental evaluation. He wanted to know more. I was about two-thirds of the way through writing this book and offered to share the draft manuscript. What came back to me 4 days later was a detailed review both substantively and editorially. Glenn offered insightful comments about gaps, identified confusing sentences, asked for more detail about certain examples, suggested ways of enhancing the flow, critiqued incomplete exhibits, and affirmed the overall contribution of the book from his perspective as a developmental evaluation practitioner interested in principles-focused evaluation. And, oh, he did superb copyediting with a keen eye for missing commas, among other errors of omission and commission. Glenn personified my target audience, in the abstract, when I began the book. He became my target audience in flesh and blood as I finished the book. He subsequently reviewed the revised draft and the remaining chapters as I wrote them. I am deeply grateful to Glenn as should you, the reader, be, for he greatly improved the book throughout.

The only other person to have read every word of the book, and multiple versions as the book evolved, was my daughter, Charmagne Campbell-Patton. Two years ago she announced that she wanted to become an independent evaluator. She had been doing evaluation part-time as one of her responsibilities in an education nonprofit. She had decided she wanted to do more on a greater variety of projects and initiatives. I welcomed her to join me as a consulting and business partner, which she did. We've been doing projects together, teaching together, and writing together. She agreed to review the manuscript as I wrote and, as we discussed what was missing, to contribute Chapter 17, in which she had a better example than I had on my own. While Glenn Page reviewed the manuscript as an experienced evaluator, Charmagne brought the fresh eyes and inquisitive mind of a relative newcomer to the profession. She represented readers who would come to this book without a lot of prior evaluation knowledge and experience. She identified areas that needed clarification, assumptions that needed to be made explicit and explained, language that was overly jargonish, and sections and chapter sequences that lacked coherence and flow. Her comments led to a major reorganization of the book and strengthened the whole as well as the parts. She is one of a handful of second-generation evaluators (children of evaluators who helped establish the profession), a number I hope grows substantially in future years, which I would treat as one indicator

of the vitality and allure of the profession. More generally, Charmagne represents the future of evaluation and, in dedicating the book to her, I dedicate it to the new and next generation of evaluators.

The solitude and intensity of writing can be tough on relationships. My partner, Jean Gornick, and I have built a place in the Minnesota woods, along the Snake River near the Wisconsin border, where we can have a life together. Here we host family gatherings and play with our grandchildren. We kayak in summer, and snowshoe and cross-country ski in winter. We plant indigenous flowers, grasses, and bushes, plant and nurture native trees, garden, keep bees, maintain a monarch butterfly habitat, and sustain a small fruit tree orchard. She brings important balance to my life, both supporting my writing and making sure it doesn't consume me—and us. My writing and, more importantly, my quality of life and our relationship benefit from that effort at balance. I am deeply grateful for her support, understanding, and commitment to a rounded life.

Note on Chapter Epigraphs

I use quotations to introduce chapters, like The Grateful Dead quote that opens this preface. Let me repeat here what I have said previously about employing quotations in this way:

> I think of such quotations as garnishes, seasoning, and a bit of *amuse-bouche* (a French gourmet tradition of serving an appetizer that is not on the menu but, when served, is done so without charge and entirely at the chef's discretion and preference). For the most part, these are not scholarly quotations, nor are they usually referenced. In the spirit of the gastronomic metaphors offered here, they are *palate cleansers* as you move from one topic to another.
>
> Some people, I am told, find such quotations annoying. . . . Well, you know, you don't have to eat the garnish. You don't like it, skip it. Like spam or unwelcome e-mails that you instantly delete, move past them quickly. (Patton, 2015a, p. xiii)

For my part, I'm a quotations addict. As a writer, one not given to brevity, I'm impressed when someone expresses a pithy insight succinctly. A well-articulated principle has that same quality.

A Note on the Cover Art

The cover features a stone sculpture of an inukshuk I was given in Banff, Alberta, when I keynoted a Canadian Evaluation Society meeting there in 1986. It was sculpted by an indigenous artist named IYAK (Fred Iyak Trimble). An inukshuk (pronounced in-ook-shook) is a stone landmark, like a cairn, created by indigenous communities to guide their people through desolate landscapes, like the great expanses of tundra in the Arctic region of North America. For the Inuit, Inupiat, Kalaallit, Yupik, and other aboriginal people of the Arctic Circle, inukshuks, often shaped like the human form, were used for navigation and guidance, especially to locate good hunting and fishing locations, food caches, and places of veneration and special cultural significance. Principles are inukshuks composed of words.

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CHAPTER 4

Evaluating Principles

Historical Context and Forward-Looking Challenge

A rose is not an orange is not a cat is not a rock.
—HALCOLM,[1] "How Things Are"

I date the beginning of the evaluation profession to 1975 and publication of the first *Handbook of Evaluation Research* (Guttentag & Struening, 1975)—in an impressive two volumes. That was also the era when the first professional evaluation associations were formed: the Evaluation Research Society and the Evaluation Network, which merged in 1984 to become the American Evaluation Association; the Australasian Evaluation Association; and the Canadian Evaluation Society. Now we have a number of evaluation journals, handbooks, textbooks, training institutes, annual conferences, webinar series, and online libraries. We now have more than 200 national and regional organizations for professional evaluators around the world, with more than 75,000 evaluators, and the year 2015 was designated as the International Year of Evaluation by the United Nations.

So what have we learned in more than 40 years? What are we still figuring out? And what are the emergent challenges for evaluation that we're just beginning to confront? Having been involved full-time as an evaluator over that entire span of four-plus decades, in this chapter I offer my perspective on these questions. Others would no doubt answer differently. My purpose in undertaking this assessment of the state of evaluation knowledge and practice is to identify the niche and contribution of principles-focused evaluation. *Spoiler alert:* Evaluating principles is one of evaluation's emergent challenges, an approach to evaluation that we're just beginning to learn how to do. This book aims to deepen our theory, knowledge, skill, and practice in evaluating principles, particularly principles-driven programs and change initiatives.

What Evaluators Do Well

We've learned to evaluate projects and programs. We know how to specify SMART goals (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) and develop

[1]Halcolm (pronounced "how come?") is my sage philosophical alter ego and muse, who pipes in every so often to remind us that evaluation is grounded in fundamental philosophical underpinnings about how and why the world works as it does.

performance indicators. We have become skilled at developing logic models and theories of change. We know the importance of distinguishing monitoring from evaluation and how to do so, different types of evaluation (utilization-focused, impact, theory-driven, cost–benefit, empowerment, participatory, social justice, etc.), diverse uses of evaluation (accountability, learning, decision making, enlightenment, etc.), and how to work with diverse stakeholders (program staff, policymakers, funders, participants, etc.). We know how to enhance evaluative thinking among those engaged in evaluations. We have standards for what constitutes evaluation quality and checklists for what should be included in an evaluation. We know the importance of specifying intended use by intended users. We have a variety of ways of reporting findings and facilitating evaluation use. This is by no means a comprehensive or exhaustive list, but, hopefully, it provides a sense that we've learned a lot, know how to do a lot, and merit the designation of being a knowledge-based profession and transdiscipline, an umbrella discipline like philosophy and statistics that is essential and foundational for all other disciplines (Scriven, 2008).

What We Aim to Do, and Know We Should Do, but Are Still Learning to Do Well

My assessments of evaluation's accomplishments and future challenges are based on nearly a half century of full-time evaluation practice across a broad range of evaluation purposes, diverse programs, and levels of engagement from local to national and international. In my view, we've largely moved beyond the qualitative–quantitative paradigm debate and have come to value mixed methods. But evaluation reports remain largely siloed, with separate qualitative and quantitative sections, rather than integrating methods to provide triangulated data on common core questions. This is analogous to what is called "parallel play" among toddlers in a sandbox, each aware of the other and both enjoying being in the same space, but lacking the skills to actually engage and play with each other.

The evaluation profession has recognized the importance of being competent at more than methods though that remains the focus of most training. We're still figuring out how to train for other professional competencies like interpersonal skills, reflective practice, project management, adherence to standards and guiding principles, and building capacity for cultural competence and responsiveness. Likewise, substantial attention is being devoted to incorporating systems thinking, complexity concepts, visualization, diverse and conflicting values, rapid feedback and real-time data, and the ability to treat failure as an opportunity for learning. The last decade has brought prominence to process use (learning and capacity building that occurs among those involved in an evaluation as distinct from using findings). We know that evaluations should search for unanticipated consequences and side effects, but too few designs include adequate resources and open-ended fieldwork to actually do so. Evaluators are getting better at incorporating explicit ethical frameworks and making underlying values explicit, but these directions need improvement and further development. Again, this is by no means a comprehensive or exhaustive list, but my message is that we're continuing to develop, innovate, and adapt to deepen and expand our relevance, utility, and excellence as a profession.

Emergent Challenges for Evaluation

The emergent challenges for evaluation, from my perspective, primarily have to do with new units of analysis and broader areas of focus for evaluation, what we call the evaluand, that is, the thing evaluated (Scriven, 1995, p. 68). Evaluation, we say,

"grew up in the projects." As evidenced by what we do well, the profession's origins were in evaluating projects, and, from my perspective, we remain in the grip of a self-limiting project mentality. Such tools as logic models and SMART goals work well for project evaluation. They do not work well, in my judgment, for different kinds of evaluands like mission fulfillment, strategy, advocacy campaigns, policy change, systems change, and complex dynamic interventions. Projects are closed systems, or at least treated as such in most evaluations, in which boundaries can be established and control can presumably be exercised within those boundaries by both program staff and evaluators. In contrast, complex dynamic interventions, advocacy campaigns, and strategic initiatives are open systems characterized by volatility, uncertainty, and unpredictability, all of which make control problematic. Evaluating community impacts, regional and sector-wide initiatives, cross-sector initiatives, networks and collaborations, leadership, innovation, and collective impact poses new conceptual and methodological challenges. Treating these complicated and complex evaluations like more simple projects is inappropriate, ineffective, and insufficient. Indeed, it can do harm by misunderstanding, misconceptualizing, and misrepresenting the very nature of complex change and thereby generating results that are inaccurate and irrelevant. In addition, and along parallel tracks, evaluators are being challenged to develop new approaches to scaling innovations, assessing the effects of social media, and using "big data" to examine large and open systems. We are evaluating both theories of change and theories of philanthropy (Patton, Foote, & Radner, 2015). Evaluating global systems dynamics poses a particularly daunting challenge as we learn to view the Earth and the Earth's inhabitants as a holistic, interconnected, and interdependent global system. Viewed from outer space the Earth looks like a blue marble, so I have referred to global systems change evaluations as Blue Marble Evaluations (Patton, 2016b).

This brings us to principles. Evaluating principles is also different from evaluating projects. Principles-driven programs are different from goals-driven programs. Principles constitute a different kind of evaluand. Principles take on added importance among the new challenges for evaluation because, as discussed in the last chapter, *principles are the primary way of navigating complex dynamic systems and engaging in strategic initiatives*. Principles undergird efforts at community change and collective impact. Understanding how to evaluate principles and adapting evaluation concepts, approaches, methods, and processes through principles-focused evaluation will, I believe, provide valuable direction for how to evaluate other new evaluands as we grapple with other and related emergent challenges. This book addresses those challenges and positions principles-focused evaluation on the cutting edge of evaluation.

Exhibit 4.1 summarizes this discussion.

Practice Exercise

If you are an evaluator, use Exhibit 4.1 to do an assessment of your expertise:

- What do you do well as an evaluator?
- What are you still figuring out?
- What are the emergent challenges you face as an evaluator?

*If you are **not** an evaluator,* assess your experience of and knowledge about evaluation:

- What activities and purposes do you associate with the word and activity *evaluation*?
- What, if anything, have you wondered about how to evaluate because evaluation seemed difficult in some way?
- What was the difficulty or challenge?

EXHIBIT 4.1. What Evaluators Do Well and Are Still Figuring Out, and the Emergent Challenges for Evaluation

A Partial Inventory from One Veteran's Perspective

What evaluators generally do well, or at least know how to do	What we aim to do and know we should do but are still learning to do well	Emergent challenges for evaluation
Evaluating . . . • projects and programs • models • policies • philanthropic grants • clusters of projects or grants • goal attainment • outcomes • implementation *Generating . . .* • logic models • theories of change • performance indicators • lessons • recommendations • standards for evaluation • rubrics • evaluation checklists *Distinguishing . . .* • purposes of evaluation (formative, summative, accountability, monitoring, knowledge generating, developmental) • types of evaluation (utilization focused, impact, theory driven, cost–benefit, empowerment, participatory, social justice, etc.) • uses of evaluation (accountability, learning, decision making, enlightenment, etc.) • diverse stakeholders (program staff, policymakers, funders, participants, etc.)	*Conducting evaluations that attend to and integrate . . .* • mixed methods • cultural responsiveness and cultural competence • systems thinking • complexity concepts • visualization • diverse and conflicting values • rapid feedback and real-time data • learning from failures • process use (capacity-building effects of being involved in the evaluation as opposed to using findings) • unanticipated consequences and side effects • explicit ethical frameworks • making values explicit	*Evaluating . . .* • principles • global systems change dynamics (Blue Marble Evaluations) • mission fulfillment • strategies • advocacy campaigns • systems change • complex dynamic interventions • contextual factors and influences • community impacts • regional and sector-wide initiatives • cross-sector initiatives • environmental ecosystem sustainability • networks • collaborations • leadership • innovations • collective impact • scaling • social media • big data • rights-focused evaluation

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