

Sharon Matthias



Photography by SJMatthias

Sharon has spent most of her life working to figure out how the world works, and then how to design our major public systems so they better help people to create meaningful lives and achieve our highest potential (this is still a work in progress). She's known in her outer world as a consultant, pragmatic provocateur, mentor and colleague, and in her private world as a mother, grandmother, and friend.

Through her consultancy Matthias Inc: Connecting for Innovation, she helps government, public and nonprofit leaders to purposefully co-design new and systemic solutions to vexing issues. She's known for her systemic and out-of-the-box thinking (one client says it's "out of the building thinking!"), helping people think differently about challenging situations and to design practical, innovative approaches to resolving them. Co-founder of Innovation Platform, a social enterprise, she collaborates with others interested in learning how to grow flourishing societies through social innovation of policy and business models.

Sharon's professional experience is eclectic - from forensic toxicology, health and safety, health and social systems' policy and operations - to citizens engaged in co-designing macro public policy, healthcare and patient oriented research. Her 25 year consulting practice builds on this wide-ranging experience as well as her academic background in Pharmaceutical Chemistry and Business. She is committed to action learning approaches for engaging with complex adaptive systems.

Her community service includes a variety of roles to advance person-centred health and human services, and Board Member, Transformational Research Network (TRN).

Sharon is a lifelong learner, committed to learning from experience to grow her adaptive capabilities for higher quality of life (a colleague says "*Sharon never lets a life-experience go by without trying to wrestle it to the ground for its deeper meaning*"). Her personal action research explores whole society governance with synergies across private, non-profit and public systems. She uses her photography and writing to express concepts. Her books (in development) crystallize key life and career learnings - "*Gifts Wrapped in Barbed Wire: a life journey from surviving and coping to thriving and flourishing*" and "*The Art of transforming public systems: A Science*".

Sharon lives in Alberta, Canada. Her tag line and favourite quotes:

We design our future with every decision we make - Our choice is whether we do it intentionally.

It's no good trying, Alice laughs. Only fools believe that impossible things can happen. The Queen responds: When I was your age I would practice at least half an hour a day, to imagine five or six unbelievable things before breakfast. (Lewis Carroll)

(Sharon's addition - once practiced at imagining them, work on co-designing and implementing new systemic designs to achieve them!).

How you imagine life determines how you live it. (David Suzuki)

"Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing." (Arundhati Roy)

Education and Lifelong Learning

Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy, University of Saskatchewan (1966);

M.Sc. (Pharmaceutical Chemistry) University of Alberta (1974);

M.B.A. University of Alberta (1984)

Western Career Assignment Program (1985-87) One of three Government of Alberta positions on the Western Career Assignment Program for development of public sector executives. Educational component included 9 weeks of residential executive training and GoC Comptroller General's training seminars in evaluation methods. In addition, undertook projects in program evaluation with the federal Office of the Comptroller General; futures scanning in occupational health and safety; and transition management for a major Ministry restructuring to establish Alberta Community and Occupational Health.

Assisi Seminars' 2-year certificate for pattern reading of whole systems (2000)

Cognitive Edge certification in methods for organization and system management and change strategies based in complexity theories. (2005)

Ernst & Young Governance For Women Symposium (2006)

GVCL certification in Integral Strategy Mapping (2014)

Human Systems Dynamics Certification (in progress, 2015)

Sharon is committed to '*learning as a way of being*' and combines personal reflection on life and professional experiences with a wide variety of short courses, seminars and personal reading related to management, public policy and new sciences. Her current self-directed learning and research focuses on the architecture and development of thriving societies.

Associate, Foresight Canada; Honoured Fellow, Canadian Institute for Conflict Resolution; Member, SROI (Social Return on Investment) Network.

Professional Experience

Innovation Platform (co-founded 2014). A social enterprise focused on learning how flourishing societies evolve and grow and are stimulated through social innovation of policy and business models. Innovation Platform convenes 'provocateur dialogues' and shares thought leadership for disruptive and 'over the horizon' social innovation in private, public, nonprofit sectors.

www.InnovationPlatform.com (live fall 2015)

Matthias Inc: Connecting for Innovation (1985-present) Policy and management innovation consulting, supporting leaders who desire unconventional approaches, including co-design facilitation, systemic evaluation for early stage innovation, professional development and provocateur sessions. Clients include provincial, federal and municipal governments, First Nations, and non-government organizations.

Sharon J Matthias Photographic Art (1995 - present)

Assistant Deputy Minister, Health and Regional Social Services Yukon Health and Social Services (1991 – 1993) Key policy and management issues included implementation of the Yukon Health Act, transfer of services from the federal government administration, implementation strategies for First Nations self-government, and integration of Health and Social Services.

Executive Director, Management Support Services Alberta Community and Occupational Health, 1987 – 1989, providing executive and management support services (legislative development, strategic planning, policy issues management, evaluation and management audit) as well as a ‘skunkworks’ within a newly formed department.

Alberta Occupational Health and Safety, (1978 – 1985) Occupational hygienist doing worksite inspections and research reviews to support the evidence base for Occupational Exposure Limits. As Manager of Standards and Projects she led Health Services legislative development and province-wide industry review programs, shifting the focus from prescriptive based approaches to a performance-based approach.

Residential Real Estate agent, Edmonton area (1976 – 1978) gave practical experience in sales, marketing and human behaviour.

R.C.M.P. Crime Detection Laboratory Edmonton (1968 – 1976) Alcohol toxicologist and Expert Witness in alcohol-related criminal proceedings. Section Head, Alcohol Section, responsible for laboratory services, expert witness support and breathalyzer operator training to assist R.C.M.P., municipal police forces and Canadian Forces in Germany.

Macro-Policy, Board Governance, Small Business Experience

Member, Minister of Advanced Education’s Steering Committee to develop a Policy Framework to support a Learning Alberta (2005-2006);

Member, Provincial Health Council of Alberta 1995 – 1998, a macro-accountability body to bring a citizen’s perspective to assessing the progress of health reform and the performance of the health system, a unique mandate in the Canadian health system;

Provincial/Territorial Representative (Yukon Government) on the Canadian contingent to the 1992 World Health Assembly;

Board Member, small pharmaceutical company. Edmonton, Alberta (mid-1990s);

Co-owner, Spotted Cow Learning. Mobile Learning approaches to developing 21st Century capabilities for leadership, evidence-based practice and organizational change for mid-level and executive leaders (2010-2012)

Co-owner, Sajado Inc. Consumer products firm specializing in art-based artifacts (1990 - 1995);

Owner, Matthias Inc. Professional policy and management consulting firm (1985 - present).

Co-founder, Innovation Platform, social enterprise focusing on social innovation of policy, program and business models with societal impact for a thriving society (2014 - present).

Community Service

Board Member, Transformational Research Network;

Patient representative: Partnership Against Cancer Person-Centred Advisory Committee; Patient Advisory Committee co-chair, CanIMPACT - a CIHR funded research study to improve linkages between specialty cancer care and primary care;

Chair, Alberta Campus Mental Health Innovation Approval Panel (2013 - 2015)

IMAGINE: Citizens Collaborating for Health

Photography

Sharon mostly thinks in pictures and graphics, and is a committed amateur photographer. She uses photographs to illustrate concepts, has created two books that are collections of her photographs - *Wendy's Garden*, *The North, a Place of Peace and Majesty*, and contributed to another - *A Year of Pilgrimage*.

Presentations

Keynote presentations: Alberta Students Executive Council Conference: Students and Mental Fitness; Edmonton Traffic Safety Conference 2010; Palliser Health Authority Research Day 2006; Red Deer College and David Thompson Health Region Nursing Conference, 2007 – Scholar Practitioner and Evidence Committed Organizations: The Developmental Journeys;

Public Sector Innovation, and the Architecture of Public and Non-profit sector programs - various public sector audiences.

“Scholar Practitioners Succeeding in White Water Environments - when progress isn't in a straight line” Research Transfer Network of Alberta, November 2009 <http://www.ahfmr.ab.ca/publications/?dept=9&search=Water+Cooler> ;

“Alberta vision for a vibrant and prosperous province: Slogan or achievable outcome? --Thinking holistically, creating a bold new world, together”. Alberta Environment Hot Topics Seminar, March 2004.

“Designing a Sustainable Health System”. Keynote speaker, Alberta Cancer Prevention Conference, March 2004.

“A Genuine Progress View of Human and Social Capital”. CANSEE Conference, Jasper AB, October 2003.

“Accepting and Responding to Concerns and Complaints” Provincial Health Authorities of Alberta (with Pitcherak and Associates)

Publications

(Full list on request, include a range of topics:

Co-author international best seller *Pebbles in the Pond, Wave 3*, “*Transforming my aging script*”,

Provocateur Paper: “*Can Aging be an Opportunity?*” available at www.PositionsOfInfluence.com

“We Can Build a Better Health System: A Values-Based, Citizen-Centred Design Framework”. In Stingl, M. and Wilson, D., Eds, *Efficiency vs Equality: Health Reform in Canada* 1996, Halifax: Fernwood Publishing

“Health Promotion in the Yukon Territory”. In *Health Promotion in Canada: Provincial, National and International Perspectives*, Pederson, A., O'Neill, M., and Rootman, I., Eds, 1994, Toronto: W.B. Saunders Canada

Most project reports are internal documents. Publications in the public domain with recognized authorship include:

Success in the 21st Century Thinking Paper Series (available fall 2015 at www.InnovationPlatform.com) includes:

- o Innovation Ecosystem for Public and Nonprofit sectors
- o Organizations Working Together: Public and Nonprofit Sector applications
- o 21st Century Alberta

Literacy Informed Practice, Organizations and Systems, for Literacy Alberta and Future Education Society of Alberta (FESA) (2014) (available fall 2015 at www.InnovationPlatform.com).

Shiell, A., Hawe, P., Perry, R., & Matthias, S. “ How health managers think about risk and the implications for portfolio theory in health systems”, *Health, Risk & Society*, 11 (1), (2009) p 71-85

Hayward, S., Wright, K.R., Matthias, S. “Replicating Social Programs: Analyzing the SEARCH Classic Program in the Context of Replication into a New Jurisdiction “(2007). SEARCH Canada Breaking Ground Series. Available fall 2015 at www.InnovationPlatform.com.

Casebeer, A., Hayward, S., MacKean, G., Matthias, S., Hayward, R. “SEARCH Canada: Building capacity in health organizations to create and use knowledge”; in *Evidence in action, acting on evidence* CIHR. Available at <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/30667.html>

Birdsell, J and Matthias, S. “Networks and their Role in Enhancing Research Impact in Alberta: Report from a Workshop held July 21-23”, Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research 2003 (available at www.InnovationPlatform.com or http://evaluationcanada.ca/distribution/200312_birdsell_judy_mathhias_sharon.pdf

“Designing a Sustainable Health System”. Poster Session for 6th National Health Promotion Conference, 2002, Victoria, B.C.

Matthias, S. and Birdsell, J. ‘SEARCH Program Evaluation, Research and Development Blueprint’. Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research 2001 (available fall 2015 at www.InnovationPlatform.com)

“Strategic Considerations for Recreation and Parks in Support of the Alberta Vision” (2001). Available at: http://www.arpaonline.ca/rr_rpts.html

“Power, and its application to Health and Social Services Programs”. Discussion paper for *Health Promotion: Rhetoric to Reality and Back Again*, a workshop of Health Promotion Knowledge Development, Alberta, B.C. and Yukon Territory, 1992

“Complementary Therapies and their role in the future healthcare needs of Albertans”. Commissioned Policy paper for the Premier’s Commission on the Future Health needs of Albertans.

Matthias, SJ, May R, Guidotti TL, Occupational Health and Safety: A future unlike the present. *Occup Med.* 1989 Jan-Mar: 4(1): 177-90.