

INCREASING READINESS FOR CHANGE IN ORGANIZATIONS:

Setting the Stage by Impacting Four Critical Variables

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By

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Abstract

In this paper, the consultant demonstrates that it is possible to increase an organization's *readiness for change* by impacting four critical variables: *desirability of future state*; *dissatisfaction with current state*; *perceived pain of changing*; and *perceived cost of not changing*. This hypothesis is supported by statistical analysis using the Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed ranks test. The client was a local affiliate of a large international non-profit organization. The sponsor of the project was another consultant serving in a dual role as interim Executive Director and as an advisor to the agency's Board of Directors. The principle consulting methodologies employed in the project were Schein's Process Consultation (1988), Action Research (Block, 2000), and Gleicher's change formula (Bunker & Alban, 1997).

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Confidentiality

In the interest of establishing and maintaining confidentiality, I do not divulge specific information that might lead to the reader identifying the client system or any of the people directly involved in it.

Client System

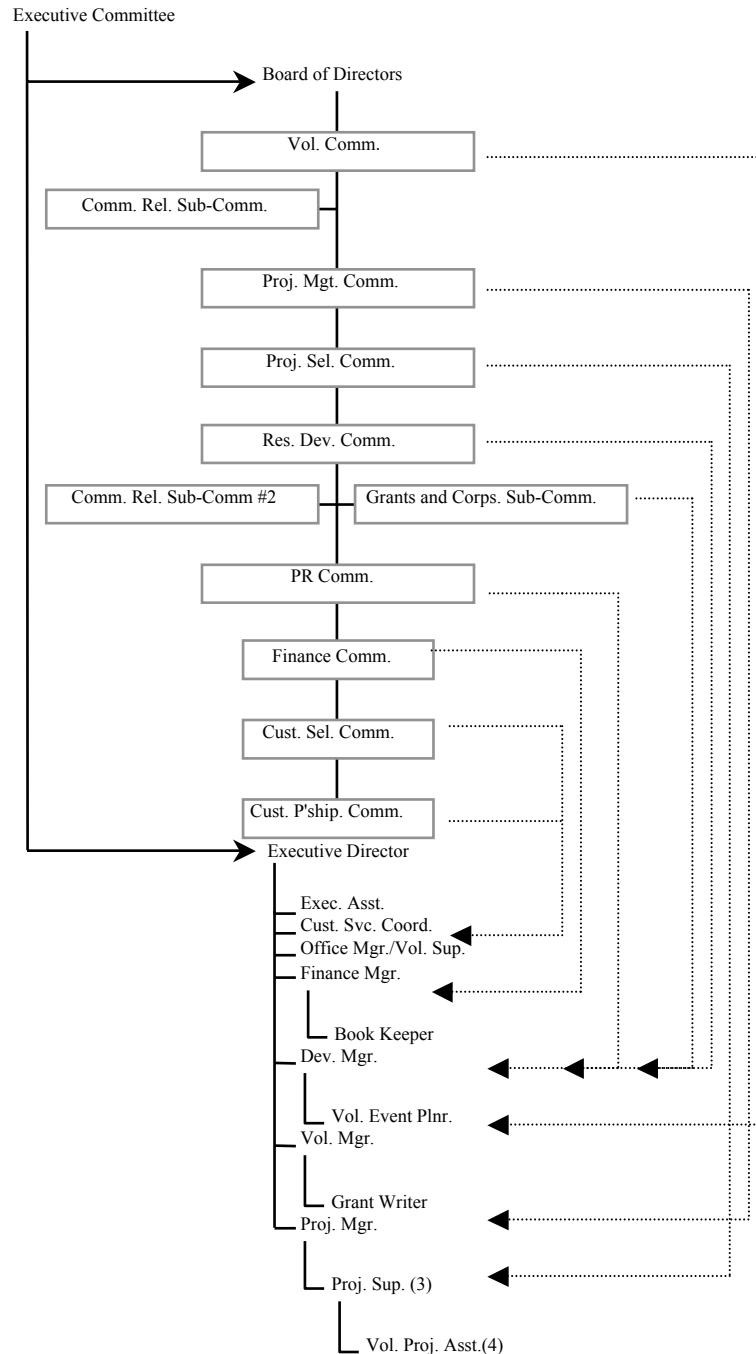
The Parent Organization was a non-profit organization with nearly 2,000 independent, community-based affiliates operating around the globe including Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and North America. The Parent Organization had been in existence for more than 25 years, and was recognized around the world as the leader in its field of service.

The client system was one of over 1,500 affiliates in the United States. Founded a decade after the international organization, it was well established in its service area. With an annual operating budget of \$2.6 million in FY2002, the organization provided employment for 10 full-time staff, as well as seven stipend-subsidized volunteers. The stipend-subsidized volunteers were provided by three different volunteer organizations, all on a rotating basis, with assignments varying in length.

The client system also counted among its members literally hundreds of individual volunteers, whose efforts were coordinated primarily by one of the stipend-subsidized volunteers, and also by full-time, paid supervisory staff.

As Figure 1.1 illustrates, the client system was managed by an Executive Director and governed by a Board of Directors, consisting of an Executive Committee and 11 sub-committees, each with working relationships (arrows) to operating departments.

Figure 1.1



Client Group

The sponsor of the project was an experienced non-profit organization executive in the beginning of a six-month contract with the Board of Directors as an interim Executive Director. The sponsor's primary responsibilities included day-to-day management of the client system in the capacity of Executive Director, advising the Board as a consultant regarding governance and operational issues, and assisting in the recruitment of a permanent executive to lead the organization into the future.

I understood from the sponsor that the previous Executive Director had been asked to leave with some degree of suddenness, leaving the sponsor to tackle many operational challenges, including a substantive revenue shortfall and what I interpreted as "low morale" among the staff of the agency.

A mutual associate, who had enjoyed working with a graduate student-consultant from the Leadership Institute of Seattle (LIOS) while leading another non-profit through a difficult transition, referred me to the sponsor. Thus, I thought the relationship began on a solid foundation, and I was optimistic regarding what the sponsor and I could potentially accomplish together. In hindsight, I also held some sense of trepidation upon meeting the sponsor that I attributed to "first time jitters" and an earnest desire to do well for what I considered a worthy cause.

The sponsor characterized the situation as an opportune time for initiating change at all levels of the organization. In our initial interview, the sponsor told me that the Board of Directors was organized in such a way as to mirror the operating organization and performed many duplicate functions. The sponsor also said that the Board of Directors did not conduct its business focused upon its strategic plan, nor did the

organization, and as such, neither measured the performance of the organization against it. Furthermore, according to the sponsor, the organization “lacked a management team,” employing instead a group of direct reports to the Executive Director who “operated in silos” without much cooperation or communication. The sponsor described an administrative and management bottleneck in the Executive Director’s office, with little sense of personal or professional responsibility among the members of the organization. When asked about diversity in the organization, the sponsor, who was white, described, with what I interpreted at the time as some amount of energy, a culture of “white privilege,” without an accompanying awareness of its existence.

Project Goals and Measurement Standards

One of my greatest challenges in this project was managing the depth and breadth of opportunities for working in the client system. How could I make the greatest impact in a limited amount of time?

The Principal Project Goal

For the purpose of this discussion, I will refer to the products/services provided by the client system as “promises made” and “promises kept.”

Together, the sponsor and I identified that the long-term goal for the organization was to increase its ability to better serve its customers, as defined in two ways:

1. Direct Customers: A more effective agency would increase its financial viability enabling it to make and keep more promises, more rapidly.
2. Internal Customers—Volunteers: A more effective agency would better serve its volunteer base by providing excellent social service experiences for people in the

local community, effectively matching their desires, skills and experience to the needs of the agency.

Given the compressed time horizon for this project, and the relatively large scope of the business goals of the organization, the sponsor and I decided we could not attempt to accomplish them fully. We could, however, attempt to put the organization in a better position to attain them in the future. As the agency was in the midst of a major leadership transition, we set our sights on a principal project goal, *to increase the organization's overall readiness for more change*. We set all secondary leadership goals with this principal goal in mind.

Measuring the principal project goal.

Based on Gleicher's change formula (Beckhard & Harris, 1987, cited by Bunker & Alban, 1997), I created a similar formula and companion data collection instrument (see Appendix A) in order to measure incremental increases or decreases in readiness for change: If $C = \text{readiness for change}$; $A = \text{desirability of future state}$; $B = \text{dissatisfaction with current state}$; $D = \text{perceived pain in completing change}$; $E = \text{perceived cost of not changing}$; then the following formula results: $C = A + B + D > E$.

My thinking was that an increase or decrease in the spread between the sum of the variables A, B and D, and the variable E would indicate an increase or decrease in organizational readiness for change.

As I will discuss in chapter four, I learned after completing the experiment that the formula may have been more elegantly expressed as $C = A + B + E > D$. However, the results would not have been materially altered.

Leadership Goal One: To clarify roles and goals

According to the sponsor's own organization assessment, there was no easy answer to the question, "Who is in charge of what around here?" I asked the sponsor to identify a measurable outcome that might improve role and goal clarity in the organization. While I would not play a material role in the sponsor realizing this goal, I planned to track her progress toward it throughout the project.

Measurement standards.

The sponsor and management group would complete written role descriptions by the end of the project. Also, the management group would publish and distribute a clearly articulated set of goals for the organization. Ideally, this work would be closely aligned with the organization's strategic plan as published by the Board of Directors.

Leadership Goal Two: To improve the sponsor's ability to understand her role in the dynamics of the organization

I intended to help the sponsor to begin to see the organization as a system, of which she was an integral part, rather than an organization she was merely "running." I anticipated that this goal would become an important part of my work as a consultant in the client system, and would be a valuable gauge of the success of the project.

Measurement standards.

The sponsor would be able to recognize and self-correct body language incongruity. The sponsor would also be able to clearly articulate which of the six decision-making styles she intended to use and to do so consistently. Finally, the sponsor would be able to recognize and respond appropriately to the different kinds of systemic resistance we might encounter and to see how she was contributing to its existence.

Leadership Goal Three: To improve processes within the organization

According to the sponsor, there were many administrative processes in need of refinement. The sponsor chose to focus upon an area that directly impacted the funding stream—the donation receiving and accounting process—as an indicator of the system’s capacity for cross-functional work. While I would not play a material role in the sponsor realizing this goal, I planned to track her progress toward it throughout the project. I also anticipated that this work process goal might become a “laboratory” within which the sponsor and I could learn about the different types of resistance that were alive in the system.

Measurement standards.

Designated staff would accurately enter all donations into the donor database within 48-hours of receipt, as well as process all “VIP” thank-you letters within 24 hours of receiving the donation. Staff would process all other thank-you letters within five working days of receipt and all deposit records within 24 hours of receipt. The accounting department would book all donations not later than the end-of-month account reconciliation.

Conclusion

Having described the client system and the project goals and measurement standards, I will next discuss the major theories and theorists that helped me to more deeply understand the client system at multiple levels and guided my interventions within it. I will concentrate my discussion in three areas of inquiry: the client system, project content, and project methodology.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Client System

In this section I reveal the theorists that helped me to understand the client system. First, on the macro-level, I consulted the writing of Drucker (1992), Harvey & Snyder (1987), Dees (1998) and Oshry (1999). I chose Drucker (1992) as one of the world's foremost authorities on leadership and as a well-known expert regarding non-profit organizations and the unique challenges they face. My selection of the work of Harvey & Snyder (1987) resulted from their focus on charities' need for bottom line performance. Dees' (1998) work helped me understand what he called the "Spectrum of Social Enterprise," a concept that shed some interesting and valuable light on the client system. Finally, I chose both McIntosh's (1990) and Oshry's (1999) work to help me understand and explain what I interpreted as an experience of the "white privilege" to which the sponsor referred in our first meeting.

Macro-Level

Non-profit organizations.

"One of the great strengths of a non-profit organization," according to Drucker (1992, p. 150), "is that people don't work for a living, they work for a cause." Harvey & Snyder (1987, p. 3) called this idealism "romance," and said that prudent management practices sometimes prove to be lacking. They encouraged non-profit leaders to behave otherwise, calling them to clearly define goals and "yardsticks" to measure progress as a way of rendering ideas "doable" and keeping the focus on the needs of the organization's beneficiaries rather than the emotional or career needs of donors or board members.

I observed these issues in the client system, as there had historically been no performance evaluation process, no orientation programs or systems that would otherwise assist the leader in establishing baseline expectations for performance, either day-to-day, or against the strategic plan set by the Board of Directors.

The Spectrum of Social Enterprise.

Another difference between non-profits and traditional businesses is the top line of the income statement, revenue, or in the case of non-profits, funding streams. According to Dees (1998, p. 7), non-profits today face tremendous challenges for alternative sources of funding and are beginning to act more like for-profit ventures as a result.

This phenomenon has resulted in what Dees (1998, p. 9) calls the *Spectrum of Social Enterprise* as presented in the table at Appendix B. Organizations fall along a continuum of methods, motives and goals—from the purely philanthropic to the purely commercial. Where the organization falls on the continuum determines not only what it does, but also how key stakeholders interact with it, including beneficiaries, capital contributors, the workforce and its suppliers.

Though the spirit of the core ideology (Collins & Porras, 1994) of the organization was rooted in purely philanthropic values and goals, I believe the client system best fit in the center column of the table, between philanthropy and commercial methods, motives and goals.

Dees (1998, p. 13) also talked about the challenges that non-profits in the center of this spectrum face with regard to the necessity for building business capabilities and managing organizational culture. The client system grappled with many of these issues.

Motivations regarding mission vs. market drivers and social vs. economic value drove key strategic and governance issues, while the interests of both capital stakeholders and the agency's workforce influenced the day-to-day operations of the agency.

White privilege.

As was previously mentioned, when I asked about diversity in the organization, the sponsor, who was white, described, with what I interpreted at the time as some amount of energy, a culture of "white privilege," without an accompanying awareness of its existence. Even though I planned no specific intervention in the system to address it, I thought it was important to gain some understanding of what she may have been experiencing.

McIntosh (1990) defined the phenomenon of white privilege as an invisible collection of assets that white people may count on each day, but about which they are meant to remain oblivious. McIntosh wrote, "White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools, and blank checks." To "unpack" that knapsack, McIntosh identified 50 different effects of white privilege that are present on a daily basis in her own life. In the context of these effects of privilege, McIntosh noted that she felt intense pressure to avoid the awareness of her unearned advantages, lest she relegate the ideal of meritocracy to the realm of myth. She said, "If these things are true, this is not such a free country; one's life is not what one makes it; many doors open for certain people through no virtues of their own."

This systemic avoidance of awareness of the phenomenon of white privilege contributes to what I will characterize as the shadow side of social service, particularly

when it is conducted by a dominant culture for the benefit of a primarily non-dominant culture.

An excellent explanation of what I'm talking about is offered by McIntosh (1990), who cited Minnich, "Whites are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, normative, and average, and also ideal, so that when we work to benefit others, this is seen as work that will allow *them* to be more like *us*."

In a related concept, Oshry (1999, p. 161) talked about "invisible differentiation." According to Oshry (1999), "Dominants," exist in a world characterized by their cultural patterns as "the way things are," which results in, among other things, easier access to the system's resources. Thus, what they contribute to the concept of diversity is invisible, along with the easier access they enjoy to the system's resources. In contrast, "Others" come from groups who are systemically excluded and who face challenges in accessing the system's resources.

In the client system, I believed the "Dominants" who inhabited every level of the organization to be well intentioned in their desire to make the lives of the "Others"—their clients—better. However, in my opinion, there seemed to be something to the dynamics that Oshry (1999) and McIntosh (1990) named that was operating below the surface in the client system. For example, I experienced discomfort in my body at a Board of Directors meeting when the one African American man present, who was there to essentially speak for the clients of the agency, got his turn on the agenda. It's difficult to explain, other than to say I thought there was something unintentionally dishonoring about the way this black gentleman had to speak for the "Others" to a room filled with white people. I recall feeling quite a bit of tension in my gut, which I made sense of later

by naming my own sense of guilt, sadness, and shame about the injustices visited upon people of color by white people throughout history. My hypothesis is that there may have been some unconscious sense of comfort in the collective of “Dominants”—myself included—which found itself engaged in the familiar business of offering heretofore unavailable access to valuable resources to the less fortunate “Others.”

With that said, I don’t wish to discount my capacity for empathy. Thus, I think my experience may have also resulted, at least in part, from a direct connection with the black gentleman and his experience in the moment of being on the other side of McIntosh’s (1990) effects of white privilege.

Micro-Level Aspects of the Client System

On the micro-level, I again called upon the work of Oshry (1999), as well as that of Lipschultz (2001).

I selected Oshry (1999) because of his well-known work regarding the experiences of people in different layers of organizations. Specifically, given the sponsor’s stated observation that the management group “operated in silos” rather than as a team, I sought to understand the experience of Oshry’s (1999) “Middles.” I chose Lipschultz (2001) because he offered a recruiter’s eye view of what makes a good candidate for the position of interim CEO—a phenomenon that has increased significantly in its prevalence in all types of businesses, and all types of situations, not just in the non-profit sector.

Management teams.

According to Oshry (1999, p. 58), members of the middle are frequently pulled apart from one another, in between the top layer that controls them, and the bottom layer

which they are expected to manage, and outward, by other groups or activities. There is rarely a common mission among the “Middles” which would alleviate much of their suffering. What results, according to Oshry (1999), is an imbalance known as “individuation without integration.” In this type of imbalance, “Middles” cope with the confusion of their environment by individuating and operating independently of one another, “not necessarily using themselves fully or bringing their unique skills and abilities” (p. 128-29).

There was no question in my mind that these environmental conditions and imbalances were present in the client system. The sponsor identified the isolation of the “Middles” when she named the “silo” effect and lack of teamwork. In my contact with the “Middles,” I heard stories of being pulled between the priorities of the Executive Director, Board committees, volunteers, donors, and customers that were laced with what I interpreted as the despair and confusion of their experience.

Interim leadership.

Lipschultz (2001) listed several desirable attributes according to some leading recruiters in the placement of interim CEOs. He talked about “unquestionable leadership ability” in terms of five years experience at a minimum, but more typically 10-15 years as a chief executive. He also listed “a quick study” in that most interim CEOs are in and out in less than 18 months, making it important for them to be able to get up to speed quickly. Lipschultz also listed “the right disposition” as important. A good interim CEO needs to be able to get in, fix the problem quickly, and get out, but at the same time, not leave the organization as so much “scorched earth” in the process. He also singled out “industry experience” as a key attribute. Finally, Lipschultz wrote about “good language skills” in

that an interim CEO should be a good communicator when breaking bad news.

Based on my experience, I think the sponsor had all of the necessary attributes, according to Lipschultz (2001), to be an excellent interim CEO, with one possible exception. My experience, in this and many other situations, does not support a direct link between “unquestionable leadership ability” and length of experience, as Lipschultz implies. While I did not question her wealth of knowledge and experience, I would not have characterized the sponsor’s leadership ability as “unquestionable.”

Content

In this section, I will address the theorists that helped me to understand the specific project goals, which are divided into two categories: leadership and change management.

To help me understand leadership, I called upon the work of Oshry (1999), Heifetz (1994), Vaill (1996), Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee (2001), and Tannenbaum & Schmidt (1958), as revised by Crosby (2002). Specifically, I sought to understand role clarity in different levels of the organization, technical vs. adaptive challenges of leadership—particularly as they may relate to an interim CEO—the qualities of managerial leadership through a systemic lens, the role of emotions in leadership—in particular, the qualities of both resonant and dissonant leadership—as well as the different types of decision-making styles.

Leadership

Role clarity.

While the sponsor and I both identified a lack of basic, functional role clarity, which she resolved to address through the completion of written job descriptions, I

discovered in my research after the project that there might also have been an important lack of understanding of the essence of the intrinsic roles in the various layers of the organization.

Oshry (1999, p. 58) identified the nature of the differing environmental conditions typically experienced by the members of each of these hierarchical layers. Members of the top (“Tops”) are collectively responsible for the whole system and are thus routinely dealing with the difficulty, complexity and unpredictability inherent in their position. Members of the middle (“Middles”) are frequently pulled apart from one another, and simultaneously inward toward the “Tops” and outward toward other individuals, groups, or activities. Members of the bottom (“Bottoms”) exist in a condition of shared vulnerability.

I observed members of the organization who were Middles instead showing up like Bottoms, expressing their unity in a “world of shared vulnerability” (Oshry, 1999, p. 57). In contrast, I observed Bottoms who would occasionally show up in ways more characteristic of Middles, either expressing frustration at being pulled in many directions at once, or a lack of understanding of the organizational structure in the system. In one such incidence, a lower level staff member decided that rather than approach her immediate supervisor, or even the Executive Director, about a pay raise, she would instead directly approach the President of the Board of Directors, and did so with predictably poor results for everyone involved. Most significantly, the Executive Director was engaged in simultaneously navigating the experiences of both a Top and Middle due to the fact that, according to the sponsor, the Board President and other Board Members had been historically more involved in day-to-day operations than was either productive

or appropriate, creating a great deal of confusion throughout the system.

Technical vs. adaptive challenges.

Heifetz (1994, p. 72) offered his definition of leadership when he said the role of the group leader could be defined as the ability to help the group identify and face its “adaptive challenges” as well as its “technical work.” He defined technical challenges as “those that can be readily defined and solved. These problems are technical in the sense that we know already how to respond to them.”

Meanwhile, Heifetz (1994, p. 22) defined adaptive challenges as those that cannot be fixed, but rather must be managed continually. He said, “Adaptive work consists of the learning required to address conflicts in the values people hold, or to diminish the gap between the values people stand for and the reality they face. Adaptive work requires getting people to clarify what matters most, in what balance, with what tradeoffs.”

Combining Heifetz’s (1994) definition of leadership with Lipschultz’s (2001) attributes of a good interim CEO, I began to question whether or not the idea of “interim leadership” was even possible. The question for me was, “Can an interim executive actually exercise “leadership,” or is he or she limited to technical work alone?”

Managerial leadership through a systemic lens.

To further my inquiry, I consulted Vaill (1996, p. 138) who talked about three qualities of managerial leadership. According to Vaill, the leader has a primary responsibility to communicate purpose and direction to the organization. I thought the sponsor was attempting to do this throughout my involvement in the client system.

Next, according to Vaill, the leader must acknowledge that he or she has only “partial knowledge” of the nature of that organization, including its contextual

environment. Here is where I think the sponsor began to run into difficulty. She time and again reported to me, accompanied by what I interpreted as frustration, anger, and even sadness, that in spite of all of her years of experience, she did not know why “these people” were behaving in the way that she saw them behaving. Interpreting her behavior through Vaill’s lens, she seemed to be making assumptions regarding her own level of understanding about the system based upon past experience alone, and was not focusing upon what she needed to learn and do in the present.

Finally, according to Vaill, the leader must never “underestimate the reactivity of the other human beings in the system to the initiatives of the managerial leader.” Again, the sponsor’s prior experiences seemed to so color her perception of how events *ought* to unfold that I think she experienced difficulty in *not* interpreting what I would characterize as fairly significant systemic resistance to her attempts to lead as personal attacks.

The role of emotions in leadership.

In addition to the qualities of managerial leadership, Vaill (1996) also discussed what he called “the loneliness of command,” which was something the sponsor described in her own experience. He wrote:

Facts do not speak for themselves, for if they did, humans would find it easy to agree. Meanings, implications, significance, and portents are *wrested* from the flow of events, wrested by men and women who have a felt stake in how things are unfolding.

Furthermore, felt meanings themselves can be frequently equivocal. There can be conflicts between the interests of various parties to a situation, between personal values and what is good for the institution, between desire for immediate

success and long-term viability, between looking good and being good. This is the province of “the loneliness of command” (p. 141).

I was particularly intrigued by the idea of “felt meaning” and thus sought to understand the importance of a group’s leader at a level deeper than mere position or role—through the concept of shared emotional connection. To that end, I explored the work of Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee (2002), who described the concept of “resonant leadership”:

One sign of resonant leadership is a group of followers who vibrate with the leader’s upbeat and enthusiastic energy. A primal leadership dictum is that resonance amplifies and prolongs the emotional impact of leadership. The more resonant people are with each other, the less static are their interactions; resonance minimizes noise in the system...The glue that holds people together in a team, and that commits people to an organization, is the emotions they feel. (p. 20)

By contrast, I found the principles of dissonant leadership advanced by Goleman, et al. (2002, p. 23) to be present in the client system. In my opinion, the sponsor seemed to lack empathy, seemed also to be emotionally out of synch with the group, and frequently transmitted “emotional tones that resound(ed) more often in the negative register.” I hoped that by weaving this awareness into my interventions, I might be able to help the sponsor to tune her emotions with the group in mind, thus helping her to lead instead with resonance.

Decision-making styles.

Tannenbaum & Schmidt (1958), as revised by Crosby (2002) explained

participatory management in terms of six different decision-making styles. The first is an autocratic style, whereby the leader unilaterally decides and announces the decision to the group. The second is a consultative style, whereby the leader, having almost decided, checks the reactions of the group prior to making the final decision. The third is also a consultative style, but this time the leader solicits input prior to deciding. The fourth is a group decision with the majority vote controlling the outcome. The fifth is also a group decision, but by consensus—all must agree after discussion. Finally, the sixth is delegation, whereby the group leader assigns responsibility for the decision to others, with clear parameters of freedom.

As I will discuss later in greater detail, I observed a lack of clarity in decision-making styles throughout the management structure of the client system, which only served to exacerbate the lack of role and goal clarity that so hindered the organization.

Change Management

To help me understand the subject of change management, I called upon the work of Druhl, Langstaff & Monson (2001), Gleicher, as cited by Bunker & Alban (1997), Block (2000), Taylor (2002), Senge (1990), Bridges (1990), Tuckman (1965), Schein (1988), and Ludema (2000). Specifically, I sought to understand differing approaches to change—notably top-down vs. bottom-up or living systems approach—measuring an organization's capacity for change, different types of resistance to change, the stages of group development that may contribute to different types of resistance, and the importance of hope as a catalyst for positive organizational transformation.

Differing approaches to change management.

The change process in the client system was characterized from the beginning by

a top-down approach. Druhl, et al. (2001, p. 381) addressed the top-down approach of “planned change” in terms of the following characteristics: developing a vision; communicating the vision; top management determination; planning and programming; and adopting the best practice. Druhl, et al. (2001) compared this approach to the mechanistic view of Newtonian physics, “assuming the organization to be comprised of functional areas, or individual parts, whose behavior could be controlled or predicted.” This was exactly the way the sponsor sought to address the project goal regarding the improvement of processing and accounting for donations to the client system, among others of her initiatives.

Though I thought there was some justification for at least a partial top-down approach to change given the unique circumstances, I intended to expand the sponsor’s repertoire to also include what Druhl, et al. (2001, p. 382) described as the characteristics of the “bottom-up” or “living systems” approach to change. This included the following ideas: the assumption that organizations are adaptive, self-organizing, interdependent and dynamic; an awareness that the leader’s challenge is not to drive change, but to release the potential for change; recognition of the need for both stability and change; a shift from future aspirations to an awareness of current reality; respect for the uniqueness of each organization and its own specialized needs for change; a deep understanding of the influence of one part of the system on the whole, including the recognition that the organization’s performance depends critically upon the interactions of its members.

I believed that at very least, this systemic awareness might help the sponsor to make decisions more clearly, even if the decision was to be most appropriately delivered in an autocratic, top-down style. At best, I hoped she might develop a greater range of

potential strategies for planning and implementing change in the system.

Though I intended to do so, I never directly connected the work-process goal to this systemic approach, instead allowing the sponsor to rely upon the coercive means typical of top-driven change.

Increasing the client system's readiness for change.

Dannemiller used Gleicher's change formula (Beckhard & Harris, 1987 cited by Bunker & Alban, 1997, p. 71): $C = D \times V \times F > R$. The formula assumes that change (C) will occur when sufficient dissatisfaction (D) with the current organizational system exists, when everyone has a clear vision of the organizational goals for the future (V), and when it is clear what first steps (F) can be taken to move the system in the direction of the vision. All three elements must be in place and must be greater than the resistance to change (R) that is present in the system.

Based on Gleicher's change formula, I created a similar formula and companion data collection instrument in order to measure incremental increases or decreases in readiness for change. If $C = \text{readiness for change}$; $A = \text{desirability of future state}$; $B = \text{dissatisfaction with current state}$; $D = \text{perceived pain in completing change}$; $E = \text{perceived cost of not changing}$; then the following formula results: $C = A + B + D > E$.

My thinking was that an increase or decrease in the spread between the sum of the variables A, B and D, and the variable E would indicate an increase or decrease in organizational readiness for change.

As I will discuss in chapter four, I learned after completing the experiment that the formula may have been more elegantly expressed as $C = A + B + E > D$. However, the results would not have been materially altered.

Understanding resistance to change.

Block (2000, pp. 139-140) said, “The hardest part of consulting is dealing with resistance” and that its presence would be a sign that I was “on target” with my inquiry. The latter part of that thinking became more self-care mantra than theoretical framework the longer I worked with the client system.

Taylor (2002) referred to three types of resistance in a system—natural, habitual and helpful, as shown in Table 2.1.

In my experience, the sponsor’s default response to resistance in the system was assuming that it was “habitual (personal)” and then becoming frustrated with the individual involved. I attempted to teach a sequential assessment of resistance that began with an assumption that it was “helpful,” moved next to “natural,” followed by “habitual (systemic),” and finally ended at “habitual (personal).”

Table 2.1

Taylor’s Types of Resistance to Change

	Natural	Habitual (personal)	Habitual (cultural)	Helpful
Follower Behavior	Raising Concerns.	Ingrained personal response to all change.	Patterned thinking in the system.	Surfaces real concerns and obstacles to success.
Leader Response	Clarity of expectations. Listening without taking resistance personally.	Performance management. Tie behavior to consequences.	Examine their part in the cultural norm and change it.	Openly listen and facilitate problem-solving conversations.

Note: Adapted from lecture at the Leadership Institute of Seattle. Original source, Roger Taylor

I sensed another type of internal resistance that Senge (1990, p. 156), citing Fritz, called “structural conflict.” Senge described it as the system involving both the tension (like a rubber band) pulling us toward our goal and the tension anchoring us to our underlying belief in powerlessness or unworthiness to have what we most want. The closer we come to achieving our goal, the more the force anchoring us to our underlying belief that we can’t have or don’t deserve it pulls us away. According to Senge, structural conflict might appear in a variety of ways, including loss of energy; questioning the vision; ability to finish the job; unexpected obstacles; and people letting us down. As I will discuss later, I believe there was ample evidence in the sponsor’s behavior that structural conflict was present in the system.

Understanding group development as a contributing factor to resistance.

Bridges (1980) said, “First there is an ending, then a beginning, with an important empty or fallow time in between” (p. 18). In my research, I learned that the client system routinely experienced a great deal of turnover, but leaders did not give much, if any attention to the subject of endings or new beginnings. People seemed to simply come and go. I hoped to positively impact the client system by cultivating an awareness of the importance of acknowledging the entire process inherent in transitions.

In addition to awareness of the process of transitions, given the magnitude of personnel turnover the client system had and would continue to experience, I thought it was also particularly important to be aware of the stages of group development. Tuckman (1965) described a developmental process engaged by all groups that has come to be characterized by the following stages: forming, storming, norming, and performing.

I suspected that with the continual changes in composition the client system had

and would continue to endure, along with no accompanying attention to the process of transitions or the stages of group development, the group may never fully develop.

I also found Schein’s (1988, p. 41) “Problems in Entering a New Group” (see Table 2.2), to be helpful in tracking the group’s development.

Table 2.2

Problems in Entering a New Group; Self-Oriented Behavior

Problems & Associated Questions	Resulting Feelings & Coping Responses
Identity: Who am I to be?	Frustration, resulting in tough responses: fighting, controlling, resisting authority.
Control & Influence: Will I be able to control and influence others?	Tension, resulting in tender responses: supporting, helping, forming alliances, dependency.
Needs and Goals: Will the group’s goals include my own needs?	Anxiety, resulting in withdrawal or denial responses: passivity, indifference, overuse of “logic and reason”.
Acceptance & Intimacy: Will I be liked and accepted by the group? How close a group will we be?	

Note: Adapted from Schein, E. (1988). *Process Consultation. Volume 1: Its Role in Organization Development*. New York: Addison-Wesley.

I observed in the system, from when I arrived through our final contact, an abundance of many of the coping responses that would indicate the group remained in an early stage of development throughout the project.

Schein (1988, p. 50) also talked about the concept of task, maintenance and boundary management behavior, all of which must be engaged in some degree of balance in order for the group to develop. As I will discuss later, the group tended to stay oriented toward task functions, even when the sponsor made attempts at maintenance.

Measuring and cultivating hope.

From the beginning of my engagement in the client system, I became curious about the level of hope that lived within it. Ludema (2000) eloquently summed up the importance of the presence of hope in any organization that was attempting to transform:

The language of hope in human systems has important implications for our continuing task as social and organizational scholars and practitioners. If the premise that hope is a primary source of positive knowledge and action in organizational life is accepted, and the tenets of social constructionism—that knowledge is a social artifact, that language is the means by which knowledge is developed, that there is an inextricable link between language, knowledge and action—are embraced, then it can be concluded that the creation of textured vocabularies of hope may well be the most powerful tool available to us if our aim is to generate constructive organizational understandings that open new possibilities for human organizing and action. (pp. 283-284)

As I will discuss in the next section of this chapter—specifically with regard to intervention methodology at the micro-level—my awareness of the importance of hope to the success of an organizational change effort played an important role in shaping how I interacted with the client system.

Methodology

In this section, I will discuss the theories behind interventions in the system at both macro- and micro-levels of the client system. At the macro-level, I called upon the work of French & Bell (1999), Block (2000), and Conner (1992) to help me understand human systems, the Action Research model, and sponsorship of change efforts.

*Macro-Level Methodology**Organizations as human systems.*

French & Bell (1999) referred to organizations as complex social systems, requiring organizational development consultants to focus upon improving the total organization, or large parts of it, rather than its individual members.

They cited systems theory as a critical part of that practice, quoting Schafritz & Ott who said, “The systems school views an organization as a complex set of dynamically intertwined and interconnected elements, including its inputs, processes, outputs, feedback loops, and the environment in which it operates. A change in any element inevitably causes changes (elsewhere)” (French & Bell, 1999, p. 4).

Action Research model.

I planned to act throughout the Action Research process, in Block’s (2000, p. 224) terms, as a “witness,” in that I was there to present accurate information and a clear, specific picture of what I observed, without any vested interest in the outcome. However, I wasn’t always successful in remaining so detached from the outcome, as I’ll discuss later.

Block (2000, pp. 6-7) described the Action Research process in terms of five phases: (1) entry and contracting; (2) discovery and dialogue—which included data collection; (3) feedback and decision to act—which included the data feedback meeting and facilitated action planning; (4) engagement and implementation—which included design and execution of an intervention in the system and follow-up; (5) extension, recycle or termination—which in this case meant closure of the project. A copy of the approved contract for conducting the project is included at Appendix C.

I planned to use Block's (2000, p. 198) three-tiered approach to data analysis. I wanted to probe not only the presenting problems, in organizational terms, but also group member perceptions about how others contribute to the presenting problems, as well as their sense of personal responsibility for the presenting problems.

Sponsorship of change efforts.

Conner (1992, pp. 106-107) identified the four distinct roles critical to the change process: sponsors, agents, targets and advocates, or S-A-T-A.

According to Conner (1992), Sponsors are individuals or groups who have the power to sanction or legitimize change. Agents are individuals or groups who are responsible for actually making the change. Targets are the individuals or groups who must actually change. Finally, Advocates are individuals or groups who want to achieve a change, but lack the power to sanction it.

Conner (1992, pp. 107-122) also talked about the importance of the configuration of relationships in his S-A-T-A model. I discovered there were numerous and conflicting sponsorship configurations operating simultaneously within the client system and to the detriment of the change effort—including parallel as well as triangular sponsorship.

Micro-Level Methodology

At the micro-level, I called upon Harrison (1979), Schein (1988), Williamson (1991), O'Neill (2000), Bunker & Alban (1997), and Ludema (2000) to address the questions of where and how to intervene in the system. I asked the question of *how* in terms of different consultative styles—specifically process vs. expert-driven approaches—and different levels of system—specifically the individual level and the group level. I was also interested in conducting research and intervening in the

organization using an appreciative lens. Specifically, I hoped to track and positively influence the level of hope in the system.

Identifying where to intervene in the system.

Harrison (1979) identified role and goal clarity as two of the primary elements to be considered when a group or team encounters challenges while engaged in a task or tasks together. His *Waterline Model* (see Appendix F) contained four progressively deeper levels of intervention, each aimed at resolving group challenges. The idea was to begin at the most “shallow” level, and progress deeper as issues were resolved or ruled out.

The first, most shallow level addressed group member roles and goals. Clarity at this level of intervention must be obtained prior to progressing to inquiry or intervention in group-process, interpersonal relational issues or intra-personal work.

Given the sponsor’s own assessment at the outset of the project that there was no easy answer to the question, "Who is in charge of what around here?" I was curious from the beginning about clarity regarding roles and goals, and found there was in fact room for improvement, as I have already discussed.

Different consulting relationships.

Schein (1988, p. 11) essentially stated my mission as a consultant in the client system, when he defined the “process consultant” as one who “seeks to give the client insight into what is going on around him, within him and between him and other people.”

The sponsor was a consultant who had been hired by the Board of Directors on a six-month contract to help them through a transition between permanent leaders. Thus, in addition to being responsible for the day-to-day operation of the organization, the sponsor

was also charged with advising the Board of Directors regarding governance and operational issues and assisting in the recruitment of a permanent executive to lead the organization into the future. In hindsight, I think the dual role of consultant and organizational leader proved to add a layer of complexity to our relationship, which showed up in the form of a major difference in consulting ideologies.

While I was attempting to create a collaborative relationship in working with the sponsor that was consistent with Schein's (1988) process consultation model, the sponsor's relationship with her sponsoring organization, the Board of Directors, would have been characterized by Schein (1988, p. 7) as analogous to the "doctor-patient model."

Schein (1988, p. 8) wrote about a difficulty with the doctor-patient model in that the "client/patient is likely to be unwilling to believe the diagnosis or to accept the prescription offered by the consultant." While the Board of Directors seemed to adopt most, if not all of the sponsor's recommendations, with some degree of what I would call "natural resistance" (Taylor, 2002) based on the sponsor's description of their behavior, they did so without a great deal of what I would characterize as skepticism or denial. They seemed to believe in the technical competence of their consultant, and rightfully so.

Coaching.

As a part of my intervention strategy, I planned to act as a coach, both to the sponsor and the team, and contracted with both parties accordingly. In preparation for this aspect of the work, I knew I needed to have a particularly firm grounding in my sense of self and to enter the system in as "healthy" a state as possible. In this regard, a "healthy" person understands simultaneously his or her "individual rights" and "sense of

belonging” in the systems of which he is a part (Whitaker in Williamson, 1991). In my opinion, the best definition of success in holding this paradox is that of “personal authority in the family system” (Williamson, 1991, pp. 40-41). In order for me to effectively coach the sponsor in her efforts as a change agent in the client system, I knew I would need to constantly attend to the business of maintaining my own personal authority, particularly when facing resistance.

From this grounding in my own health and differentiation, I would then be able to help the sponsor face her own challenges in getting to the goals we established, and to see how she gets in her own way (O’Neill, 2000, p. xv). To that end, I intended to effectively “triangle” myself between the sponsor, and the challenges she faced in the client system.

In hindsight, I would have found it helpful to assess the sponsor regarding her leadership skill level prior to beginning to coach her. Collins (2001, p. 20) provided some potentially helpful ideas that I intend to use in the future. He identified five levels of leadership skill:

- *Level 5—Executive*: Builds enduring greatness through a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will.
- *Level 4—Effective Leader*: Catalyzes commitment to and vigorous pursuit of a clear and compelling vision stimulating higher performance standards.
- *Level 3—Competent Manager*: Organizes people and resources toward the effective and efficient pursuit of predetermined objectives.
- *Level 2—Contributing Team Member*: Contributes individual capabilities to the achievement of group objectives and works effectively with others in a group setting.

- *Level 1—Highly Capable Individual*: Makes productive contributions through talent, knowledge, skills, and good work habits.

Had I accurately assessed the sponsor early in the project against this scale, I would have found her to be alternating between performing as a competent manager (Level 3) in her role as the organization’s Executive Director, and operating as a highly capable individual (Level 1) in her role as a consultant to the Board of Directors.

The whole system intervention.

While encountering systemic negativity, I was inspired by Bunker and Alban (1997, p. 20) as they talked about an early design for working with the whole system in the room—Beckhard’s Confrontation Meeting (as published in Harvard Business Review, 1967). According to Bunker and Alban, Beckhard created the intervention to shift the negative energy of a family business to a positive direction. The capstone event in the intervention was when the participants in the meeting developed “promises,” actions they would take in the direction of a better work environment.

In a similar vein of thought, Bunker & Alban (1997, p. 43) also described the systems theory work of Trist, Emery, M. Emery and Lippitt, in their creation of the Future Search Conference. The objective of the Future Search was to explore possible agreements between people with divergent views and interests by bringing together everyone with an interest in the issue at hand—literally into the same room.

According to Bunker & Alban (1997, pp. 46-47) the six major tasks of the future search include: focus on our history; focus on the present, current trends; discuss “prouds and sorries;” focus on the future; discover common futures; take action.

Block (2000, p. 281) provided complementary theory as he recommended that

meetings be structured around the major principles of implementation, including balanced participation; real choice on the table; difficult questions dealt with publicly; connection and vulnerability built into the conversation; physical space based on the circle. The design of the intervention I delivered was inspired by all of these theorists and is included at Appendix D.

Using the appreciative lens.

While I did not plan to conduct a full Appreciative Inquiry in the system, I did set out to use some of its guiding principles that I had learned and used in the past in my data collection, data analysis and implementation. Specifically, Ludema (2000, p. 267), citing Cooperrider & Srivasta (1987), articulated the two basic tenets of the appreciative approach that I hoped would inform my presence in the system. First, Ludema talked about a “direct and simultaneous link between our vocabularies of organizing and the ways in which we organize in fact.” Second, he said, “our vocabularies are products of the questions we ask.” The connection between these ideas and the importance of the existence of hope in the organization as a catalyst for positive change (Ludema, 2000, pp. 283-284) helped to guide both my data collection and intervention design.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I reviewed the theorists that helped shape my thinking regarding the client system at the macro- and micro-levels, the project goals and measurement standards, as well as the methodology by which I would intervene in service of the system’s health. In the next chapter, I will discuss the course of significant events that shaped the project and determined its ultimate success, or failure.

CHAPTER 3

Intervention

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a narrative account of the project. I describe key themes that revealed themselves over the course of the project, as well as critical incidents that occurred along the project timeline as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Project Timeline

Action Research Phase	Target Dates	Actual Dates	Type of Interaction	Contact Hrs	Comments
Entry and Contracting	Dec-Jan	11/19/01	Meeting	2 hrs	Initial meeting.
		12/17/01	Meeting	2 hrs	Goal setting and contracting.
		1/8/02	Meeting	2 hrs	First draft of proposal.
		1/29/02	Meeting	1.5 hrs	Contract approval & questionnaire briefed.
Discovery and Dialogue	Jan-Feb	2/5/02	Data Collection	12 hrs*	Interviews and surveys.
Feedback and Decision to Act	Mar-Apr	3/20/02	Meeting	2 hrs	Sponsor only. Planned data feedback meeting.
		4/9/02	Meeting	3 hrs	Data feedback meeting.
		4/18/02	Meeting	3 hrs	Data feedback to Board of Directors.

Action Research Phase	Target Dates	Actual Dates	Type of Interaction	Contact Hrs	Comments
		4/24/02	Telecon.	2 hrs	Pre-action planning meeting.
		4/25/02	Meeting	3 hrs	Action planning.
Engagement and Implementation	Mar-Apr	5/1/02	All-Staff Meeting	4 hrs	Whole system intervention.
		5/2/02	Data Feedback	1 hr	Sponsor only.
Extension, Recycle or Termination	Apr-May	5/20/02	Meeting	1.5 hrs	Final meeting. Evaluated results.
		5/28/02	Evaluation	--	Received evaluation from sponsor.
Total Time				39 hrs	

*Note: Data collection time shows planned time allotted. Actual client contact time needed for data collection was 8 hours. 2nd day of data collection was cancelled and not rescheduled.

Key Themes

I interpreted several themes from my interactions with the client system. Most prevalent among them were isolation, loss, powerlessness, and lastly, a sense of hope.

Isolation

My typical physical experience of the client system's work environment was one of low energy and a pervasive feeling of sadness. I frequently experienced a sinking, hollow feeling in my gut as I walked into the space, and in fact am experiencing it now as I write this. It's as if I'm re-entering the client system all over again. I recall there was no chatter, no joviality, no life.

The theme of isolation arose within a few minutes of beginning the first meeting with the sponsor on November 19th, 2001 and was interwoven time and again throughout the project. The experiences of working in the client system were characterized by employees with words such as “lonely,” “working in silos,” “lack of teamwork,” “wanting connection,” and “poor communication.”

During my meetings with the client system’s management group, I attempted to track and observe interactions with an eye toward noting their stage of group development (Tuckman, 1965). Though many of them had worked together for quite some time, I observed what, in my opinion, was an apparent lack of connection in the form of superficiality in conversation.

I believe this was due in part to what was a typical experience of middle managers (Oshry, 2000) in terms of “individuation without integration.” People in middle management roles commonly cope with the confusion of their environment by individuating and operating independently of one another. This hurts the organization in that they typically withhold much of what they may potentially bring to the group in terms of passion or unique gifts.

I attempted to get a sense for the presence of Schein’s (1988) “Problems Associated with Entering a New Group,” and found ample evidence of questions regarding control and influence (forming alliances), identity (resisting authority), and needs and goals (withdrawal, passivity and indifference). It was clear to me that this group had never fully worked through the dilemmas of forming (Tuckman, 1965) and as long as such uncertainty reigned, I didn’t think they would.

I found further evidence of what I interpreted as avoidance of intimacy in tracking

their task/maintenance balance (Schein, 1988) during a meeting I silently observed. The group demonstrated four behaviors indicating a task focus, including information seeking, information giving, and opinion giving and clarifying. A group member attempted only one brief foray into maintenance behaviors—diagnosing. The other attempts at maintenance work were on the part of the sponsor and came in the form of harmonizing and encouraging. The group seemed to ignore both attempts, which I came to understand was common behavior.

Loss

Following the sudden departure of the organization's leader under less than clearly explained conditions, the sponsor, (who by definition was only going to be in the organization for six to nine months) had within three months either fired or forced the resignation of two long-term senior staff members, one of whom was replaced with another temporary employee—a friend of the sponsor's—representing yet more future personnel changes in the system. Shortly after his job description was changed, a third administrative staff member departed. A temporary employee was hired to help, but stayed only a few days. One long-term staff member refused to make the move to the new office space because the commute was going to be too long. The group also expected to rotate and replace three stipend-subsidized volunteers by the end of the summer. As I prepared to depart the system, the sponsor was ready to fire another employee on the administrative staff whom she had hired with high praise and much expressed optimism shortly after arriving in the organization.

In my opinion, none of these “endings” were “closed” effectively and thus new beginnings were loaded with unresolved emotions and questions (Bridges, 1980).

Unfortunately, I ended up feeding this pattern by the way my involvement with the client system ended, which I experienced as abrupt, unceremonious, and even a bit awkward.

Before the project was completed, I encouraged the three members of the management group who would be present throughout the upcoming turnover and transition to permanent leadership, to change the pattern of unresolved loss and set the stage for new beginnings. I suggested marking the upcoming departures with farewell events, and welcoming new members of the organization with warmth and intention.

Powerlessness

I thought powerlessness showed up in many ways. Perhaps the most common indication was the presence of cascading and interlocking triangles (O'Neill, 2000) that stretched from the receptionist's desk all the way to the President of the Board of Directors. As was discussed before, the formation of these types of alliances was a sign of the fear that accompanies joining a new group (Schein, 1988) and proved to be a huge drain on the system's resources—particularly the energy and resolve of the sponsor.

In addition to triangular relationships and the reactive and indirect patterns of communication that resulted from them, powerlessness also showed up as a lack of personal responsibility. All members in the organization with whom I had contact perceived most problems as somebody else's responsibility, and tended to distribute blame liberally about the organization.

In the sponsor, powerlessness seemed to show up in the form of burnout and cynicism about the agency and the people with whom she worked, even those with whom she began on positive terms. I observed a pattern I would describe as a "souring" of the sponsor's opinion regarding people whom she initially held in high regard in no less than

four different situations, and with four different people—the last of which involved me as the object of the sponsor’s eventual disappointment. As I alluded to previously, this sort of pattern was evidence of what Senge (1990) named structural conflict.

Hope

When I surveyed the system and asked for employees to provide five descriptive words to characterize their experience at work, the most commonly used term was *frustration*. The second most commonly used term was *rewarding*. Though I found this group to be challenging to work with in many ways, I was always heartened by what I deemed to be a stubborn brand of hopefulness. I judged this to spring partially out of a connection to what Harvey & Snyder (1987) referred to as the “romance” inherent in working for a good cause. But I also sensed that deep down, this was a resilient group, and I wanted to have the time to stick with them—to see them through these difficult days and to help them realize what I know they believed at some level was possible.

Chronology: Significant Events

Entry and Contracting Phase

The project began with a meeting on November 19th, 2001. The purpose of the meeting was to begin to conduct the business of contracting, which, according to Block (2000, p. 45), included negotiating wants, coping with mixed motivation, surfacing concerns, and clarifying all parties to the contract. To that end, my agenda included the following topics for discussion: background of the structure of the Master’s Thesis Field Project (MTFP), including the steps of the Action Research model we would use; identification of the sponsor and client group, including clarification of the relationship between myself as the consultant, the sponsor, and the client group; desired goals and

outcomes; concerns and apprehensions; inquiry into how the sponsor wanted to show up in the project; wants and offers; setting a date for our next meeting and kicking off the project.

The sponsor and I got through the process of identifying the client group and some beginning discovery toward establishing goals and outcomes, when we ran out of time. We agreed to set a follow-up meeting for a month or so later to solidify the goals of the project and finalize a draft project proposal that I could submit to my Adjunct Faculty. In the meantime, I read a lengthy and detailed organizational assessment that the sponsor prepared in her role as consultant to the Board of Directors.

As I looked over that document, I noticed a stylistic bias toward what Schein (1988, p. 16-17) called a “structural approach” and a “pre-occupation with the structural or static elements of the organization.” In my opinion, the tone of this report also clearly positioned her in the role of the expert in a doctor-patient style relationship (Schein, 1988, p. 8).

Though I never observed the diagnoses provided by the sponsor to the Board of Directors to be anything other than accurate, I found that the personalities in the system were also treated as “statics.” What I mean is that the sponsor’s bias was toward making personnel changes rather than group development, training, or other possible interventions in the system. I also found that the latter of Schein’s precautions regarding a structural bias was also relevant—that is the recommendations of the structural consultant might be incomplete in that they ignore the basic human processes at work. This represented, in my opinion, a potentially excellent opportunity for our divergent consulting styles to complement one another.

I was later fascinated to find that while the sponsor was in the role of “client” in our relationship, she seemed to unconsciously put herself in the role of “patient,” as I experienced in her the type of resistance to which Schein referred as characteristic of the doctor-patient consulting relationship. For example, when the time came to intervene in the system, my recommendation to focus immediately upon shifting the cycle of negativity in the system seemed to be initially perceived and resisted as a “suspect prescription” through the doctor-patient model lens. Similar instances of resistance got in the way of any potential benefit that existed in the gap between our consulting ideologies. The gap also proved to be a critical point at which I became partially inducted into a version of the doctor-patient relationship with the sponsor, whereby I began to unconsciously view her as impaired and in need of my “expert” help.

Discovery and Dialogue Phase

I chose to use interviewing and surveying as my methods of qualitative and quantitative data gathering, in spite of Schein’s (1988) admonition that this is based on the assumption that I would be able to gather accurate diagnostic information. He said, “the organizational unit that is defined as *sick* may be reluctant to reveal the kind of information that the consultant would need to make an accurate diagnosis” (p. 8). The questionnaire I used for collecting data is provided at Appendix E.

While I did not experience overall a sense that the majority of the organization intentionally misrepresented information, I did hold as possible that the data was skewed by the climate of the organization as a whole (Schein, 1988).

In my opinion, a critical piece of data emerged from using Block’s (2000) three-tiered framework of data analysis. In an attempt to get at the third layer by asking

employees about what part they played in creating the problems at hand, I thought the question seemed to be avoided or altogether ignored. When attempting to get at the issue with a more appreciative eye, I asked what contributions they planned to make in order to improve the situation. What I heard in response were answers that had much more to do with others. In one case, an employee took absolutely no responsibility to do anything differently. Instead, she held her position that it was everybody else's job to do better in cooperating with her. This trend played heavily in my decision to design and deliver what I will call the "Mini Future Search" (Bunker & Alban, 1997) intervention.

In another critical development, the sponsor had made up her mind to hire a new manager and wanted to validate the decision with the group. She informed the candidate of her intention to hire him pending the formality of a group interview with key staff. She then asked the group to interview him and to provide her with their feedback. Thinking that their role was to approve or disapprove the candidate rather than validate a decision that had already been made, the group returned a negative report to the sponsor, who then became furious with them. I used the opportunity to call her attention to the lack of clarity in the process and to teach the sponsor about the different styles of decision-making. I further recommended to the sponsor that she be transparent with the group regarding owning her lack of clarity, as well as expressing her genuine need for their support in adding this manager to the organization. After some resistance, the sponsor agreed and called a meeting whereby she cleared up the confusion, owned her part in creating it, and asked for the group's support in her hiring of the new manager, which she ultimately received.

Feedback and Decision to Act Phase

The highlight of the data feedback meeting (see Appendix G for a copy of the meeting agenda) came when I delivered a short talk regarding the six decision-making styles associated with participatory management (Tannenbaum, as revised by Crosby, 2000).

I was able to contract with the group, in the moment, to coach them for the remainder of the meeting with regard to their use of different decision-making styles. On a number of occasions I stopped the group, each time calling their attention to the fact that a decision had been made. Following each pause, I would then ask the sponsor to decide which style she wished to use, and then to clearly articulate it and lead a decision-making process accordingly. The group was amazed by how often this happened, which significantly raised, in my experience, the overall energy and level of connection between the people in the room. They seemed to have fun with this new knowledge, and reported that they were able to see how unclear they had been about the process of decision-making in the past. Best of all, they were able to agree, with some coaching, by establishing a consensus, to begin to work on their own decision-making clarity by using the decision-making styles framework within their areas of responsibility.

As it turned out, the data feedback meeting was the only intervention I made with the management group separate from the whole system. As the results will indicate in chapter four of this paper, it was a successful intervention and supports an assertion of success regarding increasing the organization's readiness for change.

Engagement and Implementation Phase

Following the data feedback meeting, I began to run into clues that structural

conflict (Senge, 1990) was present in the system, not only in the sponsor, but also in other members of the team. Symptoms included loss of energy, questioning their own ability to finish the job at hand, unexpected obstacles, and people letting one another other down.

As Senge's (1990) preferred strategy for dealing with structural conflict is "telling the truth," this is where I ran headlong into the cultural norm of abdicating personal responsibility. As a result, I allowed myself to be pulled in and out of induction in the pattern I will name as "initiator speaks his or her truth/other deflects and blames". I failed to own my part in perpetuating the dance of resistance with the sponsor through my behavior, and instead chose to blame her for abdicating responsibility. It was a vicious cycle.

As an example, the situation became critical the day prior to what was supposed to be an action-planning meeting. I received what I experienced as a frantic, angry phone call from the sponsor. She told me that the level of anxiety had reached a point where she was considering whether or not to leave the system immediately rather than staying until June as had been contracted with the Board of Directors. The triggering event was a perceived "sick-out" by a key administrative employee.

Principal among the concerns raised by the sponsor were:

- "I don't feel confident I can effect the changes here."
- "I don't know if I want to try to figure it out anymore."
- "Nothing works."

Recognizing the symptoms of anxiety in the sponsor's speech, I sought to shift the discussion toward collecting information and taking action (O'Neill, 2000, p. 26) and

spent over an hour calmly listening and re-directing the sponsor to the question, “What do you want to create?” The sponsor and I arrived together at a short-term strategic vision she could hold as she encountered negativity and resistance in the system—that of leaving behind “a team that can support the administrative and program operations of the agency.”

Unfortunately, in spite of my diligence, I realize now that I was inducted at this point as I embarked on my own search for a “magic bullet” in a “heroic effort” (O’Neill, 2000) to put a rapid halt to the seemingly never-ending, negative systemic dance we were all doing together.

To that end, I researched large group interventions and found the Future Search Conference (Bunker & Alban, 1997) to be a good potential fit, and framed a condensed version of it around the sponsor’s desire to create a team that could support the administrative and program operations of the agency.

I went to the client system the next day, having prepared for many hours the night before, intervention in hand, ready to “stop the madness.” When the sponsor expressed a desire not to do the intervention, choosing instead to focus upon the “problem” employee in question and carry on with the scheduled action-planning meeting, I interpreted her resistance as a manifestation of the habitual (personal) variety (Taylor, 2002) as well as a typical type of resistance in the doctor-patient model (Schein, 1988). I pressed the issue relentlessly until the sponsor was visibly angered—nearly to the point of losing composure. To make matters worse, I did so in the presence of another manager. It was the low point of my involvement with the client system, and I believe destroyed whatever trust may have ever existed between the sponsor and me.

We proceeded directly with the scheduled action-planning meeting. I led with expressing my own sadness and fear that I was going to do no good for the organization, without going into detail about the difficult meeting with the sponsor that had taken place just moments prior. The management group encouraged me to take heart and expressed their optimism that lingered from the data feedback meeting. They thought we were doing good work and wanted to continue. Still inducted, I continued to focus the group on what I had identified as the dance of perpetual negativity and my recommended intervention to address it, rather than staying focused upon the project goals. We spent the rest of the meeting discussing the strategy behind the “Mini Future Search” I had designed, and the logistics of conducting it.

We conducted the “Mini Future Search” intervention in an all staff meeting the following week. The chances for success were significantly hampered by the fact that the sponsor was three quarters of an hour late to the meeting, and the employees were not aware that the meeting was going to be primarily centered upon conducting a facilitated group-process with me. I learned this was the case—as did the sponsor—halfway through the meeting when one employee stated, “If I would have known we were going to do this, I would have skipped this stupid meeting and stayed at work.” I handled the situation by calmly inquiring into the group as to whether anybody else felt that way, thus deepening the group’s level of disclosure. On the other end of the anxiety scale, the sponsor’s outrage at her managers was palpable, though kept under wraps until after the meeting, when it was unpacked on me in the parking lot.

Following the meeting, I listened to an hour-long tirade that included repeated criticisms of the group as a whole, and in particular, what I interpreted as fairly vicious

attacks directed at one individual manager, the one the sponsor blamed for failing to communicate the intent of the meeting. The verbal assault on this individual included characterizing his behavior as “typically male” and extended into opinions about racism and homophobia. I asked if I had shown up as “typically male” in my role as consultant, but failed to even hear her answer, as I lost hope that the work we had done would have any lasting impact on the client system. In that moment, I judged the entire project and my consulting efforts to be failures. All I could do was feebly attempt to ground myself as she vented her frustration, listen to her and calmly respond with, “I hear you’re angry. It sounds like you need to have a heart to heart conversation with so-and-so.” All the while, I was consumed with a sick feeling in the pit of my stomach and a penetrating sadness.

I think this incident killed the project for me. Though I had been attempting to make progress toward extending my role, I chose in that parking lot to move toward termination instead—at least until the new Executive Director was hired.

Extension, Recycle or Termination Phase

During the whole-system intervention, I committed to the group that I would summarize and share data with them within 24 hours so they could begin to work with what was in my estimation the rich material we generated together. I compiled their input as promised between curriculum breaks and meals at a LIOS module, and sent it to the sponsor via e-mail, along with a request for confirmation of receipt. Five days passed, along with numerous follow-up attempts, and I heard nothing from the sponsor to indicate that the information had been received, least of all distributed—which had been a pattern of behavior throughout the project. Finally, I got a response that the data had been

passed on to two staff members for distribution, but that distribution had not yet been confirmed—accompanied by the comment, “I’m not into babysitting.” Again, I felt frustrated and hopeless that the work would have any sustainable impact on the client system, and felt angry with the sponsor.

In subsequent correspondence with the sponsor, my fears proved true. I learned that, according to the sponsor, there was a general loss of interest in the work throughout the system and that the managers had opted not to continue meeting in conversation regularly as a group, as I had suggested they do throughout the transition in leadership.

I told my adjunct faculty of the sponsor’s lack of interest and rapidly approaching exit from the system and stated that I had enough data to write the thesis. She asked if I felt I could close, and I said that I wanted to.

In hindsight, I regret not closing with the whole system in person as I reinforced a pattern of incomplete endings. But I do not doubt that it was the right time to end the project for both the sponsor and me.

The sponsor and I closed with a short meeting re-capping the results of the project against the goals we agreed upon at its outset. The sponsor also provided some feedback regarding what she called “ineffective facilitation” which was re-iterated in more detail in the somewhat critical written evaluation I received from her several weeks later. It was the first written feedback I would receive from the sponsor, in spite of numerous attempts at soliciting written feedback during the course of the project.

I am still engaged in some amount of introspection regarding the part I played in being blindsided by this critical feedback, but am also somewhat resolved to making some sense of it in terms of Senge’s (1990) symptoms of ongoing structural conflict.

Specifically, the more my work in the system threatened to help the sponsor and the client system to move toward their goals, the more they found ways to feel “let down” by me, exhibit signs they were losing energy, question the vision, or whether they were even able to finish the job at all.

Conclusion

Though I did not help to bring about sustainable results, and in the heat of a critical incident was severely inducted into the client system, I learned a great deal about myself and the business of practicing applied behavioral science during the course of my engagement. In the next chapter, I will demonstrate through measurable results why I now portray the project as a success, overall.

CHAPTER 4

Results

In this chapter, I compare actual results to the goals and measurement standards the sponsor and I agreed upon in our contracting process. I begin by discussing the principal project goal, describing how the system experienced at least a temporary, statistically significant increase in its readiness for change. I then discuss the results of each of the three leadership goals the sponsor and I established in support of the principal project goal.

The Principal Project Goal

For the purpose of this discussion, and in service of confidentiality, I will refer to the products/services provided by the client system as “promises made” and “promises kept”.

The sponsor and I identified that the long-term goal for the organization was to increase its ability to better serve its customers, as defined in two ways:

1. Direct Customers: A more effective agency would increase financial viability and be able to *make* and *keep* more promises, more rapidly.
2. Internal Customers—Volunteers: A more effective agency would be able to effectively serve their volunteer base by providing excellent social service experiences for people in the local community.

Given the time horizon for this project, and the scope of the business goals of the organization, the sponsor and I decided we would not attempt to measure whether we accomplished them fully, but rather if we took some important steps toward them. As the organization was in the midst of a major leadership transition, we decided that the best

way to do that was to attempt to serve the system by increasing its overall readiness for more change.

Based on Gleicher's change formula (Beckhard & Harris, 1987, cited by Bunker & Alban, 1997), I created a formula and companion data collection instrument in order to measure incremental increases or decreases in readiness for change. If $C = \text{readiness for change}$; $A = \text{desirability of future state}$; $B = \text{dissatisfaction with current state}$; $D = \text{perceived pain in completing change}$; $E = \text{perceived cost of not changing}$; then the following formula results: $C = A + B + D > E$.

After finishing the experiment, I learned that the formula would have been more elegantly designed as follows: $C = A + B + E > D$. This adjusted design would have avoided the necessity to invert the Likert scale in the data collection instrument as it currently appears in Appendix A for both variables D and E. However, the results would not have been materially different in terms of statistical significance.

Results

A summary of the results and statistical analysis appears in Tables 4.1 – 4.6 of Appendix H. I believe it is important to understand my reasoning for studying the statistical mode as opposed to other descriptive statistical calculations. Given that the sample sizes were small, and change could occur that was virtually undetectable in terms of the mean or median, the score that appeared most often, the mode, could and frequently did shed light on what amounted to a shift in the prevailing opinion in the group.

Management group.

Prior to and following the data feedback meeting, I distributed the measurement

tool at Appendix A to determine changes in each variable in the formula, the overall change in the formula, as well as an additional variable—*level of hope*.

The overall spread changed from a 9.83 to a 10.83 indicating a net increase in readiness for change of +1. That is, variables (A), (B) and (E) increased, and variable (D) decreased by a net +1.

The mode of *desirability of future state* (A) increased from a 4 to a 5 (4 = I somewhat agree with and want the desired state. 5 = I strongly agree with and want the desired future state).

The mode of *perceived pain* (D) increased from a 4 to a 5. (4 = This won't be that bad, I'll see it through; 5 = The short term pain disappears in light of the long-term gain.)

The mode of *perceived cost of not changing* (E) decreased from a 2 to a 1. (2 = If we don't change, our agency will be hurt in many ways, but will survive; 1 = If we don't change, our agency will not survive.)

In addition, *total hope* increased from 25 to 26. The range in hope scores was 4 to 5. One person out of six increased their hope score from a 4 to a 5. (4 = I am quite hopeful things are going to continue to get better and am committed to doing whatever I can to help. 5 = I am very optimistic about the present and future of this organization and want to do whatever it takes to contribute.)

I examined the data using the Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed ranks test, as shown in Table 4.4 of Appendix H, and found the change to be statistically significant.

Non-management group.

I gave the non-management group employees the same instrument prior to the whole-system intervention in order to create a basis for comparison of the two sub-groups

in the system (see Table 4.5 and 4.6 of Appendix H).

I found that managers had a much greater sense of *desirability of future state* (A) than non-managers, suggesting that the future state (intent of changes) had not been communicated effectively to all levels of the organization.

I found managers also had a much higher *state of dissatisfaction with the current state* (B), which is directly related to the "silo effect" and to a lack of awareness about the future vision.

Managers also had a lower *perceived pain in completing the change* (D) than did the non-managers, which indicated a higher sense of the benefits of changing in comparison with the discomfort associated with the process.

Finally, I found managers to possess a much higher sense of *perceived cost of not changing* (E) than did non-managers, indicating that the managers had yet to instill a sense of urgency in their teams.

Interpretation of Results

I believe the act of collecting and feeding back selected data from the system, in the manner in which the sponsor and I did it, resulted in an increase in a sub-group's readiness for change. Unfortunately, the information, and hence the benefits received by the managers in the data feedback meeting had yet to make its way through the system. Had there been sufficient time to do so, continued work in the areas of decision-making clarity, group development and communication skills throughout the system may have anchored the change in the organization perhaps long enough for a new leader to join the system and assume the role of sustaining sponsor (Conner, 1992).

Leadership Goal One: To clarify roles and goals

According to the sponsor's own organizational assessment, there was no easy answer to the question, "Who is in charge of what around here?"

Measurement Standards

The sponsor and management group would complete written role descriptions by the end of the project, as well as a clearly articulated set of goals for the organization. Ideally, this work would be closely aligned with the organization's strategic plan as published by the Board of Directors.

Results

According to the sponsor, the goal was accomplished to a high degree. Every position had a new job description. The Board of Directors was focused less on operational issues and more on the business of governance, and had published and distributed a set of core values to the organization.

Interpretation of Results

Though I agreed with the sponsor and felt satisfied with the accomplishment of this goal in a literal sense, I'm not sure we made much progress with regard to the issues relating to the essence of roles in different levels of the organization. Had I extended my involvement in the client system, I would have sought to develop specific skills and behaviors within the management group through O'Neill's (2000) Live-Action Coaching model. I would also have concentrated effort on the performance evaluation process, encouraging the sponsor to tie standards for each position description directly to the organization's core values and strategic plan.

*Leadership Goal Two: To improve the sponsor's ability to understand her role
in the dynamics of the organization*

I intended to help the sponsor to begin to see the organization as a system, of which she was an integral part, rather than an organization she was “running.”

Measurement Standards

The sponsor would be able to recognize and self-correct body language incongruity. The sponsor would also be able to clearly articulate which of the six decision-making styles she intended to use and to do so consistently. Finally, the sponsor would be able to recognize and respond appropriately to the different kinds of resistance present in the system, and to see how she was contributing to it.

Results

Though I did not use a measurement tool for this goal, it is my opinion that the sponsor was unable to increase recognition and self-correction of body language incongruity due in part to what I experienced as an intense level of defensiveness, and a high level of anxiety that was present both in the sponsor and the system. In maintaining my personal authority under frequently difficult circumstances, I chose to maintain a differentiated, non-anxious presence in the relationship, which resulted in a perceived lack of connection at times, and an inability for me to engage this particularly touchy issue effectively in the moment. I take responsibility for failure to attain the results I had hoped for because I quit coaching the sponsor in this area.

In my opinion, the sponsor also failed to begin recognizing and responding to different kinds of resistance in the system. The sponsor's response to the data I presented regarding changes in the group's feelings and commitment to the group following the

whole system intervention (see Appendix I) was a nonplussed “I’m not surprised” followed by an assessment of the meeting as “ineffective.” This echoed in some ways the sponsor’s favored response to resistance, even when it represented potential progress, to either blame or shame the individual she painted as “in the wrong,” rather than seeking to discover and understand possible systemic implications and plan to intervene.

Based on our individual observations, the sponsor and I agreed that the goal to clearly articulate and consistently use the different types of decision-making styles was accomplished to a high degree, both in the sponsor’s direct experience and in the opinion of the management group.

Interpretation of Results

This goal was perhaps too ambitious, but I am pleased with the result. The part of the goal we did accomplish had a major impact on the morale and effectiveness of the management group, at least for a short period of time.

Leadership Goal Three: To improve processes within the organization

There were many administrative processes in need of refinement. The sponsor chose to focus upon an area that directly impacted the funding stream—the donation receiving and accounting process—as an indicator of the system’s capacity for cross-functional work.

Measurement Standards

Employees would accurately enter all gifts into the donor database within 48-hours of receipt, and would process all “VIP” thank-you letters within 24 hours of receipt. Employees would process all other thank-you letters within five working days. Accounting staff would receive all deposit records within 24 hours of initial processing,

and book all deposits by the end-of-month account reconciliation.

Results

The sponsor redesigned the process and planned to train incoming staff accordingly. The staff cut the processing time for thank-you letters from 30 days to 10. According to the sponsor, the accounting department was processing deposit records within 72 hours, as opposed to four to six weeks.

Interpretation of Results

Based on numerous conversations over the course of the project, my interpretation of progress in this area was that it came through coercion by the sponsor rather than improving group-process using a “bottom-up” or “living systems” approach. My assumption is that I entered and left the system as a collection of “silos.”

Conclusion

I think I helped the organization. However, I don't think that the benefits of the work were sustainable given the lack of committed sponsorship, and the degree to which I was inducted into and co-created unhealthy systemic patterns. In the following chapter, I will explore more in-depth the degree to which my personality influenced the outcomes of the project—for better, or for worse.

CHAPTER 5

Personal Impact

In this chapter, I acknowledge and explore the influence that my personality had on the outcomes of the project. I begin by discussing my own family of origin work and my level of personal authority. In addition, I describe how other aspects of my personality showed up in the project using the Enneagram as a framework for examination.

Historical Elements of Personality: family of origin and personal authority

Family of origin.

My main family of origin related work over the past two years has been with regard to self-differentiation, or in my case, a lack thereof. The awareness I now have of what was a fear-based/approval seeking relationship with my father has shed a great deal of light upon how I both use and perceive power in the world.

One aspect of that childlike relationship to power remains: my self-inflicted disappearance in anyone's presence who, in my perception, is using power to coerce or dominate others. The key questions for me in this regard have been:

- Can I be me in your presence, even if I fear you?
- Am I enough just the way I am in this moment?
- Can you care for me even if I'm not just like you? If I hurt your feelings?
- Am I going to be safe if the answer is no?
- Can I speak my truth to you if it isn't your truth too?

These issues arose for me during the course of the project, as I experienced the sponsor as a strong, powerful personality who sought to impose her way as the "right

way” upon the organization. However, I managed my reactivity in this respect appropriately, and did not fall into approval seeking patterns of behavior. One example of my success was how I was able to remain a non-anxious presence when the sponsor was expressing anger or frustration. I was almost always able to direct her back to the primary relationship in question, rather than attempting to fix it or joining her in her discomfort. When I was able to do this successfully, I was also able to avoid induction. When I failed to do so—the critical incident when I succumbed to the temptation of rescue—not only did I become inducted, I also destroyed the trust in my relationship with the sponsor.

At some level, this project was really about integration for me, and represented a critical step to leaving a dualistic view of the world forever behind me, and with it, my fear of those who would use power in a way that causes suffering. I think that is why the greatest source of reactivity for me was the sponsor’s continual insistence upon making others wrong for the problems that the organization was facing, while failing to attempt to own her part in the systemic dynamics. Writing this thesis has been an excellent opportunity for me to both make sense of that experience and deeply inquire into and own my part in the successes and failures of the project.

Personal authority.

As I have undertaken the work within my family of origin over the past two years, I have developed confidence in my self-worth and resilience. With that in mind, I’d like to examine how each aspect of Williamson’s (1991) “personal authority in the family system” (pp. 40-41) came into play during the project.

Ability to order and direct my own thoughts and opinions. I believe I did well with regard to this skill in the context of the project. I held to the integrity of my own

views while still holding space for the strongly expressed views of the sponsor and others in the client system. For example, when I encountered the vocally resistant member in the group during the whole system intervention, I was able to calmly inquire into the possibility that others may be feeling the same way rather than taking on her anger and frustration, or interpreting it as a personal attack. The one time I failed in this regard was the critical incident that had me pressing my agenda for an intervention strategy over the healthy resistance that the sponsor was displaying. I realize now more than ever how important this component of personal authority is, particularly in relation to the right use of power.

Choose to express regardless of social pressure. The best example in the context of the project was when I took what felt like a significant risk to use drum music and meditation as a part of the whole system intervention I designed. I took some amount of criticism from the sponsor for what was characterized in my feedback as an “ineffective” facilitation style. However, I also received some positive feedback from more than one source for my presence in the system as well as my style, including the use of the drum music. In fact, one manager who left the system during the project called me to inquire as to the possibility of my working in her new organization and gave me several personal referrals for additional potential organizational development projects with some prestigious organizations.

Make and respect one's judgments to the point of taking action based on them. I never wavered from what I thought was in alignment with who I am and what I thought was in service to the client system, no matter what the personal risk or level of resistance. I think this served the organization well in situations such as when I took the design risk

in the whole system intervention. But it also hindered me when I allowed attachment to my own judgment to override my objectivity and drive what I now know was unhealthy action, such as the critical incident prior to the whole system intervention that resulted in permanent damage to the relationship between the sponsor and me.

Take responsibility for consequences. I love the concept of personal responsibility. I loathe the victim's mentality, which ran deep in the culture of the client system. Thus, this aspect of personal authority, in its strength, also represented my Achilles heel in the project, and was a contributing source to most incidents when I let my reactivity even slightly influence my better judgment. For example, this strong facet of my personal authority was also the portal for induction that resulted in a marked shift from "process consultant" to "mythic hero" as the client system, in my judgment at the time, continued to be bogged down in a quagmire of negativity and finger pointing. I not only took responsibility for consequences, I took responsibility for the system as a whole! Needless to say, that was a fatal mistake.

Initiate/receive/decline intimacy and social connected-ness as well as establish and maintain clear boundaries at will. Though I was assessed by the sponsor as "not having my skin in the game," which resulted in a perceived lack of connection between us, I maintained my boundaries intentionally. I did what I thought I had to do in order to be as effective as possible given all of the complex conditions in the client system.

Experience and relate to all other persons without exception as peers. I still require work here as I did allow myself to become inducted into the "mythic hero" role as I described previously, which resulted in my seeing the sponsor and the organization as sick and in need.

Other Aspects of Personality: The Enneagram

According to Chou (2001), the Enneagram is one of the newest personality systems in use and emphasizes theory based upon psychological motivations. Its earliest origins are not completely clear, but the prevailing opinion is that the symbol may have originated in ancient Sufi traditions, while mostly 20th century teachers and writers developed the psychological understanding it embodies. The model describes nine basic personality types.

According to my own self-study and diagnosis, I am a Type Four. Baron & Wagele (1994) characterized Fours as having great sensitivity, warmth and perception. I relied heavily upon these positive traits, particularly in initially joining with the sponsor and in managing our coaching relationship, which resulted in what I sensed was a high degree of trust, that is until I violated and destroyed it late in the project. I also recall some very successful data collection interviews with the staff, whereby I was able to create a safe container for our conversations that enabled rapid joining and a high degree of authenticity. On one occasion, a staff member broke down in tears as she expressed her despair and personal disappointment at not being able to have more of a positive impact, not only in her work, but also with the customers of the client system. Finally, I let these traits shine through in my execution of the whole system intervention, when I incorporated meditation and drum music into its design. I sensed that the work would be difficult for the group and that they would be best served by beginning in a calm, grounded state of body and mind. Though I got feedback that suggested it didn't necessarily work for everyone, on the whole I think the design risk paid off in the way

that I intended. The container we created together was such that I observed new levels of disclosure among group members, and the data collected post-intervention suggested that the group as a whole had shifted its energy.

In addition to strengths, Baron & Wagele also described what's difficult about being a Four, many characteristics of which showed up in my project, including:

- *Experiencing dark moods of emptiness and despair.* I had to fight this at times in the project as the negativity in the organization frequently felt physically overwhelming to me. I doubted throughout the project that I was good enough, and feared that the work would not make a difference. At the end, I actually gave in to my despair and let that drive how I left the system.
- *Feelings of self-hatred and shame; believing I don't deserve to be loved.* The voice of doubt crept in often, as my client system seemed to make no improvements over the course of the project. Though I worked hard at keeping this negative self-talk in check, by the end, I had all but let it take over. I was particularly reactive in this way when I received what I perceived to be a negative evaluation from the sponsor. I was deeply hurt, and felt as though my fears were only being validated. I have since been able to make better sense of the whole story.
- *Feeling guilty when I disappoint people.* This was the first reaction I had when I read the sponsor's assessment of my work with the client system. It was only after I looked back at Senge's (1990) thinking regarding structural conflict that I could reframe the feedback and consider the source before swallowing it whole. This enabled me to find the grains of truth that were present for me, to

shed the illusion of guilt, and to realize the benefit of the sponsor's candor.

- *Feeling hurt or attacked when someone misunderstands me.* Again, this was alive for me as I received the sponsor's feedback. I thought I had been misunderstood in my attempts to help, and had thus been unappreciated for my effort and good will.
- *Expecting too much from life and myself.* When I began this project, I fully intended to transform the entire organization and the sponsor in the space afforded by 40 hours of client contact time. I now see how ridiculous that expectation was. Following data collection, and prior to the data feedback meeting, I had to consciously begin to dial back my unrealistic expectations in order to stay grounded in what was truly possible. I was then able to design a tool to measure incremental progress that would allow me to celebrate little victories, not only for myself, but also for the benefit of the client system.
- *Fearing being abandoned.* There were several times when the sponsor threatened to leave the system prior to completing her contractual commitment to it—which would have left me high and dry in this deadline-laden project. These were moments of sheer terror for me. In spite of how painful I experienced these threats to be, I managed my anxiety well and stayed focused on coaching the sponsor in the moment, without regard for the personal implications of the situation. Ironically, I became a party to this hostile dynamic as I essentially abandoned the system in the end by failing to close effectively.
- *Obsessing over resentments.* This has primarily come into play following my

exit from the client system. I have often worried about whether or not the sponsor painted me in as negative a light following my departure, as had been my experience when others had departed the system, and/or fallen from grace in her eyes. I still feel some degree of trepidation when I consider contacting the Board of Directors to inquire as to the potential for continuing the work I started with the new Executive Director.

Another trait of Type Fours is an accentuated sense of the negative. I see this is activated in me now as I compare the miniscule amount of space I devoted to assessing how my strengths impacted the project versus how I got in my own way.

Client Feedback

I designed a feedback tool (see Appendix J) that combined the helping skills work of Carkhuff (2001) and the cultural anthropological work of Arrien (1994). It included a Likert scale of one to five, with a score of one indicating excellent Carkhuff helping skills in concert with displaying the attributes of Arrien's four archetypes of the Warrior, the Healer, the Teacher and the Visionary. I gave the tool to the sponsor following the data feedback meeting and continually attempted to retrieve a completed copy until the end of the project. I had to give the sponsor a clean copy of the tool at our final meeting and ask again that she complete it, this time to evaluate the entire project.

As we discussed the project during that final meeting, the sponsor spent a majority of the conversation recounting one particularly negative event in the project (to which I have referred numerous times in this paper), as well as what in the sponsor's opinion had been an ineffective whole system intervention. I expressed my opinion that I didn't necessarily agree the whole system intervention had been ineffective and referred

to the data we collected during the meeting as evidence. Then I asked that the one isolated negative event not be given so much weight as to color the assessment of the entire project in service of my learning.

Data from final feedback.

The mean score was 2.7, which was slightly better than an “average” rating. The range of scores was two to four. The mode score was three, or an “average” rating. I received my lowest rating, four, with regard to disclosure, connection, and having my skin in the game. My highest score, two, came regarding the skills/attributes of concrete support, genuine caring, and immediacy. I was rated as “average” with regard to the skills of empathy, respect, confrontation and openness.

Finally, the client’s overall satisfaction rating with my service was three. Here is a sample of the narrative comments:

- Overall, I enjoyed you as a coach. Most of the time, your support was insightful and helpful.
- Overall, the staff did not experience you as an effective facilitator. One manager’s meeting was well received. Other than that, staff consistently provided feedback to me about your facilitation style, lack of connection to the group, choice of group-process—and separated that out from content or purpose of facilitation, which they were more open to.
- When I tried to give you feedback at our final meeting, you were more concerned about how this would affect your evaluation than learning from what I had to say. I felt like you tried to coach me on how to fill out the evaluation—a mistake.

I learned much from this feedback. Though it was somewhat critical, and I think a little unfair, as this was the first I had heard of any negative feedback from the system, I was grateful for the sponsor's candor. I only would have liked to have had the chance to respond to such feedback by adjusting my style and attempting to better meet the needs of the client during the project.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I revealed some of the more painful, but most valuable lessons from having completed this work. In the next chapter, I will summarize the project, with a final look at its results, some conclusions I was able to draw from them, and a synopsis of my learning.

CHAPTER 6

Summary and Conclusions

In this final chapter, I summarize the project, including a review of the client system, the project goals and principal theoretical framework, principal methodology, and a digest of the project results. Next, I draw some conclusions about what I learned during the project. Finally, I summarize some key lessons and bring the thesis to its conclusion.

Summary

Client System

The project involved an affiliate of a large international non-profit organization engaged in the transition from temporary to permanent leadership. The sponsor, who was also a consultant in the system as well as the temporary leader, and I identified that the long-term goal for the organization was to increase its ability to better serve both its direct customers and its internal customers (volunteers).

Principal Project Goal and Theoretical Framework

Given the time horizon for this project, and the large scope of the business goals of the organization, the sponsor and I decided we would not attempt to measure whether we accomplished them, but rather if the organization took some important steps toward them. As the organization was in the midst of a transition, the sponsor and I decided the best way to accomplish that was to increase its overall readiness for more change.

Based on Gleicher's change formula (Beckhard & Harris, 1987, cited by Bunker & Alban, 1997), I created a formula to measure incremental increases or decreases in readiness for change, as was previously discussed in detail.

In addition to the principal project goal of increasing the organization's readiness for change, we also specified some leadership goals that would support our effort, including: clarification of roles and goals; improvement of the sponsor's ability to understand her role in the dynamics of the organization; improvement of administrative processes within the organization.

Methodology

I conducted an Action Research (Block, 2000) project with the project goals in mind. Data collection consisted of individual interviews with a sample consisting of over half of the client system. I also designed a tool for measuring the organization's readiness for change, which served as a pre- and post- intervention test for the management group, as well as a basis for comparison of that sub-system to the rest of the organization. In addition, I acted as an executive coach to the sponsor, and conducted a whole system intervention, based on the Future Search Conference design (Bunker & Alban, 1997).

Summary of Results

By collecting and feeding back selected data from the system in the manner in which we did it, a sub-group of the system—the management group—increased its readiness for change. The result was found to be statistically significant using the Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed ranks test. Unfortunately, the information, and hence the benefits received by the group's leaders in the data feedback meeting, had yet to make its way through the organization, which was an excellent lesson in the value of effective initiating and cascading sponsorship (Conner, 1992).

According to the sponsor, the goal of increasing clarity with regard to roles and goals was accomplished to a high degree. Every position had a new job description. The

Board of Directors was focused less on operational issues and more on the business of governance, and had published and distributed a set of core values to the organization.

In my opinion, my attempts to coach the sponsor with regard to recognizing and responding to different kinds of resistance in the system—principally to train her to use Taylor’s (2002) framework as a step-by-step diagnostic tool—were unsuccessful. From start to finish, the sponsor’s default response to resistance, even when the resistance represented potential progress, was to either blame or shame the individual who was painted as “in the wrong,” rather than seeking to discover and understand a possible systemic pattern and plan to intervene accordingly.

In my opinion, my attempts to coach the sponsor with regard to self-correction of body language incongruity also were unsuccessful, due in large part to my conscious choice not to engage this issue when it presented itself in the moment (which I’ve already discussed).

The sponsor and I agreed that we accomplished to a high degree the goal to clearly articulate and consistently use the different types of decision-making styles.

According to the sponsor, the work-process goal was partially attained, but was in my opinion done so through coercive techniques rather than a sustainable improvement in group-process.

As was stated previously, overall, I think the goals were perhaps too ambitious. However, I am pleased with the effort that was put forth by the sponsor, the client system and myself toward attaining them. I think we all learned, and the progress we made had a positive impact on the management group’s readiness for more change. Whether that impact was sustainable is another story, to be at least partially addressed in the following

conclusions.

Conclusions

The learning legacy of this project is perhaps two-fold. First, I think it is difficult, if not impossible, to mix the Process Consultation method with the Doctor-Patient model in the same change effort without a single initiating sponsor. Had my project been sponsored by the Board of Directors, and the sponsor and I been working as teammates for one “boss,” we may have enjoyed different results and a different experience altogether.

Second, I think the notion of a temporary (as defined by an assignment of less than one year in duration) or interim “leader” is questionable. Without a significant amount of training in and awareness of the dynamics inherent in human systems, an interim “leader” is limited to technical work (Heifetz, 1994), and cannot hope to create sustainable change beyond the reach of his or her own force of will. Sufficient trust cannot be built in the organization by a leader who is limited to technical work, particularly in such a short time, nor is it possible to secure lasting buy-in from the organization’s members so rapidly, leaving some form of coercion as his or her only means for implementation.

In my opinion, the organization might have been better off employing a long-term internal manager as a temporary occupant of the Executive Director’s office under the close supervision of the Board of Directors. A consultant such as the sponsor could then have entered and exited the system quickly and quietly after delivering a “structural” (Schein, 1988) report, or a list of technical “fixes” (Heifetz, 1994) for the new, long-term leader to execute upon arrival.

I assert, in most circumstances, adaptive challenges (Heifetz, 1994) should only be undertaken by a leader who has a long-term stake in the success of the organization, not to mention a leader who has effectively earned the trust of the organization. In my opinion, neither condition was met in the client system during the project.

Summary of my Learning

Intervention Strategy

I learned that it is possible to make a positive difference (whether sustainable or not) in an organization, and to do so quite quickly—even if the organization is experiencing a great deal of distress. Framing interventions around the four variables in the change readiness formula I presented in this project is effective and easily measurable.

I also learned that the large group intervention technique can be effective for quickly shifting the energy of a group that is “stuck” in a negative pattern of behavior, thereby freeing it up to begin learning new ways of being and working together. I wish now that I could have continued to work with the group in that pursuit.

The Power of Resonant Leadership

I learned much about the impact of a leader’s negative emotions on a system. As a leader who has tended throughout my own career to be occasionally, negatively impacted by my own emotional state, in particular, by anger and frustration, I see now how quickly that builds into what Goleman et al. (2002) called “dissonance.” I was forever changed as a leader by this aspect of my experience in the project, and will seek to continue honing my level of Emotional Intelligence so I might one day lead people through the power of resonance rather than fear or coercion.

The Power of Induction

I learned a valuable first-hand lesson about the insidious power of induction into a system's negative patterns of behavior. In particular, I learned that my tendency when inducted is to place myself in the saddle of a great white horse in the role of the mythic "hero" (O'Neill, 2000).

Most importantly, I learned that the combination of succumbing to induction and climbing atop the white horse spells disaster for any change effort that I might be attempting to help bring to completion, not to mention unnecessary suffering for me, and potentially, my client.

Effective Assessment of Coaching Client

In hindsight, I would have found it useful to place the sponsor on Collins' (2001) spectrum of leadership skill levels prior to beginning to work in a coaching role with her. Through Collins' (2001) lens, I may have been able to see the sponsor more clearly as alternating between behaviors characteristic of Level 1 and Level 3, which may have enabled me to more quickly diagnose her simultaneous existence in the realms of both Top and Middle (Oshry, 1999). This critical knowledge may have enabled me to subsequently tailor both my interventions in the system and my expectations more appropriately in service of helping the sponsor to progress toward consistent Level 4 management competence. As it was, I was often frustrated as a coach, pulled between the reality of the situation and where I assumed and expected the sponsor, the client system and myself to be.

Non-profit Organizations

I was particularly intrigued by Dees' (2001) work with the Spectrum of Social

Enterprise, and gained a tremendous amount of appreciation for the complexity of effectively running a non-profit agency in a competitive marketplace. I was also at once fascinated and repelled by my learning about what I called the *dark side* of social service. That opened up a lot of room for questions in my own life—Where is that dark side alive in me? Where do I unconsciously keep myself in a “comfortable” dominant role, even when my intentions may otherwise be to extend love, generosity, and compassion?

Conclusion

Early in the project, I read what Dannemiller, et al. (2001) wrote about a situation typified by the same pattern of dissatisfaction being repeatedly expressed in a client system, when suddenly the energy just transformed. The moment was described in terms of a paradigm shift that created “one-brain, one-heart” (p. 316).

Such was the pinnacle I so longed to reach, but never even approached. I see now that my failure to co-create that magical shift had little or nothing to do with my level of technical expertise, intervention skills, or what my client did or didn't do. It was in many ways about my own attachment to the outcome itself. I was so emotionally invested in moving the group that I exposed myself unwittingly to the darkest shadows of my personality—shadows to which I ultimately succumbed and paid a heavy price. Having replaced what I now know to have been some amount of hubris with a more humble brand of competence and clearer vision, I now embark confidently on a lifelong journey to bring greater health to the systems we create.

As I conclude the project, I am aware of how much love and gratitude I feel toward my faculty and peers for so generously sharing the gift of their collective wisdom over the past two years, and in particular during the course of this project.

Finally, I feel profoundly grateful to the sponsor and the members of the client system for opening themselves to me in service of my learning and their increased health and effectiveness. I come away from this experience hoping that they each benefited in some small way from having known me, as I certainly did from knowing each of them.

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APPENDIX A

Organizational Readiness for Change Measurement Tool

Name: _____

(note: will be kept confidential—used only for matching data for use in Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed ranks statistical test.)

Please circle the one answer for each of the following 5 categories which most closely resembles your thoughts and feelings about (the Client System).

I. Desirability of Future State (Future State is defined as your understanding of where the agency is being led and what that will be like for you and for your clients.)

1 = I strongly disagree with and don't want the desired future state.

2 = I moderately disagree with the desired future state.

3 = I don't care about or am not clear about the desired future state.

4 = I somewhat agree with and want the desired future state.

5 = I strongly agree with and want the desired future state.

II. Dissatisfaction of Current State (Current State is defined as your experience of the agency today as an employer and as a service provider to clients and donors.)

1 = I am extremely satisfied with the current state of the agency.

2 = I am somewhat satisfied with the current state of the agency.

3 = I don't have an opinion about the current state of the agency.

4 = I am somewhat dissatisfied with the current state of the agency.

5 = I am highly dissatisfied with the current state of the agency.

III. Perceived Pain in Completing the Change Process (Perceived Pain is defined as how much discomfort you think you and your colleagues will suffer in this process of

change.)

1 = This will be unbearably painful and I may not stick around.

2 = This will be very painful, but I'll try to see it through.

3 = This will be quite painful, but I'll see it through.

4 = This won't be that bad. I'll see it through.

5 = The short term pain disappears in light of the long-term gain.

IV. Perceived Cost of Not Changing (Perceived Cost is defined as your understanding of the consequences of leaving things just as they are today in the agency.)

1 = If we don't change, our agency will not survive.

2 = If we don't change, our agency will be hurt in many ways, but will survive.

3 = If we don't change, nothing much will happen.

4 = If we don't change, things will actually get better on their own, slowly.

5 = It would be better if we just stayed as we are.

V. Level of Hope (Hope is defined as optimism for a better future for this agency, and my desire to be a part of creating it, given what I know now. *Note: temporary or contract employees, answer the question as if you were a full-time employee of the agency without a set departure date.*)

1 = I am not at all hopeful this agency can or will get better, and have little desire to keep this up any longer.

2 = I have very little hope this agency can or will get better, but will see if I can help anyway.

3 = I have some hope things will get better, and will do my best to be a part of it.

4 = I am quite hopeful things are going to continue to get better and am

committed to doing whatever I can to help.

5 = I am very optimistic about the present and future of this organization and very much want to do whatever it takes to contribute.

APPENDIX B

Spectrum of Social Enterprise

		←—————→		
		Purely Philanthropic	Methods, Motives & Goals	Purely Commercial
		Appeal to goodwill.	Mixed motives.	Appeal to self-interest.
		Mission driven.	Mission and market driven.	Market driven.
		Social value.	Social and economic value.	Economic value.
<u>Key Stakeholders</u>				
	Beneficiaries	Pay nothing.	Subsidized rates, or mix of full payers and those who pay nothing.	Market-rate pricing.
	Capital	Donations and grants.	Below-market capital, or mix of donations and market-rate capital.	Market-rate capital.
	Workforces	Volunteers.	Below-market wages, or mix of volunteers and fully paid staff.	Market-rate compensation.
	Suppliers	Make in-kind donations.	Special discounts, or mix of in-kind and full-price donations.	Market-rate prices.

Note: Adapted from Dees, J. G. (1998, January-February). *Enterprising Non-Profits*. *Harvard Business Review*, Reprint 98105, 5-15.

APPENDIX C

Contract for Action Research Project

Introduction:

This contract outlines the agreement between Sean Hatt (Student Consultant), and XXXXX (Sponsor), interim Executive Director at XXXXX (Client System) for consulting services. It is understood that the Student Consultant will use all data collected and interventions conducted in order to write a Thesis for the purpose of completing a Master of Applied Behavioral Science Degree at The Leadership Institute of Seattle (LIOS) at Bastyr University (BU).

The Action Research model will be used as a framework for the Student Consultant's involvement with the Client System. The Action Research Model includes the following steps:

1. Contracting
2. Development of Data Collection Strategy
3. Alignment of Data Collection Strategy with Sponsor/Client System
4. Data Collection
5. Review and Organization of Data
6. Design Data Feedback Session
7. Alignment of Data Feedback Session Design with Sponsor/Client System
8. Data feedback meeting with Client System
9. Intervention/Action Planning
10. Post-Intervention Evaluation of Project
11. Follow up

The goals of the Action Research Project as identified by the Sponsor and the Student Consultant include:

The principal focus for this project is upon readying the organization for change. I plan to use the following formula to gauge current and future readiness for change:

Where:

C is readiness for change.

A is Desirability of Future State

B is Dissatisfaction with Current State

D is Perceived Pain in Completing Change

E is Perceived Cost of not Changing

Therefore:

$$C=A+B+D>E$$

Leadership Goals in service of improving organizational readiness for change:

Goal: To clarify roles and goals.

According to the sponsor's own organizational assessment, currently there is no easy answer to the question, "Who is in charge of what around here?"

Measurement Standards:

The sponsor and her management group will complete written role descriptions by the end of the project. Also, a clearly articulated set of goals for the organization will be published by the management group and disseminated to the organization as a whole—and will be in alignment with the organization's strategic plan as published by the Board of Directors.

Goal: To improve sponsor's ability to understand her role in the dynamics of the organization.

Measurement Standards:

Sponsor will be able to:

- recognize and self-correct body language incongruence;
- clearly articulate which decision-making style is intended and to use it consistently;
- recognize and respond appropriately to the different kinds of resistance present in a system that is experiencing change.

Goal: To improve processes within the organization.

Measurement Standards:

All gifts will be entered accurately into the donor database within 48-hours of receipt. All VIP thank-yous will be processed within 24 hours of receipt. All other thank-yous will be processed within 5 working days of receipt. All deposit records will be processed and sent to accounting within 24 hours of receipt, and accounting department will book all deposits not later than end-of-month close.

The goals of the Student Consultant include:

- To utilize the client-responsibility model to assist the Sponsor to achieve her goals as outlined in this contract.
- To create and maintain a healthy relationship with the Sponsor and the Client System by showing up and choosing to be present in every interaction with the Client System, listening for what has heart and meaning, speaking my truth without blame or judgment, and remaining open to outcome.

- To create an environment for the Sponsor, the Client System and the Student Consultant that results in significant learning for all.
- To successfully complete the Master's Thesis Field Project within established timelines.

Requirements of the Sponsor:

- Access to key staff as deemed appropriate and necessary by Student Consultant in service of data collection strategy mutually agreed upon.
- Adequate time to conduct both collaborative meetings and coaching sessions as scheduled in advance between Sponsor and Student Consultant.
- 24 hour notice for changing appointment times.
- Returned phone calls and emails within one business day.
- Openness to receiving coaching, giving and receiving feedback and collaboration.

Requirements of the Student Consultant:

- Adequate time to conduct collaborative meetings, coaching sessions and other work within Client System as scheduled in advance between Sponsor and Student Consultant.
- Openness to giving and receiving feedback and collaboration.
- Returned phone calls and emails within one business day.
- 24 hour notice for changing appointment times.
- Confidentiality as agreed upon in advance by the Sponsor and Student Consultant.

Coaching Agreement Specifics:

The Sponsor has requested executive coaching services and has stated her openness to and desire for candid feedback, in the moment, from the Student Consultant—even in the context of larger group meetings, as appropriate.

Milestones:

Dec - Jan: Entry and Contracting

Jan - Feb: Data collection in client system

Mar – Apr: Data compilation/Feedback Design/Data feedback meeting/Action planning/Set final project goals, measurement standards

Mar – Apr: Design and delivery of planned intervention(s)

Apr – May: Conduct post intervention assessment(s)/Evaluate results/Close.

Agreed this ____ day of _____, 2002.

original signed

Sean Hatt – Student Consultant

original signed

XXXXX—Sponsor

APPENDIX D

Whole System Intervention Outline

References: Four Fold Way (Arrien) and Large Group Interventions (Bunker and Alban)—Future Search framework and the Participatory Process.

Need meditative music and CD player.

On flip chart:

Sponsor's Goal: I want to create a team that can support the Executive and Program Operations of XXXXX.

On white board:

- ° Sponsor Goal
- ° Why are we all here today?

“Mission statement of founder of Parent Organization.”

On flip chart taped to the wall:

Ground Rules: (5 minutes)

1. Be present. That means sitting here with body, mind and spirit all committed to participate fully for the next 2 hours.
2. Listen. You may be asked to paraphrase so listen carefully.
3. Speak your truth without blame or judgment.
4. Be open to the POSSIBILITIES.
5. Map of the session (on another flip chart taped to the wall):
6. Management Shares Relevant Information/Situation.
 - A. History: From (Executive's) perspective, experience... (5 minute limit)
 - B. Present/Current Trends: From (Executive's) perspective, experience... (5

- minute limit)
7. Break in place for quiet reflection: “Prouds” and “Sorrlys.” What am I most proud about and most sorry about with regard to my part in creating a team that can support the Executive and Program Operations of XXXXX? (5 minutes with music)
 8. Management asks for input to facilitate goal attainment. Capture on Flip Chart with Names...
 - A. Prouds and Sorrlys: Starting with (Executive). (15 minutes)

Let’s check in with people? One at a time...Begin the phrases with I feel...Everyone checks in...(15 minutes)
 9. Quiet reflection: I promise to do one thing that I have not been doing, starting today, over the next 2 months to help... (5 minutes with music)
 10. Focus on the Future (I promise to do one thing that I have not been doing, starting today, over the next 2 months to help.) (15 minutes)
 11. Create multi-level dialogue with whole team to explore common futures: What do we want to create together? How are we doing? How do you feel about what was just shared here? (50 to 55 minutes)
 12. Wrap up—feedback (see attached form)
- Note: Attempt to get Commitment from leadership to follow up with weekly whole staff meetings just like this for the duration of the time (Executive) is here to check in re: What do we want to create here? How are we doing? What’s up for people? What do we need to do better?

APPENDIX E

Data Collection Questionnaires

Demographic Information:

Name (confidentiality to be maintained)

Sex

Age

Ethnicity

Job Title

Position Type (Volunteer or Permanent/Mgmt Team or Not)

Length of Service

Interview Questions:

- What can you tell me about your role in the organization? How do you contribute to the ability of XXXXX to get the job done? What is expected of you?
- What can you tell me about the goals of XXXXX? About your particular area?
- Tell me a story about your best day at XXXXX. What do you think made it that way? What did you do to contribute to it? How often is that present day-to-day?
- Tell me about your worst day at XXXXX. What do you think made it that way? What did you do to contribute to it? How often is that present day-to-day?

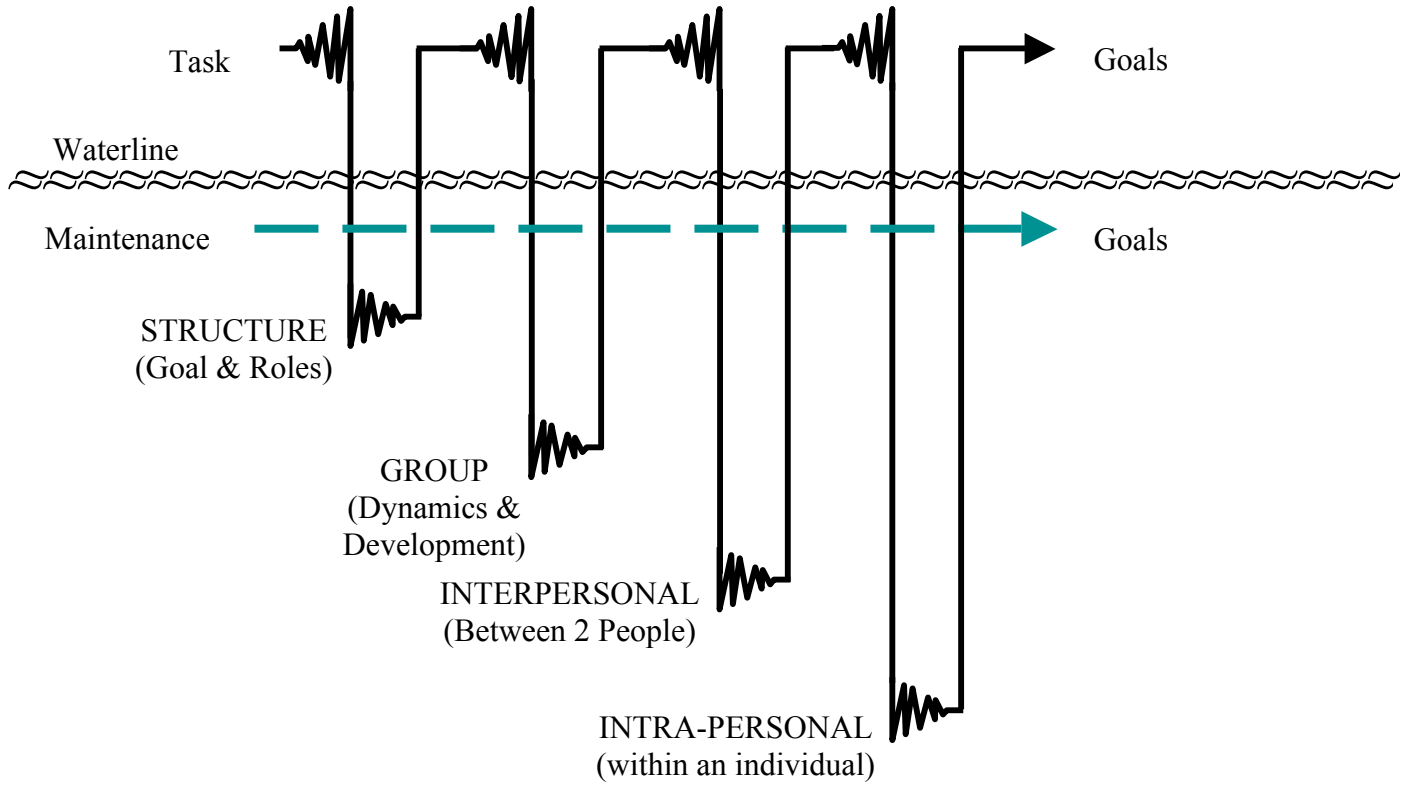
- What is your understanding of the changes that are taking place here? How have they impacted you?
- What do you think will happen if things don't change?
- Is there anything else you think I should know?

Managers Only Questionnaire

1. What do you think about XXXXX's leadership and the changes that are taking place here?
2. If you could rate XXXXX as a leader from 1 to 5 in the following categories, how would you rate her?
3. Clarity of expectations of you
4. Clarity of purpose
5. Clarity of communication
6. Clarity of decisions
7. Give me 5 descriptive words (adjectives) that describe your current experience at work.
8. Why is it like that?
9. How does your team function? What are its strengths and challenges?
10. What does your team need to do differently in order to make the changes?
11. What contribution are you going to make to the effort?

APPENDIX F

Waterline Model



Note: Adapted from Harrison, R. (1979). The waterline model: A diagnostic intervention model for managing/leading groups. Material from the Leadership Institute of Seattle.

APPENDIX G

Outline for Data feedback meeting

1. Pre-Test: Organization's Readiness for Change
2. Summary of Data Gathering
 - Strategy (interviews and leadership survey)
 - Impact on Me (report out of internal experience)
3. Key Data: What the system said:
 - Amplification of the positive—the best of what's alive here
 - Challenges, in our own words (training re: decision-making styles)
4. What I observed—My sense of what the system said
 - Waterline Model discussion around roles and goals (Waterline Slide)
 - A pattern of a lack of emphasis on relationships and interdependence (slide of org structure)
 - One way that shows up in this system (diagram re: triangles)
 - A lack of personal responsibility (slide of Senge's possible responses to vision)
 - Group Development is hampered by turnover. (slide of group development process)
5. Post Test: Organization's Readiness for Change
6. Discussion about results of survey.
7. Action planning based on results of survey.

APPENDIX H
Statistical Analysis

Table 4.1

*Pre- and Post- Data Feedback Meeting Survey Comparison of Readiness for Change**Management Group Only*

Before Intervention	Resp. 1	Resp. 2	Resp. 3	Resp. 4	Resp. 5	Resp. 6	Average
Des. of Future (A)	4	2	4	5	3	5	3.83
Current Dissat. (B)	4	5	2	5	5	2	3.83
Perceived Pain (D)	4	3	4	5	2	5	3.83
Perceived Cost (E)	2	1	2	1	2	2	1.67
Spread for Each	10	9	8	14	8	10	9.83
Hope	4	4	4	5	4	4	4.17
After Intervention	Resp. 1	Resp. 2	Resp. 3	Resp. 4	Resp. 5	Resp. 6	Average
Des. of Future (A)	5	2	4	5	4	5	4.17
Current Dissat. (B)	4	5	2	5	5	2	3.83
Perceived Pain (D)	5	3	4	5	2	5	4.00
Perceived Cost (E)	1	1	2	1	1	1	1.17
Spread for Each	13	9	8	14	10	11	10.83
Hope	4	4	5	5	4	4	4.33

Table 4.2

Summary Descriptive Statistics for Management Group Only

Change in averages (A)	0.3
Change in averages (B)	0.0
Change in averages (D)	0.2
Change in averages (E)	-0.5
Average Spread Before	9.83
Average Spread After	10.83
Change in Spread	1
Average Hope Before	4.17
Average Hope After	4.33
Change in Avg. Hope	0.17
Total Hope Before	25
Total Hope After	26

Table 4.3

Summary Descriptive Statistics for Management Group Only

Descriptive Statistics	A	B	D	E
Range Before	2 to 5	2 to 5	2 to 5	1 to 2
Mode Before	4	5	4	2
Mean Before	3.83	3.83	3.83	1.67
Range After	2 to 5	2 to 5	2 to 5	1 to 2
Mode After	5	5	5	1
Mean After	4.17	3.83	4.00	1.17

Table 4.4

Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed Ranks Test of Significance for Management Group

Matched Pair ID	Initial Spread	Final Spread	Sign	Change (abs. value)	Neg. Ranks	Positive Ranks
1	10	13	+	3		6
2	9	9	0	0		
3	8	8	0	0		
4	14	14	0	0		
5	8	10	+	2		5
6	10	11	+	1		4
Total					0	15

Ranks	Abs. Value
1	0
2	0
3	0
4	1
5	2
6	3

Null hypothesis: The pre- and post-intervention scores are not significantly different.

Conclusion: since 0 is less than the value for $n=6$ at a level of significance of 0.10 for a two-tail test (Swanson, 2000, p.93), then the null hypothesis may be rejected. The difference is in fact significant.

Table 4.5

*Comparison of Management Group Post-Data Feedback Meeting and Non-Managers**Pre-Whole System Intervention*

Non-Managers	Resp. 1	Resp. 2	Resp. 3	Resp. 4	Resp. 5	Resp. 6	Avg.
Des. of Future (A)	2	3	2	3	4		2.8
Current Dissat. (B)	2	3	4	2	2		2.6
Perceived Pain (D)	2	4	3	5	4		3.6
Perceived Cost (E)	2	3	1	3	3		2.4
Spread for Each	4	7	8	7	7		6.6
Hope	3	4	3	4	4		3.6

Management Group	Resp. 1	Resp. 2	Resp. 3	Resp. 4	Resp. 5	Resp. 6	Avg.
Des. of Future (A)	5	2	4	5	4	5	4.2
Current Dissat. (B)	4	5	2	5	5	2	3.8
Perceived Pain (D)	5	3	4	5	2	5	4.0
Perceived Cost (E)	1	1	2	1	1	1	1.2
Spread for Each	13	9	8	14	10	11	10.8
Hope	4	4	5	5	4	4	4.33

Table 4.6

Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Table 4.5—Comparison of Management Group Post-Data Feedback Meeting and Non-Managers Pre-Whole System Intervention

Change in Avg.	
(A)	1.4
(B)	1.2
(D)	0.4
(E)	-1.2

Formula: $C=A+B+D>=E$	
Avg. Spread Non-Mgr.	6.6
Avg. Spread Mgt. Group	10.83
Difference	4.23
Average Hope Non-Mgr.	3.6
Average Hope Mgt. Group	4.33
Difference	0.73

APPENDIX I

Post-Intervention Questionnaire

Part One: Circle the number on the range of possibilities that *best characterizes* your feelings.

1. Before this meeting, when I thought about work, I felt:

1	2	3	4	5
Mostly Anxious/Sad/ Mad/Frustrated	A little Anxious/Sad/ Mad/frustrated	Nothing in particular	Somewhat Happy/ Optimistic/ Energized	Happy/ Optimistic/ Energized

2. Now that the meeting is over, I feel:

1	2	3	4	5
Mostly Anxious/Sad/ Mad/Frustrated	A little Anxious/Sad/ Mad/frustrated	Nothing in particular	Somewhat Happy/ Optimistic/ Energized	Happy/ Optimistic/ Energized

3. Before this meeting, I would describe my level of commitment to this group as:

1	2	3	4	5
Very low	Low	Moderate	Pretty High	Very High

4. I would now describe my level of commitment to this group as:

1	2	3	4	5
Very low	Low	Moderate	Pretty high	Very High

Part Two: Please write a few words about the following:

My favorite part of this meeting was, and why:

My least favorite part of this meeting was, and why:

APPENDIX J

Practitioner Feedback Tool

Client/Sponsor:

Please rate me on the continuum from 1 to 5 in the following areas:

I experience you as empathetic and think you understand my experience. You listen to me.	1 2 3 4 5	I don't think you understand my feelings or my situation at all. You don't listen well.
I experience you as very respectful of me and of my organization. I don't experience blame or judgment from you.	1 2 3 4 5	I don't think you respect me or my organization at all. I feel judged by you.
I experience your support frequently in the form of concrete examples of how my behavior or the behavior of others might be either helpful or not.	1 2 3 4 5	I experience your support mostly in the form of abstractions that are difficult to tie to anything that is real for me in the moment.
I believe you are genuine in your care and concern for me and my organization	1 2 3 4 5	I don't believe you when you say you care about what happens here.
I experience you as fully present with me. Your assistance as immediate, in that you don't wait to bring things up that may help, especially if they are present in the moment.	1 2 3 4 5	I think you miss opportunities to intervene in the moment.
I think you are unafraid of challenging me appropriately, even if it means being confrontational. You speak your truth.	1 2 3 4 5	I think you hide hard feedback from me because you are afraid of being totally honest. I think you withhold the truth.
You are helpful to me by disclosing what is happening with you personally, both in the moment, and in terms of experiences you've had in the past. I feel connected to you.	1 2 3 4 5	I don't experience you as having your "skin in the game" at all. I'm not sure where you stand. I don't feel connected to you at all.
I think your thoughts, opinions and recommendations have been insightful and helpful, even when I don't agree with them or choose to take your advice. I feel I have the freedom to disagree with you.	1 2 3 4 5	I think that most of the time you are incorrect in your assessments and off-base on your recommended courses of action. I don't feel free to disagree with you.
I am satisfied with the help you have provided to me.	1 2 3 4 5	I am dissatisfied with the help you have provided to me.

Comments:

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I recently heard a story that I connected with deeply in this experience of finishing this significant chapter in my life. As I recall, it goes something like this:

A man is walking down a road, when he suddenly falls into a deep, dark hole. He spots a doctor walking by and says, "Hey, Doc! Can you help me? I've fallen into this hole and I can't get out." The doctor shouts back to him, "Are you hurt?" The man replies, "Well, come to think of it, I do feel a bit of pain from the fall." So the doctor writes a prescription and throws it down into the hole. "Call me in the morning if that doesn't work," he says as he walks away.

Next, the man spots a priest walking by the hole and says, "Hey, Padre! Can you help me? I've fallen into this hole and I can't get out." The priest asks, "Have you made your peace with the Lord, my son?" The man thinks for a moment and answers, "Well, Father, come to think of it, I haven't been to church in a long time." So the priest makes the sign-of-the-cross, writes down a prayer and throws it into the hole. "May the Lord be with you, my son," he says as he walks away.

Finally, a friend happens by the hole. The man exclaims, "Hey! Am I glad to see you! Can you help me? I've fallen into this hole and I can't get out." Without hesitation, the friend jumps down into the hole. "Why'd you do that?" the man asks, horrified, "Now we're both trapped down here!" The friend calmly replies, "Hey, I was once in a hole that looked an awful lot like this one. I can help you find your way out."

As I have engaged in answering the calling to become an agent of change in this world of ever-increasing complexity and danger, I have found the bottom of many a hole. I have also been blessed by the presence of many excellent friends—in particular my

colleagues and teachers—who have all jumped right in with me when it would have been much easier to drop learned prescriptions or heartfelt prayers from the distant safety of the ground above.

I must also thank my spiritual partner. The love of my life. My best friend. My wife, Jaimee Jo.

In giving me your support, your wisdom and your steadfast belief that I will always find my own way out of the darkness, you have all modeled for me the courage that it takes to do this work and do it well, and in the process, we have all been transformed. To all of you, I am eternally grateful.

Finally, I'd like to offer a prayer written by my teacher, Lama Surya Das.

May all beings everywhere be awakened, healed, fulfilled and free.

May there be peace in the world.

And may we all together complete the spiritual journey.

Emaho!

*Sean Patrick Hatt
Seattle, Washington
November 19th, 2002*