
GUIDED JOURNEY OF A CATERPILLAR

A TRANSITION FROM PERSONAL ORIENTATION TO ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



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&
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Guided Journey of a Caterpillar
A Transition from Personal Orientation to
Organizational Development

Volume 1

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FOREWORD

This book is a compilation of my personal learning journey with Bernd Schmid. The pages in the book are an illustration of my transition from working with a clinically oriented approach to developing an organizational orientation in my work with or organizations. It is also a text book on concepts and approaches. I have used examples of insights, concepts and approaches I adopted or developed, as I encountered them in my journey. (Systematical presentations of these concepts are to be published. <http://isb-i.eu/> and <http://www.systemischeprofessionalitaet.de/isbweb/content/view/30/78/>.)

This book is also about learning culture in organizations, how it can be understood and built up in a useful and meaningful way.

What is learning culture ?

In modern organizations, people have to face many complex challenges, and have to work hand in hand with others to accomplish challenging tasks. This means different roles at different times, acting in different frames of references, clarifying and acting on shared responsibilities with others. There is no chance of having a predefined regulations or processes for all that evolves in a day to day functioning. People have to find solutions and ways to cooperate with each other in a shared frame of reference. This frame of reference has to be built up by shared learning. Through dialoguing on many examples people learn from each other on how things can be handled together. Thus not only a set of conscious understandings and skills are built , but also a set of intuitive understanding, judging and acting. While finding solutions for specific cases, people also learn how to find solutions together, how to help each other to learn, to understand and to cooperate. ***All this together is called learning culture.***

This book is on attitudes, ideas, concepts and approaches around building up an internal learning culture with the help of organizational coaches. Organizational Coaching in general improves relationships between

human beings and the organizations they work for. Building a learning culture means to connect learning behaviors of individuals and groups of people with learning programs to gain adequate competence and finally reach desired performance.

This book is also about my journey from being an engineering graduate to a psychotherapist to a trainer and then to a consultant for organizational development. Through telling this story, I am sharing on how to build learning culture in organizations. Through this, I am sharing my experience, the lessons I learnt along the way, the guidance and support I received from Bernd Schmid, and the thought processes that evolved as I shaped my role as an organizational consultant. The story of my personal journey in learning to build a learning culture in organization is more like the meandering of a river rather than flowing like an artificial canal. In my journey I had to first unlearn certain skills before I could learn organizational developmental work. During the process of learning organization consultancy, my beliefs about training were shattered, and then I fitted the pieces again.

With an engineering degree in printing technology, I started my own printing unit as my dream was to be a successful entrepreneur. However, within a couple of years, my attention shifted to qualifying as a psychotherapist, as I realized my passion lay in learning more about myself and people. Soon, as a psychotherapist, the changes I was able to facilitate in individuals and families increased my confidence that I was on the right path. With this understanding I thought I had on human behavior, and combining it with my oratory skills I started conducting training programs for the employees of various organizations. I received good feedback on my workshops and the participants left my workshops energized and enthusiastic. I was I believed, a successful psychotherapist as well as a life coach.

My training covered a variety of topics like, leadership, team work, conflict management, stress management, change management etc. During my discussions with the organization, I usually convinced the HR department

to measure effectiveness of the training by

- Feel good factor of the training
- Use pre and post test to assess the understanding of the employees on the chosen topics before and after the training.

During the workshop, like many others in the field of training, I would use psychometric test to give feedback to employees on their strength and limitations. However, conducting a training program in organization and doing this postmortem analysis was a Himalayan task and it was time consuming for me as well as for the organizations.

Apart from the psychometric testing results I would also give participants methods on how they could improve their strength and break free from limitations using my psychological background, which was unique in my workshops. The employees would leave the workshop with a renewed energy and enthusiasm about themselves and their work.

As my workshops increased, I realized that the satisfaction I had as a therapist in seeing growth in my clients was missing in training. After my workshops, I always had a question in my mind about what happens to these employees when they get back to work? Are they able to sustain their behavioral changes? Is the environment at work conducive for the employees to hold on to the new attitudes till it becomes their second nature? I did not have an answer for this question.

When I work as a psychotherapist I am aware of what happens to the client during and after few sessions with me. They share positive changes they successfully made due to therapy and we have mutual appreciation for such progress. The clients also share the areas of life they want to improve and the difficulties they face in achieving their life goals. This sharing becomes a feedback and we consistently focus our sessions on attaining these set goals.

In training, I had no such feedback opportunity and my question remained

are these employees who go through the training and follow-ups such as post test able to make and sustain the changes in themselves and contribute to organizational growth? In my innermost mind, I knew the answer - sustaining the changes was always the challenge that people lost out on.

Surely there must be some other way to develop sustainable positive changes in employees and organizations.

Methods like psychometric tests and 360 degrees feedback seemed a roundabout way to make changes. My search were for methods and processes where I could directly experience and encounter organizational reality and introduce processes that could contribute to organizational development . Though my search continued, I was becoming successful as a corporate trainer. The paradox was, being a successful trainer lowered my confidence and belief that effective changes could be made through teaching and organizing other outdoor and team activities during the training workshops.

I read many books on organizational development, culture building, customer care, strategic management, leadership etc. I attended various training programs to find new methods of teaching in organization. My search became aggressive in my effort to know how to make sustained changes in employees and in organization. I felt that I was unable to get a grasp of the reality in the field where I claimed to be an expert; sometimes I was frustrated and close to tears.

And then in July 2011, I met Bernd Schmid in Oxford UK during a three day workshop he was conducting. Intuitively I knew this man Schmid has something for me to learn from. Frankly, I did not understand much of his teachings when I attended his workshop. But the man had a powerful impact on me.

In 2012, I contacted Schmid and made a learning agreement. The agreement was that I will share my organizational training experience with him and he would mentor me on developing my employee coaching

skills and organizational developmental work. Today, as I write this book in 2015, I can trace the long path I have travelled from where I was in 2012 to where I am today in organizational consultancy. I have gained the competence and identity as a learning specialist in the organizational development field. In this journey with Schmid, I have become alive as a human being and gained competence as an organizational consultant as well.

Today, at the end of my training workshops, I see direct and irreversible evidence of the change in employees which will contribute to sustained organizational growth in the chosen context. "Seems to be a tall claim? Isn't it?" You will see for yourself how this kind of organizational change is possible when you adapt to the methods shared in this book.

In writing this book, my intention is to give an edge not only for the professionals in the field of psychotherapy, counseling, coaching or training but also for CEOs, Managing directors, and managers of the organizations who want to sharpen their competence as an effective organizational change agents.

There are the learning conversations between Schmid and me that I have quoted in this book as it is. This is the key space where I was unlocked solutions towards my desire to be an organizational learning specialist. If I can use the image of metamorphosis of a caterpillar to a butterfly, this volume is the reliving of my journey from a caterpillar where I struggled to open my wings, to becoming a butterfly and spreading my wings.

I would like to start with a conversation between Schmid and Myself. In the beginning of my journey I said to Schmid, *"I am scared as I get into this unknown territory of organizational field and I need your support". Schmid replied, "I will stand like a spine with you and support you."*

This assurance was necessary for me to imbibe the attitude and skill in the field of organizational development. I quote this, as any mentee may require such support from the mentor. The belief of the mentor that the mentee can and will learn, makes a positive difference in such learning relationships.

I realize my journey as Geethan, from being a psychotherapist to developing as an organisational consultant is unique and may not match everyone's journey in this specific field. On the other hand, the concepts and models that I learnt from Bernd Schmid and how I evolved my understanding to suit organizational development work , can be used in any organizational context for sustained and consistent results.

I invite you as readers, to be part of this journey.

Let us begin our journey...

– CHAPTER 1 –
CHALLENGING OLD BELIEFS AND LEARNING

CHALLENGING OLD BELIEFS AND LEARNING

A disciple met a Zen guru and asked, "I already know something of Zen, I would like to learn more" the master replied, " you have to work for a year and pay me 1000 dollars". Another disciple asked, "I don't know anything about Zen and I want to learn Zen, how much should I pay and how long it will take for me to learn" The master replied, " a week's time and 25 dollars". The first disciple got furious and asked, "why are the time and charges for me higher, even though I know something of Zen already ? The master replied, "I have to put in twice the effort for you. First I have to prepare you to let go of what you have already learnt and then secondly I have to teach you Zen. This requires more time and more expenses are involved".

For me the learning agreement with Schmid began with challenging my old beliefs and methods, about training employees in organizations. In the process of mentoring I received from Schmid, I unlearned and re-learned till I got the transformation required for a organizational development work.

Unlearning old beliefs

This book is about how to build the competence in attuning to organizational reality. Organizational development work is a different field when compared to the field of psychotherapy or coaching\ counseling. Hence this field demands new competencies to understand the application of human change concepts and align it with organizational expectations. It is not only learning new competencies it is also important to let go of certain learnt perceptions applied in the field of training, psychotherapy or counseling in order to attune the organizational reality.

“What works there will work here”

When an individual meets a counselor and asks for a professional help to become assertive, the counselor/coach or psychotherapist may help in gaining assertiveness. Like me, many counselors/coaches, may believe that since they have helped the individuals gain assertiveness, they can teach being assertive in organizations too.

Normally, when the HR department finds the employees need assertiveness skills, they ask for a workshop on assertiveness, the counselor/coach translates the experience with an individual to a group. The employees go through the workshop, and participate in exercises meant to improve their assertiveness and leave the workshop with plans of being assertive. However, within a month or two the employees are back to their old ways unable to sustain the newly learnt skill. The reason for non-sustaining of change may be due to the prevailing culture or various factors influencing an organization. When the environment in the organization does not encourage assertiveness, then the investment made and time spent in assertiveness training does not yield the required result.

I realized, that practicing assertiveness in a workshop needs not translate to sustained change at the shop floor level. I learnt that development of assertiveness in an individual domain is different from developing assertive in employees in an organizational domain. This is the same for many other topics given as training in organization like leadership, team building, stress and conflict management etc.

Practicing assertiveness in a workshop needs not translate to sustained change at the shop floor level.

It's all about Human behavior

Quite often professionals in the field of psychotherapy, psychiatry, psychology, counseling and coaching believe that competence in working with individual human behavioral change can be applied in organizations also. This belief “humans are everywhere” and hence a professional facilitating individual human change can also facilitate changing

employees behavior in organizations is a myth.

Teaching “defense mechanisms” or theories like Transactional Analysis, NLP, CBT, or Gestalt in organizations does not result in behavior change in employees within the organizational context even though individual may benefit at a personal level. Asking employees to learn these models to apply in their organizational context can sometimes lead to confusion. An employee can never equal an expert in applying these models in handling a day-to-day situation in the organization. At the same time the professionals, who are behavioral experts can never equal the expertise the employees carry in their field. Teaching these psychological models to employees in workshops leads to a situation of parallel track between the psychological concepts and organizational reality rather than a cohesive approach to behavioral change and organizational development work. Personal level change may not always translate to professional or organizational change.

Personal level change may not always translate to professional or organizational change.

It is imperative for experts in the human behavioral change domain to learn the organizational context and employee’s reality, so that some of the behavioral concepts can be borrowed from psychological orientation and modified to suit the organizational requirements. An example of this is Role Theory or the Responsibility model, which Schmid extended from the Ego State model and Symbiosis concepts of Transactional Analysis.

The specialists in the field of human psychology need to first orient themselves to organizational reality rather than asking the employees to learn behavioral or psychological theories and orientations. Only then can change be facilitated within the organizational contexts.

Unlearning Old methods

Workshop culture Vs Organizational culture

Many trainers including myself have been spending lot of time in

conducting workshops in organizations. The participant's behavior in a workshop may be very different from their actions when they get into their organizational roles. Some organization plan outbound trainings to improve leadership and team building skills. However, the person who exhibits high leadership skills in the training program does not show the same leadership in his organizational role. Similarly active participation of the members in any workshop may not have direct correlation to their involvement towards work.

Schmid says that workshop training by itself is a culture and it may not have relevance to organizational culture. In a workshop, the employees may exhibit a behavior different from their behavior in the organization. This is similar to the Green house effect. Eric Berne the founder of Transactional analysis talked about green house effect on clients - the client showed positivity in one atmosphere and when the environment changes their behavior goes back to the old habits. This is like plants grown in green house. Once we change the atmosphere the plants die. This is applicable in training in organizations too.

The employees are happy and feel great during the workshop. The workshops are also predictable in that the program will start with an icebreaker and continue with some teaching, fun activities etc. Once the workshop is over then the employees get back to the same old habits. The enthusiasm shown in the workshop culture may not be relevant to an organizational context. In many organizations, workshops are conducted to obtain international certification and for satisfying audit which mandate certain quality practice certifications.

Context memory vs content memory

It is important to understand the difference between the content memory and the context memory. The HR department of a company organized a training program on customer relationship. A few weeks later, they found the employees were not applying what they had learnt in the training program at their shop floor.

What the participants learnt at the workshop was "content". At the shop floor, the context is different. We can't train and expect the participants to take the learning to the workspace. Instead, we have to bring the happenings in the workspace that employees would like to change to the training room. The trainer and the participants learn together how such events in the work context can be changed. Since the learning is directly pertaining to the work context whatever is learnt is stored in the memory along with the context of work. This memory has a better chance of being recalled at work rather than shifting and integrating memory from another (training) context. This also ensures the training is aligned to organizational reality and has direct correlation to real situation experienced in organizations.

We can't train and expect the participants to take the learning to the workspace. Instead, we have to bring the happenings in the workspace that employees would like to change to the training room.

Calling an expert who can handle the situation

Schmid has not been in favor of experts making interventions in organizations. To quote an example, a psychologist was called to resolve a conflict between two units in an organization. A training program for two unit employees was arranged. The therapist gave two color ribbons to differentiate the two units employees. Then he asked them to fight aggressively to stimulate conflicting situation. The psychologist processed the difference between two units, the hurt feeling etc. The training program ended and the employees went back to their old ways. Next time the same situation occurred, the participants had no skill to process the situation the way the expert had done on the training day. Whatever was processed in the training room did not change the existing reality for employees of either of the two units.

The process used in organizational context to learn about a situation should be learnable within the organizational context by the employees.

Such initiatives of calling an expert or a therapist is not a solution, as these resolutions can only be done by therapist or experts. The process used in organizational context to learn about a situation

should be learnable within the organizational context by the employees. The employees must be able to use the framework and not depend on the external consultant to make interventions and solve problems. In my experience, the psychological framework overpowers the organizational reality which may not be relevant to the organizational context. Hence the current reality prevailing in organization gets distorted.

Schmid often talks of some consultants who are fixed in their expertise "Organization has this problem because I am expert in this field." For example - a psychologist is invited to enhance productivity of sales employees. The psychologist may diagnose that the self esteem of the sales team is low and hence salesmen need to be motivated. If a communication expert has to view the same situation, he/she would have said, "There is lack in communication between the sales team hence, a communication program is necessary." The problem is identified in a particular angle not because it exists in an organization, but because the expert thinks so as he views it from his frame of reference. However this view of an expert can be partially true but whether it is relevant to an organizational context is an important criteria and question.

Hence it is always important for an expert to ask this question , "whose reality is relevant to this context?" In this way the consultant, the management and employees at various levels evolve the relevance of approach to the reality in organizations than going by an experts approach.

Looking for whose reality is relevant

Once, a trainer who taught NLP for developing selling skills shared his frustration, that the employees do not practice what they learnt on regular basis. They do not integrate NLP and selling skills.

Teaching these concepts creates a reality outside the sphere of work and workers. It is neither relevant to the organization nor to organizational growth.

In such contexts Schmid would always ask "whose reality is relevant while working

with organizational development work?" It is not about NLP, TA or psychoanalysis; it is about "whose reality is relevant in organizations". Asking employees to learn behavioral or psychological concepts is not an appropriate step in the direction of achieving organizational change. Teaching these concepts creates a reality outside the sphere of work and workers. It is neither relevant to the organization nor to organizational growth.

Yet oddly, organizations pay the behavioral experts to teach models and concepts that are outside the organizational contexts expecting these learnings to be applied back at work. It is like using a hockey stick to play football. An alternate option is asking the behavioral expert to orient changes within the organizational context and then facilitating change in employees for organizational growth. In this way the relevant reality is accounted.

Psychometric testing

Once an employee told me, "when I have to fill questionnaire for psychometric testing I exactly know what questions to tick to get into the right slot or category of people". He further added, "I know what kind of intervention will be made on me. I will take the feedback and tell it is useful and that is what the organization wants". Many psychometric testing's done and the feedback given to people has made very little impact on the overall development of organization.

These tests may give the individual an idea about himself.

The trainer felt proud about his training ability. He claimed to the world, "see how I have trained my monkeys, they will pluck the banana whenever I ring the bell." The monkeys in the cage were talking among each other, "see when we jump to take a banana the fellow outside the cage will ring the bell". The question is who is training whom? What are we measuring and who is measuring whom?

This story of a monkey trainer may suit this context. A trainer had few monkeys in cage. He trained the monkeys to pluck a banana when he rang a bell. The trainer felt proud about his training ability. He claimed to the

world, “see how I have trained my monkeys, they will pluck the banana whenever I ring the bell.” The monkeys in the cage were talking among each other, “see when we jump to take a banana the fellow outside the cage will ring the bell”. The question is who is training whom? What are we measuring and who is measuring whom?

What you measure gets done

An organization measured the performance of the team leaders. The measure for team leader was based on the measures set for the team members. The team leader’s performance had to be more than the team member’s individual performance. This was one of the criteria for eligibility to be a team leader. Hence the team leaders chose average performers in their team so that they can remain as team leaders. People are smart and trying to set measure for everything can lead to such disasters.

The 360-degree-feedback or internal customers rating is not successful in the long term because it requires an external intervention. These measure and feedback may have to be done every quarter. By the time the feedback reaches the employee the context has changed or his boss has changed.

Hence what people require is a spontaneous mechanism to narrate their feedback. Developing a narrative culture can be complimenting in making any change meaningful and will help employees share their experience as close to reality as possible.

I was becoming aware of the need to drop many of the accepted norms in the field of training, that though were unquestioned by many, did not fit the concept of organisational development as I was beginning to understand it. The new competencies I wanted to develop lay in the direction of going towards a long term vision of growth and sustaining that growth and at the same time integrating it with the organisational vision. Short quick time fixes no longer interested me as I travelled in this path. Having been an entrepreneur myself, I realized what I needed

was an integration of learning thread within the existing fabric of the organization.

And thus began my new learning.

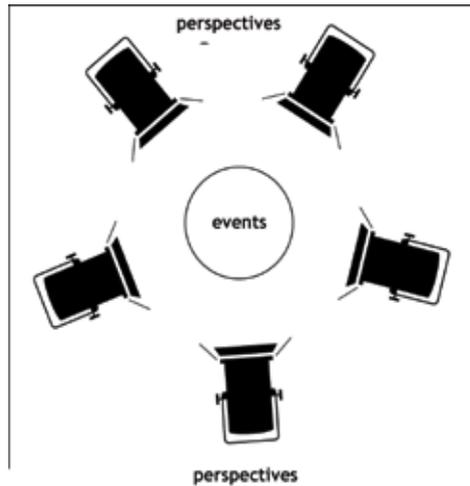
New Learning

Pretention Creates doubt

I shared with Bernd Schmid an organizational situation I was working with. This was a situation where I had to give the diagnosis for why many people leave the organization. I shared with Schmid many solutions and interventions I had made and Schmid asked me a question, "Is it in your culture that you need to come across as a person who knows things?" I said, "I thought I am supposed to know things in the field where I am a consultant" Schmid replied "you need not come across as though you know or have solutions. If we pretend we know, then that in itself creates doubt. As a consultant you know few things and you can be open to learning along with the organizational people."

This gave me a different perspective and changed my attitude that I can be a joint learner along with employees of the organization rather than come across as an expert. The perception that I need to know or people have to see me as a knowledgeable person had been influencing and I had felt anxious in doing my work. When I chose the new perspective of a learner I was open to see things with the scope of fresh eyes keeping aside pre conceived ideas. My anxiety came down.

Schmid's Model on Perception :-



(Fig 1 – Schmid's model on perception)

Our reaction to an event is based on the perception with which we see the event. It is important to learn through which light of perception we view an event, as our experience is constructed based on our perceptions. A short story to throw a light on perception and reaction towards an event " A boy who failed in a exam was sitting in a park and feeling worthless, He saw a spider falling down from the tree, trying to climb up but falling down again. The boy thought to himself, "The spider is like me, it is experiencing failure." This perception made the boy see the spider in a particular way. The next day when the boy visited the park again, to his surprise the spider had built a beautiful web. Now he realized the spider was not falling down and trying to climb up. It was spinning its web. The boy had a new perception of his failure. His perspective changed that he too can construct his experience of failure as a learning step to success. When perception changes the reaction to an event also changes.

Our reaction to an event is based on the perception with which we see the event.

Initially, when I worked towards organizational change I was viewing an organization change from a trainer perspective, business perspective, TA perspective or NLP perspective etc. I viewed from these perspectives because I believed that I was an expert in the domains mentioned above. I seldom asked this question, is this perspective of mine relevant to the organizational reality?

Every context has to be seen in its perspective.

A woodcutter was cutting trees near a river. As he was cutting, his axe fell into the river and the poor farmer became desperate to find the axe as his livelihood depended on the axe. An angel appeared and promised that she will help the woodcutter find the axe. The angel showed him a golden axe and asked if it was his and the woodcutter said no. Then the angel showed a beautiful silver axe, to which the woodcutter replied in the negative. The angel was impressed by the man's honesty and showed him his iron axe which the woodcutter claimed as his own lost axe. Impressed with the integrity of the simple man, the angel gave him the gold, silver and the iron axe. He soon became quite rich. One day, he went for a stroll in the banks of the same river along with his wife. His wife tripped and fell into the river. He prayed to the angel to get his wife back. The angel appeared and showed a beautiful and rich woman and asked, "Is this your wife?" The man said, "Yes, she is my wife." The angel became furious and said, "You have become a cheat. This woman is not your wife and yet you are claiming her" The farmer replied, "I can manage three axes, but if I tell the truth and you give me 3 women I cannot manage". When context changes the response we get also changes. Instead of copying practices every organization needs to be mindful that they develop methods, which will suit them.

Case Examples

Spirituality has solution for everything

There are organizations where the owner and employees believe spirituality has a solution for every problem. I have seen this in India. An owner of an organization learnt a meditation technique. He was convinced that every employee should learn the same meditation technique and made arrangements for employees to go through the process. When the organization diverted its focus to spirituality at the cost of its business it resulted in the organization becoming bankrupt in few years.

Applying training rules to the shopfloor

An MD who went through training was impressed with the time consciousness and strictness practiced in the training group. Even if the participants were late by a few minutes the door was shut and the latecomers had to miss the session. The MD decided to practice the same in his organization. So when employees came late the MD instructed that they should be sent out. The result was, many employees quit the job.

Most importantly what we need to understand in an organizational context is how the organizational culture influences the employees personality and how the employees influence the organization. Reality in an organization is developed not only based on individual experience; it is constructed based on the inter play between various factors. A systemic perspective needs to be developed to attune to the organizational reality rather than focusing on individual perspectives.

This book is a guide and shows how once the learning culture is set in an organization, it can help evolve organizational development work which will suit the organization, context by context.

– CHAPTER 2 –
LEARNING MODELS & CONCEPTS

LEARNING MODELS & CONCEPTS

See the moon and not my finger - Buddha

Models are a frame work to understand reality.

When we see a clear pond we experience stillness. When a wind blows or when we throw a stone into the pond we see ripples being formed. If we see the pond as a system, then we understand that when any external factor is introduced, the system is impacted or is influenced by it. Similarly, when an Organizational Development model is introduced in an organizational situation it also impacts the organization.

Schmid defines a model as, "a framework to organize perception of reality and a tool to frame questions to get a sense of prevailing reality and to construct new reality".

What is a model? Schmid defines a model as, "a framework to organize perception of reality and a tool to frame questions to get a sense of prevailing reality and to construct new reality".

However, often since professionals are trained to use certain models, the strength of the model becomes more significant. Once a learning and development manager told me, "I am an expert in coaching. I use neuroscience but my employees do not understand the strength of the model". Some experts and managers are well versed in TA and some in NLP and some in DISC or MBTI or systems study etc. Often what becomes more important in any situation is using the model rather than looking at reality. We forget that these models can color and influence our perception. We forget that they represent only a framework. We start seeing reality through the model and squeeze reality into the model rather than looking at reality really.

It is also important to be aware of how the model influences our perception of the management, employees, distributors and other stake holders. Sometimes the model can help us to attune to the reality or and

at other times color our perception to an extent that contact with the real situation is lost.

A simple example that I am sharing illustrates how Bernd Schmid helped me to let go of viewing a situation through models and develop new perspectives in organizational development work.

Case Example

Once I was working with a Sales Manager regarding high level of attrition in his telesales team. Since I know Transactional Analysis methods I assessed the telesales people quit because they are receiving “Don’t be important injunction.” (Injunctions are inhibitors and are a part of the human script. It is believed that many injunctions are passed on from the parents to children during the preverbal stage). Often these injunctions and other methods of TA are used to understand an individual script and it can also be used to understand the organizational script.

(Script is a story which we have formed about ourselves in the young age. Script contains the preconceived perceptions about life with which a person may approach life and react to the presented live events. This concept of script finds mention in Jungian psychology, Transactional Analysis as well as in the behavioural model of Sullivan Tomkins.) Using the script analysis I observed and arrived at a conclusion as to why the telesales people were not feeling important in their role. The reasons were:

- The telesales people had not been given proper equipments
- Their issues and difficulties were not heard by the senior management.

(Repeated approach by the telesales people to the senior level managers had not yielded the result and hence they started quitting their job)
I believed that my intervention was valid, the injunction model fitted the context and if I share it with the sales manager, he will have understood the reason for high attrition levels.

I shared my intervention of “Don’t Be Important” message of the sales people, with Schmid. He asked me few questions and this is the conversation we had :

Schmid: Do the senior managers and the sales employees talk to each other?

Geethan: The senior managers talk about the non involvement of the telesales people towards the organization. The employees say that they are not treated respectfully and their salary is low. However the two levels of employees do not talk about these issues directly.

Schmid: If the senior levels of managers and the sales employees do not talk then why not make them talk? If investing in equipments will help retain the sales people and if this is true then it is a financial decision. These are common sense decisions, which the management has to make. You need not to make psychological interventions.

Schmid’s approach created a paradigm shift in my thinking. I understood that I don’t need sophisticated models to explain a situation or see a situation using a familiar model. I can see what is missing and bring people together who can bridge the gap.

My next learning from Schmid was to include multiple perspectives of reality of the leaders and employees in an organization. My work as I understood it is to create a learning space where the organizational people come together to see how they construct a reality in an organization. In this learning container, the people in the organisation and I, compliment our strengths. I share learning perspective to reality construction in an organization and the organizational people include their view of defining roles, responsibilities and decisional powers which is creating a productive or a non productive event in an organization . Then together we see what kind of new events they want to create in an organization and this gives a common focus to employees. The dialoguing process between employees helps in sharing perception which leads to a construct of common shared reality and team performance by employees.

What the organization wants to change gives the focus. It is with this focus that the reality has to be aligned. Hence the questions to be framed to attune to organizational reality are:

What the organization wants to change gives the focus.

- Who are the employees and/or management representatives who have the decision-making authority and responsibility and can take action to achieve the focus?
- How can I as a consultant bring them together and help them dialogue?

Through this dialogue the team and I learn what is not conducive in the current reality . Then we move to what is the new reality that the team wants to create? What kind of action will help us to attain that reality? Is that reality the focus of the organization? Such dialogues gradually shape a learning culture in an organization, which I will elaborate in detail in the coming chapters.

I have used the term focus in this chapter. What is focus? Is it same as a goal? When I set a goal I know the specific outcome that I am expecting to achieve. In an organizational context arriving at specific outcome is difficult as various factors influence a goal. On the other hand, a focus is a point or direction where the organization wants to give attention to. Goals will be one of the outcomes which will manifest when the employees direct their attention in achieving the set focus.

A focus is a point or direction where the organization wants to give attention to. Goals will be one of the outcomes which will manifest when the employees direct their attention in achieving the set focus.

When I introduced this new approach in my work, it gave me the first taste of success in the organizational work. The participants felt the training was relevant to the organizational context. Since it was relevant, I found the learning created an observable positive difference in the attitudes and behaviors of the entire unit.

In order to sustain the change created in the training I felt the need to include senior people and management as a part of the learning system. At this point I expressed to Schmid my insecurity and apprehension on whether my views and ideas will be accepted by the senior management. Schmid taught me about being, "Competently Insecure." What does it mean to be competently insecure?

This can be used in certain contexts which are new or uncertain, at such times we may not be sure how to respond. Particularly when learning something new one may become overwhelmed by the questions Will saying I don't know certain things mean that I will be seen as incapable in the eyes of people whom I am working with?, will my abilities be under the scanner? In such situations the sense of insecurity can be very high. At the same time, how is any person supposed to know everything while learning or even how can an expert know everything?

Competently Insecure

I was facing a dilemma of feeling that I do not "know" when I was stepping up my progress in the organizational field. Bernd Schmid asked me "Have you ever been competently insecure"? What does being competently insecure mean? Ever since I learnt this phrase my life has changed. New and uncertain situations are no longer scary. Being competently insecure has made me more open to life's challenges.

***Being
competently
insecure has
made me more
open to life's
challenges.***

I have developed this simple technique of Schmid a little more and I call this the "Two screen method". I feel this method can be used in any situation where an individual is at a loss or is uncertain about how to respond to a challenge. How does this technique work?

Two Screen Method

The method is simple. See your mind as a drama stage and in that there are two screens. On one screen you see yourself anchored with what you already know and hence feel competent. In the second screen see

yourself who is learning in an unknown situation. The second screen has a you who is insecure but is comfortable saying “I don’t know this, but I am willing to learn”. Underneath is the comfort, I have abilities and skills in other areas, and I am ready to admit and learn what I don’t know. Seeing oneself in two screens helps to be insecure in a competent way and face uncertainties comfortably.

I have applied this method in many situations and I am sharing the benefits clients and I have experienced using this two screen method.

Case Examples

I was coaching a client and we were progressing well. A new situation developed and the coachee was expecting a new role a senior position. He thought he was most eligible for it, but the company management felt that he was not yet competent for such role. This upset the coachee very much and as a coach my role extended to understanding what competency the management expected from my coachee to take over the new role.

I started feeling agitated as I felt challenged in this new arena. I had to understand the management hierarchy and the overall structure of his organization of which I had no clear map. In simple words “I didn’t know!”. I felt helpless and insecure. In this situation the competence I had developed as a coach over last few months was at stake.

I used the two screen technique. In one screen I accounted what I am and the abilities that I have. In the second screen I was ready to learn about the management hierarchy, their way of working and their expectations from an employee who would suit the senior position. My learning capacity was rooted in my competence as a coach, and I could deal with my insecure feeling of not knowing in a comfortable way.

My coachee was worried, angry and upset that he was not being considered for the new role. He was unable to concentrate on the task at hand. He was constantly questioning himself, his competency, had

doubts about himself and his performance slipped. This further added to his seniors' judgment that he may not suit the new role.

I shared the same split screen technique with my coachee. In one screen he accounted for his earlier contribution and the appreciations he had got from his seniors. In the second screen he decided to negotiate for new role. Now he had both his past success and also the unknown and uncertainty he was about to confront. He was able to focus the task in hand and was ready to talk openly about his expectation of being promoted with his seniors. Being able to do this, was a success for him in itself.

After the process he said "throughout life I had this difficulty - whenever I have encountered situations of doubt, all my past success disappeared. I now know that it does not have to be that way. I can use the two screen method and go towards what I want even in challenging situations".

Breaking All or nothing pattern with two screen method.

A client of mine had plans of taking up teaching in the next two years while working as a accountant in an organization. She started taking up courses to become a teacher. Once she started her courses, her interest in the current job started reducing. Going to work became unbearable and boring.

She used the split screen method as well. In one screen she saw herself working for the current organization and in the second screen she saw herself equipping herself for the new career. When the back drop in the screen was her current organisation she acted as an employee and when the back drop was the new career she was working for her future plans, happy doing both without confusion.

I see this as a simple tool and very effective in facing uncertainty and unknown situation in a effective way.

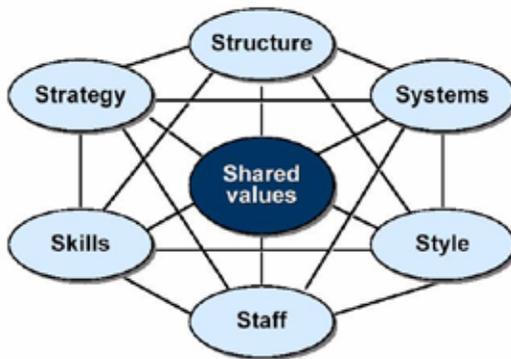
Effectiveness of Models:

Schmid is in favor of models, which had only 3 to 4 factors to understand reality. He is against complex models as they can add to the complexity of the organizational situation. He also said it is not necessary that these models build a consistent model together. For example some experts discuss a given situation through a particular model, and then they discuss if it can also be seen through another model? They also discuss the commonality or difference between models. The focus here then becomes the models and not the current reality prevailing in the organization. Though Schmid has developed many models to understand 'roles, employees matching identity, sharing responsibility or resolving dilemma' etc, he encourages applying these models and finding out, what differences are created in reality. ***The clarification loop is between each model and reality and not so much between the different models.*** The clarification loop is between each model and reality and not so much between the different models. He also encourages all stakeholders to do some experimenting and evaluating of experienced consequences. He is not keen that we hold on to a model, if it does not make sense in that particular context.

At the same time, my intention is not to belittle the strengths of any model. Models are helpful in holding the experience of people together. They help to see patterns and common connecting threads in an organization. Usually the professionals who have learnt the model stick on to it out of insecurity. The old saying, "cutting the feet to fit the shoe" is applicable when using models to understand the organizational reality. When employees and the consultant together learn about the situation then, a model which will fit the situation can be chosen rather than trying to fit the situation to a familiar model. Schmid says: ***"Each model has a sphere of convincing meaning, a sphere of doubts and a sphere of nonsense"***.

Case Example

An example of a work situation can be used to understand how models can distort reality. I was the consultant during a company's top management meeting. The leaders of the organization felt that their subordinates have to be empowered to take decisions and run the production effectively at the shop floor. Since the managers were familiar with 7 S model they used it as a model to develop their subordinates.



(Fig 2 The 7S model)

As you can see, the common focus of the model in the diagram is to create shared values. The leaders went on to the discussion of what values should be practiced which will help to develop their subordinates in the shop floor. Over a period as the discussion went on I found the discussion was primarily becoming focused on giving priority to values. What are the values in practice? And who will accept what values? And what does value mean?

The 7 S model had influenced the reality construction among leaders and the focus had changed to values, while the focus of developing shop floor performance and empowering employees were lost. As a consultant my job is to bring back the attention of the team to their set focus. In the meeting, I brought it to the notice of the leaders that the discussion is

moving away from focus. The discussion then turned to, how to use this model to align with the focus. The managers then removed the shared values from the center and inserted shop floor effectiveness.

When shop floor effectiveness became the focus, organizational leaders felt it necessary to include the head of the departments in the discussion. Together the head of departments and the leaders evolved ways to attain shop floor effectiveness. Next, employees like supervisors and operators were involved at appropriate situations. They all dialogued with examples of where the shop floor effectiveness was less, the possible reasons and what needs to be done differently to enhance effectiveness. Without any model they were able to arrive at an action plan to achieve shop floor effectiveness. Then they also used the seven "S" model to have another perspective of their action plan and found most of the components of the model was included in the action plan .

When the leaders had put the model first it distorted the reality. When understanding came directly through the discussions with their subordinates and the current reality became the priority, then the model fitted perfectly. The focus was achieved easily. Schmid always says, "set the focus and then align roles, resource and action to achieve the focus".

Schmid always says, "set the focus and then align roles, resource and action to achieve the focus".

I recalled what Buddha said centuries ago, "When I point my fingers to the moon, you see my fingers and not the moon. See the moon and not my fingers." These lines of Buddha explain what I have shared in this chapter.

– CHAPTER 3 –

**FINDING MY IDENTITY, UNDERSTANDING DREAMS
AND LEARNING NEW MEANINGS**

FINDING MY IDENTITY, UNDERSTANDING DREAMS AND LEARNING NEW MEANINGS

“There is time to think of the seed and a time to think of the fruit”

- Italian proverb

In building my identity and competence, I understood the wisdom of the Italian proverb. When one works to build competence it is like thinking of the seed; consistent work and practice automatically results, in the tree growing and bearing the fruit .

My success story in organizational work was increasing and competence to be trainer\consultant\ coach in the organizational field was enhancing. The new way of learning helped employees to add a fresh perspective to their work and employees together started constructing new events which were strengthening the DNA of an organization.

Now I faced a new challenge “How to convince the industry people, as they were used to the regular corporate training programme with the class room or out bound trainings”. This new approach for organizational development through building learning culture is different and did not have a structured training syllabus. Convincing organizations and HR people was becoming a difficult task. I approached Schmid and asked, “How to approach organizations with this new approach in organizational development?”

New stuff with the Old labels

To manage this situation Schmid said, “ Go with the old label and introduce the new stuff.” This gave me encouragement to step up my old training with a new approach. I let go of my teaching approach with power points, case studies, psychometric testing and play activates to teach concepts. I introduce dialogue between employees about

- What do they want to change in their working methods?
- How would they like to construct new events?
- How will this help them work in their organization with ease etc.

This learning process was within the context of organizational situations. The employees learnt to use the frame work mentioned in the previous sections along with their work . The insights the participants got helped them to carry the change to work context.

Case Example

I was invited for a team building workshop for an organizations. Since there were many departments I recommended the participants should be head of each department and one employee reporting to the HOD. Here the team comprised of vertical and horizontal organization line structure. During the training they were asked to dialogue with examples for the following questions

- Where do they see good team work?
- Where do they lack team work?
- What change will help to enhance the team work?

These narratives helped the employees to get an insight on how to the construct their own reality and the new learning was how to construct a team reality. The participants were satisfied as the training focused on their day to day work . They decided to continue this kind of team reflection and dialoguing on the above or similar questions.

When this practice became regular, a dialoguing and team culture developed. In the old label of team building, instead of teaching, along with employees I made a team construct which suited their organizational context.

This new method was benefitting the organizations and my business started growing. However I could not feel that I was an organizational

coach though I had the skill with the acumen of making changes in organizations. The process described below helped me to own the Identity that I am an organizational change specialist.

Professional Identity

I told Schmid that though I have moved from the regular corporate training methods to supervision and consultancy mode in organizational settings, I could not identify with my new role. Schmid identified that it was like when some employees have been promoted and they were in charge of new or higher roles but do not feel an identity towards the new role. As I shared this with Schmid, he helped me to develop this new identity with this following exercise. I am sharing our conversation verbatim here as the process made a huge difference in my attitude and perception about myself. I felt more confident in my work with organisations after this process.

IDENTITY WORK WITH SCHMID

Schmid: You are learning concepts and tools from me and applying them in organisational work. You are doing well but somehow you feel that you are not an organisational consultant. You feel you are a clinical consultant who is playing the role of an organisational consultant.

Geethan: Yes

Schmid: You do not feel that you are an organisational consultant, is that right?

Geethan: Exactly

Schmid: Did you already read something of my identity belief

Geethan : Yes, I heard your tape on identity belief. You describe certain employees are performing well in their role as a manager. They are competent in what they are doing but when they have to talk about their role they are not able to express it adequately. That is where you found that at the being level that they have yet not taken the role of a manager. They are not able to believe that they are managers even though they are competent in their performance. I also understood that I am competent when I am working in organisations but somewhere I feel that since I have not worked as an employee in an organization, I don't know enough theory about TQM(Total quality management) I don't know what is assessment in an organisation etc . So I have doubts if I am an efficient organisational consultant. I keep having these doubts.

Schmid: Certainly there are many things you can learn as an organisation consultant. But do you expect that when you have learnt all these things that you will feel like an organisational consultant?

Geethan : I am not sure I will feel that I am a consultant after learning many things because the list can keep on adding that I need to learn more, more and more.

Schmid : This might feel like an endless loop.

Geethan : Yes

Schmid : Did you read what ever you could read as a clinical consultant?

Geethan : No, even in psychotherapy there is more to learn

Schmid : But somehow you manage to feel like a clinician

Geethan : Because I did my CTA, and I completed my Masters in psychology. Other professionals send me clients and that gives me confidence that I am doing a good work there.

Schmid : Ok, you feel your university and TA authorized and this gave you

a definition to be a clinician

Geethan : Yes

Schmid : Ok we can do the same procedure to have a second identity as an organisational consultant without going back to university, without doing lot of formal training. I can help as an authority to adopt this belief.

Geethan : Yes I want that help from you

Schmid : I call this as identity card approach. In your passport form is there a section that cites an attribute a person owns for ever. Do you have this section in your passport? For ExampleThe section that list light blue eyes.....These are identity proofs without any attributes. In this section, with the university certification it is written that Geethan is a clinician

Geethan : Yes a psychotherapist

Schmid : This is also true when he does not behave as a clinician.

Geethan : Yes

Schmid : This is also true when he has lot to learn as a clinician.

Geethan : Yes

Schmid : So it has nothing to do with competence or behaviour or feelings, what is true is written and being authorized.

Geethan : Yes

Schmid : I am ready to take your passport form and do necessary changes as an authority. if you are interested

Geethan : Yes I am interested

Schmid : Let us do mentally, you send your passport form through skype

to my office here in Heidelberg, can you visualize this way?

Geethan: Yes I am sending it right now

Schmid: I get it now. I see in the passport that it is you. I also see that in the section about professional identity it is written clinician. I believe that.

You can have several identities, you can add or change. I know you and I am authorized to write down the attribute "organizational consultant, teacher and supervisor on professional affairs in that page.

I certify you as a Professional in the organisational field, coach & consultant"

Geethan: And supervisor also

Schmid: Yes, do you accept this documentation

Geethan: Yes

Schmid: I have a printer, I print and give a sign on it authorized by an authority now made official by me

Geethan: Ok

Schmid: Now I give the passport back to you

Geethan: Ok I have received it

Schmid: And now you are all this, You don't have to behave like this, you can be an incompetent professional in the field but still you are a professional. You can behave as a clinician, as a private person, this doesn't do anything to the identity which is already there. You can adopt any of these identities anytime. It is not about the competency you have. It is written that you are a professional

Geethan: Yes

Schmid : That is all, you need not feel something different. You can now be an organisational professional but feel like a clinician. You are an organisational professional and it does not depend on whether you feel it or not.

Geethan : Yes it is authorized in my passport

Schmid : Authorized even when it is not empirical provable by you. You understand the difference

Geethan : I will check my understanding, I need not have all the competencies or have to be competent because of this identity. Like every other attribution this also existing in me this identity also exists in me now. It is there with me and when ever necessary I can own it.

Schmid : You can deny it but it is still there, does not depend on your individual behavior

Geethan : Ok, like a scar. Whether I believe it or not, the scar is there with me, similarly this identity is there with me

Schmid : Yes, You don't have do any thing as a consequence , consequence just happens

My Learning

I realize I am an engineer by qualification. I don't practice it nor update my skill as an engineer. But because I have been authorized as an engineer and I don't have any doubt if I am an engineer or not. Similarly, after being authorized by Schmid, I believe " I am a organisational consultant, teacher, supervisor on professional affairs.

After this process I found that when I am introducing myself as an organisational consultant I am doing it without effort. My learnings with respect to organizational work also has picked up faster and I am able to

carry a better power field during my organisational work.

After this identity approach, my ability convince organizational CEO's and MD with examples of my work become stronger. My power field was well established.

Power Field

Power field means an aura of competence one carries in their professional field. After this identity work the power field I carried and created while I worked with organizations were rooted in my strength. This got demonstrated in the way I understand the organizational questions & situation. The way I frame questions and give structure for change initiatives, the people in the organisation intuitively know and believe that hiring me will benefit the organization.

Rasputin Effect

As I was doing good consultancy work many senior managers of a corporate became close to me. This also led to few managers disliking me as they perceived me to be popular and having a lot of say in the internal affairs of the organisation. They started criticizing the changes happening through the learning and development process. I shared this situation I faced with Schmid and he shared that I should keep the Rasputin effect in mind while working with organizations.

Rasputin was one of the central figures in Russia's modern history up to the fall of the royal family in 1917. Rasputin achieved huge power in a very short space of time - but that power led to Rasputin having many enemies within Russia which led to his downfall and out of favour with the royals very soon.

Schmid cautioned me that as a successful consultant I may gain influence in an organization, but it is important not to be seen as a power centre. I wondered how to deal with such situations and learnt it the following way.

Meta Perspective reflection on perception:-

If I feel some employees see me as a person of power in an organization I consciously have a dialogue on "how do they see me?" I sometime share, "when you all respond I feel like I am the owner of the organization ". In such situations, after my sharing I encourage them to see me as learning partner and sometimes share my limitations within the organizational context. These things help me to deal with the Rasputin effect.

Case Example:

In an organization while building a team culture the employees took a project of reducing electricity usage. The team progressed well in this project and when I met them the team gave me report of how they have reduced the usage of electricity. I felt like being treated as their "Boss". Hence I shared my perspective of how I feel "Being reported to" and asked the employees reflection. The employees said that they want to share their success story with me and we decided that I along with them will look at their report from a learning frame. This piece of information is important as some of the psychological schools may assess such situation as "The dynamics between the consultant and the subordinates or transference of boss on to the consultant." What I understand with my experience in working as a consultant is, instead of managing the dynamics of how a consultant is being perceived, the consultant has a choice to construct a shared perception through dialoguing with the participants. The dialogic or narratives can focus on,

Managers pressurize themselves to live upto the image and become anxious that they might lose the image and respect in the eyes of their colleagues.

What kind of perception if chosen by the employees and consultant will support learning and organizational development?.

Many managers also have this concern, how my management\peers or subordinates perceive me? Sometime the manager fixes an image, "This is how I want to be perceived as (like- a competent person, go getter or a loyalist etc). They pressurize themselves to live up to the image or become anxious that they will lose this image. Instead the managers can dialogue on sharing perceptions. This is done by sharing examples of how the colleagues or management perceive each other. In this way the employees learn how the images about each other gets constructed in each others' mind. This process helps the employees to share and update perceptions about self, other and their reactions to situations .

So thus rooted in my competence, I enjoyed the sweet taste of success and I started expanding the application of my learning as a consultant on a wider range. Creating learning system and space to form a competent culture for organizational health became quite natural for me .

However at certain times I became anxious as I progressed. The Dream work I did with Schmid helped me to advance my organizational coaching experience with ease.

Dream Work

Geethan : I see 7 containers stacked one over the other in a shipyard, one is about to fall but not falling.

Schmid : Good for you

Geethan : Why Schmid?

Schmid : Every mistake does not lead to catastrophe

***Every
mistake does
not lead to
catastrophe***

My learning

I am generally scared to make mistakes. "Every mistake does not lead to catastrophe", is a permission for me to make mistakes and learn. I need not be scared of taking new initiatives or steps. It's ok to risk sometimes and trust my ability to deal with the outcome and consequences spontaneously. This was not only a learning for organisational work it is a learning for my life.

Geethan : You made it very simple. I was connecting this dream with stacked containers in the line authority of the organisation I am working with. May be there is a disconnect between the top and the middle management in transferring their ideas to the bottom level. That was my interpretation to the dream and the work I am doing.

Schmid : Dream has different dimension and this can be one of the dimensions; if you think like that (in the above dimension) what consequences will that have for you?

Geethan : May be get biased in seeing the reality in that organisation, I can become judgemental and this perception can influence my diagnosis.

Schmid : Many ideas sound quite correct theoretically, but it is an idea. Find out whether there is a misfit in the hierarchy. If you find there is a misfit then you should find if it is important for what you are doing right now, then you should focus on your diagnosis and also intuitive diagnosis. In dreams not every idea that comes to your narrative mind is already well sorted. These are ideas which are correct but may not be important to the work you are doing.

My learning

I thought that whatever material I get in my dream, I can connect it to the organizational work. I thought this is the way to use dream for organisational work. I learnt that it not necessary get fixated with these

perceptions, but be open to the reality for what it is. This will help in being in the now and be sensible to the reality than being knowledgeable about the situation.

I may have to use my ability to reflect over these thoughts and ideas to discriminate what is important for the work I am doing.

Expressing Emotions

Around this time, I got a contract to initiate an inter departmental coordination in a factory. As my confidence grew my expectation from employees who were in contract with me also was growing. At a point I felt the employees are not progressing at expected pace. I told Schmid, "I am planning to share my emotions like anger and fear I go through when I see them not raising up to the set level." Schmid replied, "expressing of emotion in this context is not adequate and does not fit the context. He asked me to deal with the situation in the following manner. I may have to make a reality check with the employees, if they were not able to apply their learning then they need to dialogue on

- What motivated them to initiate change?
- How long they were able to sustain the motivation?
- What factors in the current situation brought down the motivation level?
- What and how often they will do something different which will sustain the motivation till they achieve the desired result?

These questions needs to be dialogued with the learning frame than a performing frame. I was approaching from the perspective of performing frame and hence I was wanting to prove this initiative works for the organization. This frame of reference, "need to prove" itself has the problem in it and hence letting go of this frame and choosing a learning frame helped me settle with a sense of peace. Schmid gave me a metaphor of "waves"

A change initiative progress is like waves with back and forth movement. He said, "It may take 5 to 6 times up's and down moment before a change is sustained."

change is not a linear or a straight cut. A change initiative progress is like waves with back and forth movement. He said, "It may take 5 to 6 times up's and down moment before a change is sustained." This understanding "Helped feel a comfort" within me when employees say, "We tried but it did not work." Such narratives of employees not being able to be successful when seen from a learning perspective helps to understand their reality. Employees also gain the same attitude when they choose a learning frame, once a senior manager said, " Our employees have made the first step, sometimes they may fall and that's OK." I was amazed as this manager was initially intolerant when any deviation happened from the set plan.

– CHAPTER 4 –
IMPACT OF TRAINING STYLES ON
ORGANISATIONAL WORK

IMPACT OF TRAINING STYLES ON ORGANISATIONAL WORK

In the second chapter we saw the impact of how a model or a frame work can influence the reality in an organization. In this chapter we will see the different ways of training conducted in organizations and their impact in the organizational development work.

In organizational contexts, the goal of any training workshop is bringing in change - change in the way of working, interpersonal relationships among employees, enhancing decision-making capabilities among managers etc. Often a training program is beneficial personally for employees, but not all the benefits translate into change in the working context. Organizational contexts and situations themselves seem to force the employee to repeatedly give the same response they were giving before the training program.

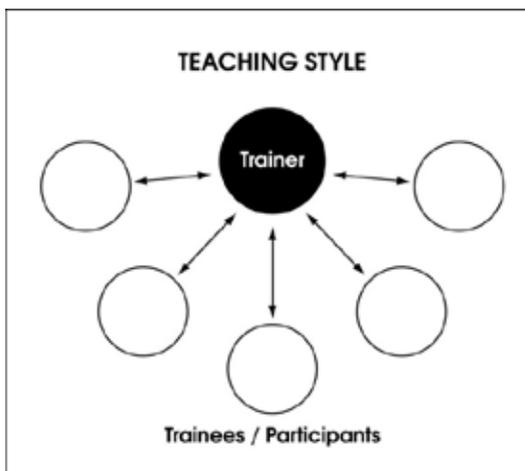
How can the learning be sustained and bring about lasting change? What kind of training style is meaningful from the organizational perspective? There are mainly the following three styles in training.

- Teaching style
- Interactive and emerging style
- Participative style

Traditionally the teaching style has been used assuming that learning can bring about change. The Interactive and experiential style includes the group dynamics in an effort to enhance awareness among participants about the impact of their style of working on others and on the organization. However, both these styles are attempts at introducing something from the external environment into the organizational context without complete understanding of the current reality as it is played out in the organization. The participative style combines the merit of teaching style and interactive and experiential styles within the context of current reality and events as constructed by the employees themselves in an organization.

Let me explain these styles a little further.

Teaching Style :



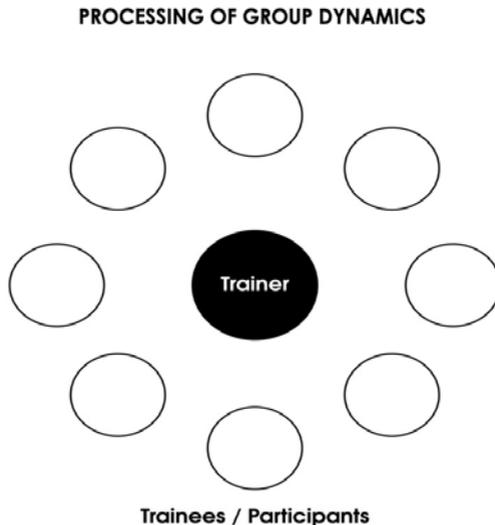
(Fig 3 : Traditional Teaching Style)

In this method, the HR department does a training need analysis with inputs from the head of each department . The topics are identified and an outsourced trainer completes the training on the topics. The teaching style is based on classroom setup. All employees go through the training program. The trainer has knowledge and experience in various behavioral models and teaches that to the employees.

The advantage of this training style is the employees gain knowledge on various frameworks to understand like "time management, leadership, team, stress management etc" from the trainer. The employees can use this training information as reference to understand the organizational context. However many times the employees feel what they learnt is not applicable in the work context. Because what they learnt in the classroom setting is different from an organizational work setting.

Interactive and Emerging Style:

In this style though some concepts are taught, the focus is also on how the learning group evolves. The trainer not only teaches but also brings the dynamics involved in the group to the employees' awareness. The trainer may also process how the dynamics in the group can influence the work situation. Some trainers may use play activity and assessment tools to show the participant style of handling situations and co-relating it to their working style.



(Fig 4. Interactive & emerging style)

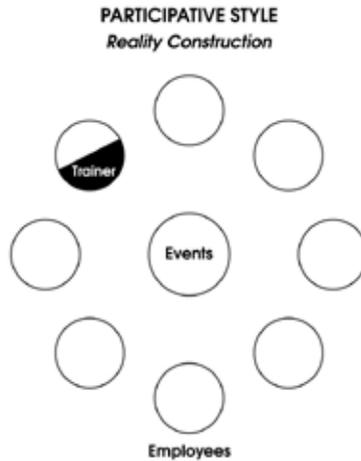
The advantage of this type of training is enhancing self awareness and how employees co-create situations by influencing each other. However the dynamics experienced in the role of a participant in a training group is different from the dynamics experienced in an organizational role. A participant who is very much involved and demonstrates self-awareness and leadership in the training room may not exhibit the same qualities in his role as a manager. And the dynamic, which evolves in the Training

group, may be touching and in this context experienced as meaningful. Still it may not represent the dynamic of an organizational team, where structures and dynamics coming from the context and from responsibilities and organizational roles are to be handled. The dynamic of a training group may not count for an organizational dynamic or even be distractive. Hence the co-relation between the training and the work effectiveness does not guarantee result.

Participative Style

Participative training is not transferring knowledge to the work context in the first place; it is transferring work context to the training space and building up competence in handling it together.

From this perspective the trainer is "half-involved" in the shared responsibilities of the employees. He is involved, but in a specific role with different major responsibilities. The trainer attunes to the organizational reality and also maintains the learning perspective that he\she has been contracted for. So he builds up and maintains a double focus. He does not stay outside by only sharing knowledge or models and helping the employees to use it. The trainer becomes a part of organizational reality along with the employees. In a way the trainer is adapting to the organizational reality rather than asking the employees to adapt to the training module. With the advantage of being only partially impacted by the organizational reality, the trainer uses his learning perspective to help the employees to learn how they can be involved and at the same time construct events which they want to change in the organizations from a more distant perspective.



(Fig 5 Participative Style of Training)

Since the training is focused on the events, which are happening in the organization, the employees are already stepping back and looking at how they are working together. In this way employees have already taken a meta perspective (Meta perspective -perspective on the current perspective) of the events happening in organizations.

The difference between the other training styles and participative training is that the participants in the program are not randomly chosen employees. The chosen participants are employees in the roles and responsibilities who are contributing in shaping these events which the organization wants to change. They are participating in learning how they are creating a situation in the working context. This learning team may consist of employees in horizontal and vertical line structure of the organization.

In this style of training, the trainer and the organizational leaders have done prior work in understanding the current context and the major focus of the learning experiment. Then the participants have been selected in this respect.

In this process the trainer is attuning to the organizational reality before bringing the employees together to gain a learning perspective on the work context. The formation of participants is elaborated further in the chapter on team.

The trainer creates a learning climate along with the employees in the workshop. These should be step to a learning culture, which can sustainably be run in the organization. The trainer also facilitates the employees to dialogue on the current events in the organization, which they want to change. This is practicing what Eric Berne meant by working with “real people” and “real life situations”. Usually the employees dialogue with the focus of

- How do the employees contribute in constructing the current events?
- How does this way of reality construction impact the organizational performance and health?
- How can they construct a new event?

What will be seen and happen differently when the employees construct new events?

This dialoguing process leads to

- Understanding current reality prevailing in the organization
- How employees share and habitually co-create events supporting this reality
- How they are willing to share responsibility for constructing new events

In this way the employees learn together how they construct events in the organization, which lead to a different reality and to developing a learning culture for further changes. The learning evolves gradually and employees learn how they can come together when they co-create situations, which should be changed. They learn how challenges can be faced and how solutions can be evolved on an ongoing basis. Since the learning pertains to the organizational context it rules out the possibility

of non-adaptability of training and learning to the work situation. ***This style empowers the employees with the skill of "how to think" rather than "what to think". This skill can then be used in any context in the work situation.***

Participative training involves bringing the employees according to their roles and decisional responsibilities to facilitate changes in the organization. It involves a different kind of contracting-procedure, which is different for the other training styles and the therapy context. What kind of contracting will help to set up a participative training to create a learning culture will be seen in the next chapter.

– CHAPTER 5 –
CONTRACT PROCESS IN BUILDING LEARNING CULTURE

CONTRACT PROCESS IN BUILDING LEARNING CULTURE

Contracting is a contribution from the school of Transactional Analysis. Eric Berne, founder of Transactional Analysis defined contracting as, "A bilateral (can be multi level also) commitment, explicitly stated towards a well defined course of action." He saw contracting as an equal responsibility between the patients (clients) and the professional to influence change. Contracting is useful, since both the professional and the client take equal responsibility towards making change. In an organizational context too, contracting is an important process in attaining a common focus between the organization, internal people and the external partners like trainer /coach etc.

However, contracting in a therapy context is very different from contracting in an organizational context. As discussed in the previous chapter, participative training involves bringing in the right people who are in appropriate roles and responsibilities to drive through and influence change. This context then demands a different type of contracting.

In the therapy context an experience is based on an individual's reality, whereas in an organization context an experience is based on multiple realities. When an individual meets a therapist and asks for a change the therapist can ask the client to define change, which will be observable, achievable, tangible and can be experienced through evidences or outcomes. This is different from when a manager says that he wants to create a change among employees in an organizational context. In an organizational setting taking into account only a manager's perspective will not be sufficient to define change. It requires involving people in different roles to specify "what needs to be changed and what will be the outcome due to the change?" When the organization and change agents work together it is imperative to understand how much they are on the same course. This often must be differentiated for different subsystems on both sides.

Case Example :

A Business head told me during our initial discussion, "I want to develop my middle level managers". He added, "the middle level managers are still behaving like field executives rather than behaving as a managers who handle a team of field executives". After further discussions with the business head, I found this was a feedback that had been given to him when he was just promoted as a manager from the level of a field executive. This feedback helped him to develop new competence and he soon got more promotions and finally he had reached the level of a business head. Hence he believed that his subordinates also needed to develop new managerial skills in a similar way. He wanted to achieve it through a leadership-training program. The change he wanted was that the middle level manager should behave as managers rather than field executives. But when I met the middle level managers their reality was different, they were not given enough authority to handle field staff. Without the authority, they could hardly make any decisions and lead a team.

Hence in an organizational setting contracting cannot be made taking an independent view of one employee and asking specific details for change is not feasible.

Also, in an organizational context "the explicit part" can be a limitation in contracting. It may not be possible to predict a specific outcome through training and development, as change in an organizational setting involves various factors. To set specific outcomes as a contracting procedure and asking the people in the organization, what they want to achieve through training and development with specific details might lead us in the wrong direction.

Case Example

A vice president for Sales, told me that he wants his sales team to build healthy relationship with the product distributors. The Vice president felt this relationship between the field staff and the distributors will help sustain sales during the lean period. Bernd Schmid, in his coaching taught me to think of such requests as a hypothesis made by the managers and not to take it as an absolute reality.

Hypothesis means that the sales head is making a hypothesis, "good relationship between field staff and distributors will increase sale in lean period." To test this hypothesis the consultant needs to conduct a reality check at various levels of employees. Hence the initial contract has to be, to meet few employees who work in the market at different levels and see if their reality and the hypothesis of the manager match. If they do not match, then explore ways to align the reality first. When the employees come together a common a pattern prevailing at various level of employees in different roles and responsibilities can be elicited. The discussion with the employees and the sales head can then be used for deciding the best focus which will help to achieve a change. The contract process will then be for the trainer to help the employees and their sales head learn how to set such focus and to create new events which will support in achieving the chosen focus.

Contracting as a process

Completing a contract successfully between the consultant and the organization involves dimensions which are

- 5.3.1 Procedural & financial contract
- 5.3.2 Competence contract
- 5.3.3 Building initial learning contract and smaller picture
- 5.3.4 Experimental Learning Contract
- 5.3.5 Psychological contract vs fore ground/ back ground communication process
- 5.3.6 Psychological distance vs reality matching

Procedural and Financial contract

This contract involves clarity on financial terms, number of days to work, where, when and how these services will happen etc. Bernd Schmid also underlines the importance of this part of the contract. To clarify giving and taking on both sides establishes a culture of mutual responsibility. Although this is only one currency payment regulations can help. After a very limited first clarification, the client should pay for the further contracting process, even if it does not lead to a contract beyond the discussion. Clarification related to contracting is a service and provokes learning. Payment invites the client to be serious and responsible with the resources of all parties. An organization might give one contract and seek the work of a professional around many issues. If the cooperation is about coming to limits of the old contract, a new one should be negotiated in time. Hence it is important to have a clear negotiation in this procedural part of contract.

It is important to have a clear negotiation in this procedural part of contract.

Competence Contract

Bernd Schmid's controlling triangle model is a good tool to understand competence contract. This is for the professional and the organizational employees to check whether they are the competent people to make a change or achieve a set focus in an organization.

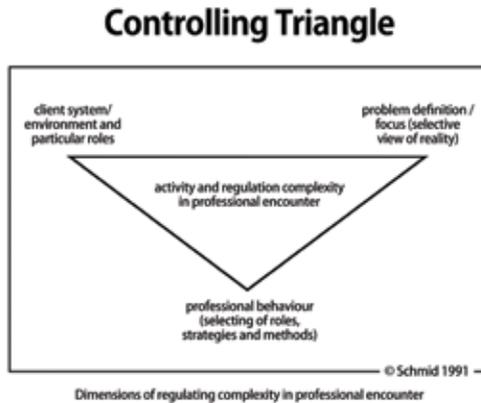


Fig 6 : Schmid's Controlling Triangle

The focus corner is what the organization wants to achieve. The controlling triangle can also help in checking whether as a trainer or a consultant, "Am I the right competent person to accept the contract or not". A consultant, needs to have the following competencies,

- Understanding current reality construction
- Explain how employees share responsibility
- Understanding the role of employees , prevailing team and Leadership culture
- Communication as a process for reality construction

Another point to be checked in the triangle before accepting the contract is, whether the employees in the right roles are a part of the team to achieve the focus . If yes, then the contract can be accepted. If some employees or people in management are not part of the team triangle,

then the focus will be to redefine what can be done best with available people.

Case Example : Contracting - Fore ground action with back ground support

In my initial days of organisational work, once I had a difficulty with a manager while building the learning culture. The CEO of the company contracted for a work to be done where I had to work with the manager with whom I had some discomfort. The manager was integral part and his role was important in achieving the focus.

I shared my discomfort with Schmid and he suggested, "Have an agreement with the CEO that in the foreground you will work with the manager but in the background he should support you when there is difficulty". This means if I have differences with the manager and he does not buy in the new culture the manager, myself and the CEO may have joint meetings. In this way the person in responsible role is available as a support for the external consultant.

Building initial learning contract and smaller picture:-

Though the organization wants to achieve a focus they may not be clear what will be the consequence or outcome of achieving such a focus. At this point asking them to be explicit about the specific outcome may add pressure to the people in the organization. Hence it is useful to build the change work as small pieces of a larger picture.

It is useful to build the change work as small pieces of a larger picture.

Case Example

Once I agreed to accept a contract with the focus to increase productivity in an oil factory. The reality to be included in the process were,

- Management need to increase productivity in the factory
- The cooperation of plant employees to achieve this focus

The plant head was worried whether this new initiative will change the current working process and system, which he has laboriously built over a period of time. I negotiated with him during our discussions that we will include the views of team of employees who shape the organization productivity before commencing the organizational development work. We agreed that as the plant head he had the right to stop the team from taking initiatives, which deviate from the current practice.

When the first level managers of the factory came together for training they found lack of communication among them is one of the reason for lack in productivity. The team decided to look for evidences of the kind of events that will occur when there is better communication among plant employees. The plant head was convinced that this initiative was not interfering with the current system but actually enhances productivity. The team members were then able to make small changes, which increased communication among them. This communication channel automatically resulted in increasing productivity in a non threatening way, rather than directly working on the management task of increasing production.

In this way employees learnt how to build small pictures of what and how the change will be and make gradual changes. Smaller changes are non threatening for the people to explore and increases their openness to experiment with new possibilities as a part of learning process.

Experimental learning contract

This helps employees in learning to form a hypothesis and test it to see whether the steps taken by the employees to achieve the focus are in the right direction. The trainer may also include managers who can assure or validate that the actions taken are giving the expected result. The next step of the contract will then be to bring the employees from various levels who can perform a reality check on the change process. In this way the employees at various levels are involved in achieving the focus and they learn the steps that support changes. In the process, employees not only learn to achieve a single focus, they also learn to set focus, frame hypothesis and learn together till they achieve the organizational objectives.

Psychological contract vs background foreground communication process contract.

During the process of contracting while practicing therapy one of the key factors to be looked is the psychological congruence. Example a client may expresses that he\she wants to change but there can be apprehensions in actually accomplishing the change. These apprehension may not have been explicitly stated but may show as an "incongruence between," what the client is asking for and what they actually intend to do". The therapist may sometimes confront the ulterior motive or the incongruence felt in the client to avoid failure of achieving a contract .

In an organizational context talking about psychological process invites a framework of psychology, which is not necessarily a dominant factor for organizational development. Another aspect to it is every employee may not be able to elicit the psychological process, which is involved in discussing and planning for change with a team. However congruency among employees is necessary to achieve the

Bernd Schmid recommends that instead of bringing the process of ulterior motives and our psychological process into the organizational context, the trainers can model to the employees on how the employees can dialogue on the foreground- and background- communication.

focus. Often in such situations, even though people appear willing, no permanent change takes place. Nor are the doubts stated explicitly, when asked.

Bernd Schmid recommends that instead of bringing the process of ulterior motives and our psychological process into the organizational context, the trainers can model to the employees on how they employees can dialogue on the foreground and background communication.

Case example:

A trainer might say "I see people are interested in making changes in the foreground, but in the background it appears to me that people have doubts". So what the trainer is doing is acknowledging the acceptance, which is evident in the foreground, and also addressing the unarticulated doubts, which people have in the background. It is non-threatening to the participants when the foreground and background metaphors are used and helps them articulate their concerns.

Once in a training group, one of the manager said in a metaphorical way, "I am doubtful of who will drive this bus" The manager further clarified, "earlier an initiative was made to install an operational software. Many managers who joined in the initial stage lost interest and one person who had the concern drove this project alone which left him overburdened." This statement brought out into the open a discussion, on what would be the role of the managers present and helped take their commitment towards the project.

In this way the learning process fosters narrative among employees, where they start talking about what are their thoughts in the foreground and what they would like to bring from the background of their mind for dialoguing within a group, a narrative culture develops. In such an environment, open communication is facilitated rather than the trainer picking on the ulterior motives and confronting the incongruence in the

communication process between employees. Once employees learn the art of sharing the background and foreground communication process they continue to practice even without the presence of the trainer.

Psychological Distance vs Reality Matching

When there is a difference between the management expectations and the employees or departments the external consultant trained with a psychological framework may say, "The psychological distance between the management and the employees are high". In organizations, instead of using psychological orientation Schmid recommends that it is good to talk about the difference in reality matching.

For example if there is a difference in expectations between the hierarchy or among management or employees, instead of seeing it as a psychological distance and it being high or low the employees can see it as reality matching between two levels or 'different levels' that needs to be aligned. The employees at various levels may dialog to match their reality. In this way bringing psychology orientation to an organizational context can be minimized. Here contracting is done based on reality construction rather than taking a psychological orientation.

To sum up the contracting process in an organization needs to be evolving and inclusive of necessary realities along with employees in relevant roles and responsibilities. It is important not to bring psychological orientations, as the employees will find it difficult to transfer them to organizational context. In participative training within an organization, contracting as discussed above will help achieve the identified focus.

Till now we were seeing the difference between various fields of human development. We have also shown the importance consultants\trainer\coaches orienting their map to an organisational context.

In the next chapters you can find the ways of application of organizational development through building learning culture in the organizational fields.

**– CHAPTER 6 –
LEARNING CULTURE AND SHARED REALITY**

LEARNING CULTURE AND SHARED REALITY

An organization is a mix of multiple realities functioning together to give an output. These realities can be cohesive and in sync or fragmented. If the realities are not in sync then energy in an organization will be drained due to conflict and there will be wastage of time, money, productivity and human energy. Hence when we work with organization the first important step is constructing a shared reality between all the participants.

Constructing Shared Reality

Before I go explain about shared reality let's see the commonly used term "shared vision" used in the context of organisational development work. Creating a shared vision among employees is also seen as a key leadership skill. A shared vision enables the organisation to move forward together towards a designed future, along with its people.

However, in my experience when working with various organizations many employees do not feel that they are part of "the vision, mission or the management objective". There are differences in the way the Shared Vision is perceived by the employees. This perception is dependent on the individual reality of each employee or the reality of each team in a department.

Perception is dependent on the individual reality of each employee or the reality of each team in a department. Therefore decoding and arriving at a shared reality of the employees is essential before sharing a vision.

Therefore decoding and arriving at a shared reality of the employees is essential before sharing a vision. If we move to constructing new reality or achieving goals without attuning to the current reality of the employees it will lead to a pre matured solution and the changes which are made will not sustain.

The difference between a shared vision and shared reality is that the

vision is towards future and reality is in the now. Both are relevant - one is in the now and one is towards the future.

In an organisational context we aim to find, what kind of reality do the employees co-create together? When employees share their experience at work within the context of work, this leads to an understanding for the consultant of how each employee as an individual or employees as a group share or not share the reality of the organisation as a whole. Are the employees running as a team or are each of them running their own race?

How can we facilitate creating a common shared reality in an organisation? In order to construct a common shared reality in an organisation we need to start with building a dialogic culture in an organisation. This dialogue culture helps employees to share their current reality. As each employee shares their current reality or their understanding of the current situation, the reality other employees gets updated and we are able to arrive at a shared reality.

What is dialogic culture?

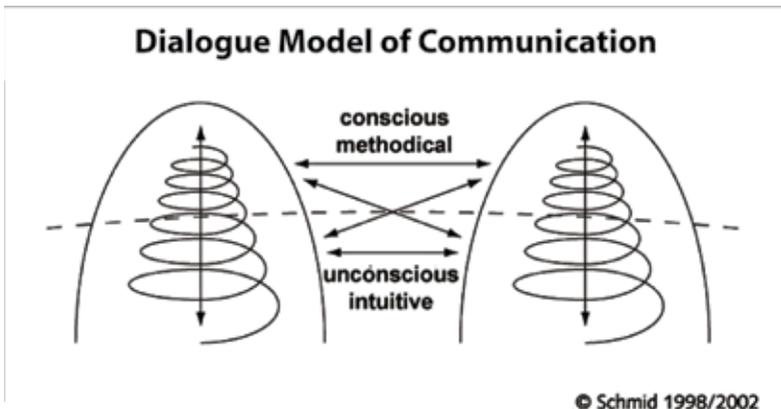


Fig 7 Dialog - Model of communication

"Narrative" dimensions of who or what meets in the dialogue?

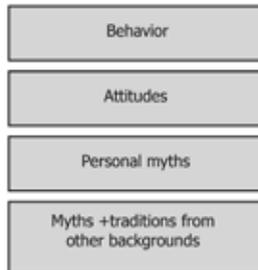


Fig 8 - Narrative Dimensions of who or what meets in the dialogue

Dialogic culture is the way to engage and narrate.

In a dialogic culture employees have permission to talk about the impact each other's action has on self, others departments and organisation as a whole. Through the discussions they understand how they work together and how they are co-creating any difficult situation. This realisation gives them a conscious choice to continue creating unhealthy situations or move towards creating a healthy work situation.

Dialogic culture is the way to engage and narrate.

For example let us say that in a meeting, the head of logistics complains that he does not get the support of other departments in completing his delivery on time. Since it is perceived as a complaint, on hearing this the employees in the production department start showing evidences where they see logistics team has not cooperated with them to justify and counter the complaint. These are two different realities which are from two different perspectives. This meeting can go on in this manner without any new understanding or appreciation of other's perspective.

The first objective then is to create a common shared reality between the employees of two departments which aims at mutual understanding. In this example, for creating a shared reality it is then essential to ask for specific example of non cooperation. The examples which are specific rather than general and vague will help each of the team understand the perspective of the other team. Dialogue involves engagement and the freedom to narrate.

The examples which are specific rather than general and vague will help each of the team understand the perspective of the other team

Engage

Engaging with the another individual is a kind of attitude towards the relationship. Schmid says, "If your soul carries the relationship of the person with whom you want to relate then you will be able relate no matter what the differences are with that person." I would add that willingness to carry the relationship is important part for engaging with the other person. Another way to look at is to have contact with the other. Many times we think we are in contact with the other person but we are not. Engaging is ability to establish contact and relate with the other person. When we are engaged with the other individual sharing each other's ideas and experience becomes possible and easy.

Schmid says, "If your soul carries the relationship of the person with whom you want to relate then you will be able relate no matter what the differences are with that person."

Narrate

Narrating is an ability to engage with the logic of words and at the same time to cut across beyond words to understand the intuitive and unconscious parts of individuals reality. Here what is referred to as 'unconscious' is that part of the reality which is not being noticed. Our conscious mind has a limitation in paying attention to everything. Through narrating one can become aware of matters that needs to be included as a part of understanding the current reality. During our narration, if we

are able to express the cognitive and intuitive parts of our experience through our narration then one can come to as close as possible to the current reality of an individual or a group .

Thus in engaging and narrating an environment is created where people share their intuitions as well as cognitive experience and learn together their organisational roles and responsibilities and perform together. However sharing of intuition by employees in a group needs a conducive climate. In a conducive environment, employees narrate their experience and understand what kind of reality gets constructed through their action. This exchange helps employees at all levels in attuning to each other's current reality and increases their ability to understand the overall current reality of the organisation.

For example after a engaging and hearing the narrative of the sales team, a product development manager shared his realization, "I always felt the sales team does not show interest in new products. Hearing the perspective of the sales team I realize, I have not included them in any of the product development meetings and yet I expect them to co-operate. They may understand and cooperate better if they are included in product development meetings".

In building a shared reality, we also have to pay attention to the following :

- Setting the required Focus
- Open communication
- Integration of Intuition\cognition
- Focusing on reality construction than on content discussion
- Integrating multi layers of reality
- Communication as a cultural encounter
- Confrontation
- Four levels of shared reality
- Finding the relevant reality

Focus

It is important to set a focus for any work. This is applicable for dialogic culture also. The narratives can start at random but along the way we need to arrive at a common focus on why we are together. This will help in setting the scope and limitation for the reality construction among employees. Open-ended narratives can dissipate energy and having a focus will always help in containing the narratives and channelizing energy of the individuals and group in co-creating new realities.

Open communication

“Open communication touches the soul of the other” says Schmid. When our narratives are clear and authentic it reaches the other. It is not necessary that we devise a strategy, use concepts or jargons, to convince people. Open communication is expressing our experience as narratives and listening to others and groups’ narrative. In this exchange of narratives, there evolves a space to share and construct a common shared reality in an organisation.

Open communication touches the soul of the other

Integrating Intuition and Cognition

It is important to integrate intuition and cognition in constructing realities in organization. Eric Berne founder of transactional analysis defined intuition as “knowing without knowing how you know it.” We get such intuitions in most unexpected moments and sometimes it is an aha experience when we get such insights. Bernd Schmid emphasizes the importance of training ourselves to think intuitively, so that we can use the strength of our intuitive capacity at required moments. Schmid uses theatre metaphors, thinking in images and pictures and narratives to develop our intuitive capacity. However he also cautioned that we should not use all the intuitive ideas for action. Sometimes we need to confront

Bernd Schmid emphasizes the importance of training ourselves to think intuitively, so that we can use the strength of our intuitive capacity at required moments.

our intuitions with respect to what kind of reality we intend to construct. For example, once a manager was complaining that his subordinate was not responding to the change and producing the expected result. When I saw their conversation as a movie scene in my mind, I intuitively felt it was like father and son talking. They both were struggling in a symbiotic relationship. I checked within myself what kind of reality will be created in expressing this image (father and son image) to the manager and his subordinate. I realized that this intuitive idea might not fit the organizational context. However this intuition has a message and hence I used role theory, which I shared with them. The manager and subordinate realized that they are stuck because they are approaching each other from the private role. As per the organizational role the subordinate has to do that work and the manager has to take action if there is any delay in getting the result. This understanding from the role theory framework helped them to resolve the conflict and led to constructing the current reality from their organizational roles. This is an example of integrating intuition and cognitive frame work to check whether the message from one's intuition can be relevantly used to the context or not.

Focusing more on reality construction than on content Discussion.

Many times I see people in organisations focus on content rather than seeing how they are co-creating a reality together. For example, I facilitated a cross functional team meeting between three departments in an organisation. We decided to list the unresolved issues between these departments on a white board. Soon the board was filled with more than 65 points. We had three teams and I asked the team members to see what one change if they make, it can create a difference to the list of issues presented in the white board. After discussions, the teams came up with three ideas.

- 1) Increase communication among departments,
- 2) Co-ordinate by involving the other team members from the beginning and
- 3) Share Responsibilities.

Then the team went on to discuss how they could do this and translate these three new ideas into action. The teams realized that if they work differently 80 percent of the issue written on the board will get cleared by itself. This is an example of taking little content and focusing more on how reality can be constructed.

Integrating multi layers of reality

A common shared reality among employees in an organization is created by any stimuli. A clean environment ensures that the individual behaves carefully according to values, while a rotten surrounding indicates, that how you behave doesn't matter much. Studies in Zürich, Switzerland have (Prof. Behr) show, that the same people for example steal more in a neglected surrounding.

***Same people
for example
steal more in
a neglected
surrounding.***

Communications between human beings are encounters of their world of meanings and values, because all of us view the world through our own frames of reference. Activated roles and status also give rise to certain fields of reality. When the same person communicates from different roles, his communication and frame of reference may be different. When two or more people meet there is a possibility for mismatch in their frames of reference and hence in understanding the reality in some level.

The traditional Shannon Weaver "sender-channel-receiver model of communication" assumes a controlled exchange of messages and a consistent interpretive framework. If the message is transmitted correctly and the channel works well, the exact same message must arrive at the receiver. We expect this to be the rule. Otherwise, we assume there must be a communication failure that needs to be fixed. Often, we also implicitly expect to initiate an intended apprehension or even a desired behavior in with the transmitted

***Positive confrontations
are often unsuccessful.
This happens, if the
related communicative
tasks are underestimated
and if the culture
of confrontation is
underdeveloped.***

message.

Communication as a cultural encounter

From a systemic perspective, however, it is normal that living systems refer entirely to their own realities and that their communication can only be understood in the light of their own cultures. In order to understand communication, one must study cultures. In order to understand cultures, one must embark in communication experiences within them. That's why we'll refer to the model shown in image (fig) as the "model of cultural encounters in communication".

The actors involved, as well as the communication processes are complex. Complex is not the same as complicated, which can be true of technical systems. It rather refers to the autonomy of these processes, meaning that they follow autonomous and recondite principles. Despite all this, the most important purpose of communication is to create a space for a somewhat reliable encounter and a shared reality. From this perspective, it is to be expected that random or undesirable shared realities or qualities of encounters can happen at any time. It is expected that individual B selects utterances of individual A based on their own reality system and that they react to these utterances with a behaviour that follows their own reality and needs for development. If the outcomes of communication vary from the expected results, they should be regarded as opportunities for learning, not as mistakes. The organizational task is not to eliminate errors, it is rather to increase the probability of mutual understanding and complementary action.

If the outcomes of communication vary from the expected results, they should be regarded as opportunities for learning, not as mistakes.

Model of communication as cultural encounter



Fig 9 : Model of cultural encounters in communication

Both models of communication, the Shannon Weaver sender-channel-receiver model and the model of cultural encounters have their valid perspectives and can be used to compliment each other.

If expectations in communication are not fulfilled, we often spontaneously derive that obvious solutions were not acted upon or that responsibilities were neglected. Accordingly, we form our opinions about those people of who we think are responsible for the failures. If we analyze the situation more closely, we can see that we project our own realities on others without further evaluation or that we integrate others quite naturally into our own imagination of reality, just as if we were practicing some sort of "reality colonialism".

If we are instead open to cultural encounters, we can use this idea for gaining an understanding on which level we could or could not develop a mutual framework of reference. Within this mutual framework of reference, we can then contemplate on which level an intervention would have to take place in order to deal with missing consistency and in order to realize a better shared reality through improved reconciliation. Gaining a better understanding of missing consistency and its significance can be seen as a good progress. As a result, we neither believe in false agreements nor in false disagreements. Thus, we can save the pains of some communication efforts or specify our messages better.

Confrontation

In our everyday world, we associate the term confrontation mostly with the confrontational clash of two systems. In a more neutral way, the term simply refers to the meeting and the comparison of different realities and self-organizing. A brave confrontation, based on interest and mutual respect, can be of great advantage for the further development of the systems involved, for constructively dealing with differences, and for community building. This applies to leadership and cooperative relationships as well as to encounters of different cultures, e.g. in the context of a merger of companies.

The purpose of confrontation is not necessarily to achieve congruent realities, which would rather lead to cultural monotony, but to achieve an understanding of the differences or sometimes even incoherencies for which we can then aim at peaceful coexistence. This can even strengthen the dynamics and identity of the systems involved: "The encounter with the otherness can strengthen your uniqueness." (Rupert Lay).

Positive confrontations are often unsuccessful. This happens, if the related communicative tasks are underestimated and if the culture of confrontation is underdeveloped.

Positive confrontations are often unsuccessful. This happens, if the related communicative tasks are underestimated and if the culture of confrontation is underdeveloped.

In consulting, the term confrontation refers to consultants contraposing their own explicit or implicit imaginations of reality to those of their clients. Consultants use this approach to help clients with the reformation of their imaginations of reality. They encourage clients to question their realities, to broaden their horizons, to redesign information and correlations and, if applicable, to adopt other solutions and imaginations of responsible action. Good consultants don't try to colonialize the reality of their clients. Instead, they offer a confrontation in the sense of a positive cultural encounter. Creating an adequate mutually shared reality is, particularly at the beginning of a consultant-client relationship, a special challenge for the partners involved. Above all, the consultant needs the appropriate

competences and has to assume responsibility in this setting. He has to study his counterpart's reality and way of self-organizing and must not become absorbed by their understanding of reality, because this would inhibit his ability to create differences. Professional service should ideally create meaningful confrontations with reality, without which consulting would become redundant.

Many aspects of reality are selected definitions and unfold their credibility only after they have been implemented and their results can be directly experienced. This makes it imperative that a strong consultant applies definition competence. The consultant uses accredited or acquired authority to make other aspects of reality plausible and, in consequence, trustworthy. By claiming that certain things exist, that they are relevant, linked with other things etc., a consultant with adequate authority can make these things become relevant aspects of his client's reality.

Four levels of shared reality

The systemic term "information" needs to be introduced briefly, because of its important role in the following model. Here, data and information are two different things. Data refers to facts of any kind. Only those facts, whose manifestation make a difference to someone, result in information. Example: "It is raining" is data. If we don't go hiking on a rainy day, the difference between "raining" and "not raining" becomes relevant information with regard to hiking. If we go hiking on a rainy day, too, "raining" has no information value for the decision of whether we go hiking or not, but it might have for the question of whether to "bring an umbrella" or "not".

For communication to be successful, a shared framework of reference or a shared framework for the confrontation of realities needs to be established. For this purpose, we distinguish four levels of a shared reality.

Encounter Levels of Communication

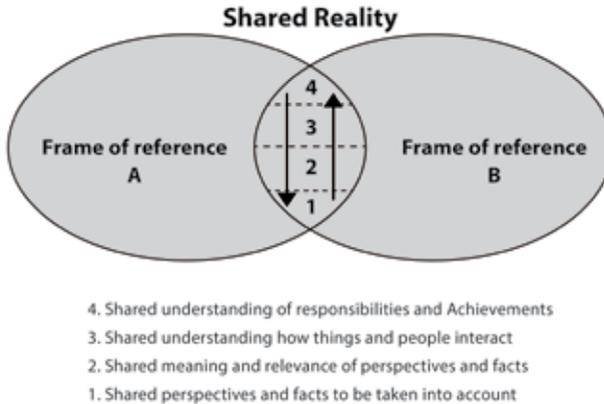


Fig 10 : Levels in creating a Shared Reality

Level 1: Data and scenarios

Do the participants refer to the same data? Do they know the scenarios to which the other participants refer the current situation to? Does a shared understanding of the relevant scenarios exist?

Level 2: Meanings and information

Do the participants know the meanings of their counterparts? Do the participants attribute the same meanings to existing data? Do the participants share the same perception of what is and what isn't relevant for the description of the situation?

Level 3: Conclusions and interdependencies

- What conclusions can be derived from the framework of reference and the connections between the different systems?
- What effects can be expected from the use of the meanings getting constructed through the interdependencies?
- Do the participants share mutual or complementary imaginations of the means with which the desired realities can be created or changed?

Level 4: Solutions and responsibilities

- Do the participants share mutual or complementary perceptions of what could be acceptable solutions for open questions?
- Who has to take on which responsibility in order to make an impact on behalf of these solutions?
- Which authority or obligation exists that allows the participants to take each other up on their promise?

In most cases, we assume that a fairly reliable agreement on the level of solutions and responsibilities can only be reached, if agreement explicitly or implicitly exists on the other levels, too. Otherwise, responsible complementary action cannot take effect or is not stable, because hidden disagreements can lead to non-complementary actions at any time. However, an alternative could be to agree on complementary actions even if the participants don't share the meanings and imaginations of interdependencies. This has been proven particularly successful e.g. in marital conflicts.

Which objective data is involved or which cultural assumptions are accepted is fundamentally influenced by relationships. Oftentimes, we jump to conclusions and assume that others want, don't want, resist something etc. Usually, people make an effort of conducting themselves responsibly. This doesn't work out, because other levels of the framework of reference and interdependencies were not yet reflected in a way that would allow a competent management to be based on it or because the framework of reference was not communicated and checked for

compatibility. Reality can be referred to as an extensive reality which was created or experienced in relationships. Thus, confrontation is an almost paradox task for which no „one size fits all“ solutions, but rather respectful and creative solutions exist that need to prove themselves equally in both worlds of the systems involved. This requires authority and humbleness.

If we pursue a strategy in organizational consulting, we have to ask ourselves again and again:

- Which events exist in my strategy?
- What meaning do I attribute to these events?
- What imaginations about interdependencies do I have and how can I contribute to the solution, based on my responsibilities?

Certainly, one can also do good work without this model. If, however, you get the impression that the consultation is at a standstill, it might be helpful to have a tool with which you can thoroughly and consequently reflect on the process of the confrontation of realities and the creation of shared realities.

An example from team development

As a conclusion, I will outline the confrontation of realities and confrontation itself in each category of the four levels, using the example of team development. It is not as important to match the conversation precisely and logically to the four levels. It is more important to get a feeling for their implementation in the confrontation. Obviously, team development has many variants and dimensions of which we can only present a microscopic excerpt in this paper.

Level 1

At the beginning of a team development intervention a consultant observes that the participants have a long face. One possible way to take up this observation could be by saying:

Consultant: What can you do to change the oppressive mood in here?

If the participants now look confused in the sense of "What's wrong with him?", the consultant has taken too much of a shared imagination of reality for granted. He has offered an intervention on the solution and responsibility level too early.

According to the model, the consultant could confront on level 1 and say:
Consultant: When I look around me, I get the impression that you are looking a bit sad or gloomy. Can you relate to what I am saying?

If then someone says:

Participant: No, I can't. Actually, everyone is always in a good mood here. It becomes obvious that this person cannot relate to the intervention "how can you get out of this oppressive mood?". For this person, the perception of this reality does not exist or doesn't seem to belong to the characterization of the current scenario. Maybe other perceptions of reality - for example who sits where or how well everyone is dressed - are subject of the characterization of this person's reality.

If the consultant nonetheless wants to include the participants into his focus, he could now say:

Consultant: Have a close look at the faces around you. Does anyone share my perception?

It could now happen that the participants one by one confirm the perception offered.

Participant : It is true that we have to be in a good mood, because our revenue is high. But looking in the faces around me, it is true that we might seem to feel a bit gloomy.

With this, the consultant achieved to create a shared reality on level 1 or to define a difference with the participants who don't share his perception.

Level 2

The consultant could now say:

Consultant : If, on a beautiful day like this, people in this team seem to feel gloomy, I conclude that the group might not be able to work.

And then someone might say:

Participant : This doesn't mean anything. The people in this team have worked very hard for the past six weeks. It is quite normal that they just sag if they get off the treadmill.

This participant assesses the accepted shared perception differently and ascribes a different meaning to it.

The consultant could say at that:

Consultant : From my perspective, this could also mean something different. But we would have to clarify it.

If the Consultant now starts to ask every participant about their experiences, one participant could say:

Participant : Indeed, we are also tired, but that's not everything. This morning, I was actually in a better mood than I am right now that I'm sitting here. Maybe it has something to do with the fact that we sit here together.

This would be a competing meaning of the situation. With this meaning, the consultant and the participants could come to the agreement that the morale within the group might be meaningful and relevant for what

is happening. With this, a shared understanding on the meaning would have been created.

Level 3

Level 3 aims at discussing conclusions and interdependencies. The consultant could say:

Consultant: In that case, we should focus on this in the next thirty minutes. If we can at least talk about it, a gloomy morale will not affect the ability to work and the team spirit of the group. We might also discover topics that are important for the team and would have been lost otherwise.

Then, a participant could say:

Participant: Sometimes, people are in a good mood and sometimes they aren't. If you offer us an exciting topic to work on, our mood might get better.

This answer is an indication for the consultant. It shows that the team members, even though they have reached an agreement on the first two levels, don't share an understanding of what they can derive from the situation and with which means a solution can be produced.

The consultant could talk about experiences with other teams, whose morales became better after awkward topics have been discussed, clarified and even expressed emotionally.

Level 4

Participant : If you consider the great deal of emotional pressure we're under and how we have to elbow our ways, you can't expect anyone to come out of the wood.

Now, you are on the level of responsibilities. On this level, very different ideas on who would have to take on responsibility for shaping a positive culture of conversation might exist.

Basically, the consultant and the team have only now accomplished a sufficient degree of connecting to reality that they can negotiate how solutions could look like and who could take on real responsibility. It would be possible to draw up a contract containing responsibilities and rules based on which everyone could hold themselves and others responsible. If it had led to the ability to work and a brightening of the team's morale, the confrontation with the consultant's culture would have been a gain for the team.

It stands to reason that these reflections and models can be used for large events and the encounters of larger cultures, e.g. in the context of a merger of companies. And this will surely generate some kind of benefit. In the end, however, it is crucial whether meaningful analyses and guidelines can be transformed into communication that is beneficial for system and cultural encounters.

Often managers complain to me about what they feel as lack of commitment on part of their subordinates. My answers to them has been, "if you learn to attune with your subordinates on all these 4 levels of reality and arrive at a common shared reality the chances of developing committed subordinates are high".

Finding relevant reality

To find the relevant reality, we need a systemic perspective.

For example I was coaching a subordinate and his manager. The focus was - increasing sales. The hypothesis I framed included the reality of customer, the manager and subordinate which I thought were relevant to the focus we had. The customers were unhappy with the product and the sales field staff service. The manager was not happy since the sales had dropped. After we started our work we found a very interesting reason for a drop in sales. We found that the stores and despatch team supplied the products late. Now the reality of the store employee also became relevant. On investigating the reason for the delay, it became evident that the stores needed an additional man power to deliver on time. Once this additional manpower was given the sales picked up.

So initially in an effort to find a solution, we start with an hypothesis "These are the people in relevant roles whose reality need to be shared". As they start their narration we may find some more people in relevant roles whose reality needs to be included and some people whose reality may be excluded. This way the employees learn to share significant reality and construct new reality.

In a narrative culture employees learn to engage, dialogue and in the process build a common or a shared reality.

Thus in a narrative culture employees learn to engage, dialogue and in the process build a common or a shared reality.

Other Useful frameworks in reality Construction

As a consultant we can also use the following frameworks which has been created by Schmid to understand the reality construction in an organization. These frameworks can also be used by employees to understand the reality that they are creating at the work place.

- ***Theatre Metaphor in reality construction***
- ***Accounting and recounting***
- ***Defining, redefining and co defining***
- ***Meta perspective***

Theatre Metaphor in reality construction

Theatre art by itself is a reality construction tool. The script, plots, screen play, directions, characters, lightings, music etc are already part of reality construction and this theatre understanding can be used to understand the reality of an individual. The more frequent specific plays happen, the more this is the personality you are, personality not as an abstract construct, but personality in action.



Fig 11 : Using Theatre Metaphor in Reality Construction

You can also use theatre metaphor to sense the current reality in an organisation. This also helps people to be narrative about their experience. Especially where two personalities or two organizations meet each other for a shared play, you can use the theater metaphor to focus on different aspects of integrating the show.

Many questions can be designed using the theater metapor. For example: Is there a shared understanding of the story? Who takes responsibility for which part of the story? Which roles are there? How will these roles be designed to actors? Which part of the play enacted is being enacted on which stage ? Who will set up these stages? Does the way the play evolves, fit the stages involved ? Which style is appropriate to which part of the play?

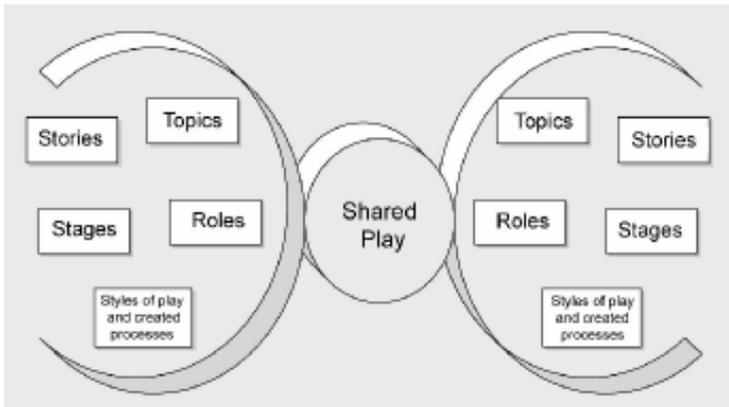


Fig 12 : Shared Play Reality Construction

If a play is somehow inappropriate, you can use theater metaphor to discuss in which dimensions alternatives should be considered. For example: It may be the right play, but on too small/too big stage. Is the experimenting phase of the play, being rolled out in the style of a glamorous premiere? Is it a too big story for a minor topic? Do we need so many roles to tell the story? Should we have less roles but more options to substitute the actors?

Along the same lines, using theatre metaphors we can ask questions in the direction of, what is the story of this organisation/unit? who is the script writer? or who can influence the script?, Who is the director or co-director?, who is on stage and who else has to be in stage?.How are the employees enacting their joint performance?, who are the audience? etc.

This does not mean a person has to learn theatre or go to a drama school. If they do so then chances of getting deviated from organisational context is high. I came to know an organisation has brought a movie director to teach theatre to their employees. When employees move to theatre context they may not be able use theatre as a metaphor to understand the organisational functions. What I recommend is instead of employees moving towards learning theatre they can learn and understand the organisation using theatre thinking. In this way theatre thinking and methods can be well used within the organisational context. Using theatre thinking can help in understanding the current reality as well as to construct new reality.

When employees move to theatre context they may not be able use theatre as a metaphor to understand the organisational functions.

Accounting and Recounting

This frame work also helps in the reality construction. We account or include things which fits our frame of reference. When more people work together they may encounter situations where others have a different frame of approach to the same situation. By accounting or including their frame of reference we can recount and update our frame of reference. This flexibility will help in constructing a shared common reality.

For example a manager may be angry that his subordinate is late for a meeting. Once he hears the story of the subordinate and understands the valid reason for the delay, the managers perspective towards the employee changes and the anger also vanishes. This is accounting others' frame of reference and recounting within, to update and expand one's frame of reference. With this new frame of reference the manager is able

to share the reality of the subordinate. This accounting and recounting process helps in creating the common shared reality.

Defining redefining and Co Defining.

We define a topic and start engaging or dialoging with the other person or a group. When the other\group are not aligning with the topic they may introduce a new topic or meaning to the discussion. This is seen as redefining and in psychotherapy perspective redefining is seen as an unhealthy coping mechanism.

In an organizational context, instead of seeing redefining as an unhealthy coping mechanism, Schmid recommends that we get along with the others' redefinition and co define with them. This does not mean accepting everything, but showing, that I understand the way others define and probably want to redefine my reality. Then we can bargain on it . In this way both the realities are included and this leads to a construction of common shared reality.

Case Example :

A meeting was called between a unit manager and the employees to discuss ways to increase productivity. Slowly, the discussion moved over to salary increase. The employees had redefined and introduced a different meaning without answering the question of increasing productivity. To Co-define it is important for the manager to ask, "when asked about productivity you seem to talk about salary. Is there any reason to it?" The answer might be, "if we don't talk about salary now, we will miss an opportunity to talk about salary issue". The manager can then assure that he will arrange a separate meeting to talk about salary issues as now the meeting has been called for to discuss productivity. It is also possible that the salary may be the key issue and unless that is explicitly spoken about, the chances of increased productivity may be low. This co-defining with employees helps in identifying the intensity of the issue which was redefined and gives an idea about where the current focus should be. As the managers and employees co-define, a common

reality is constructed between both parties and can lead to a better reality construction.

Meta perspective

Meta means a larger view or an overall view. Meta perspective means a perspective on the perspective. Meta position involves ability to see yourself from outside as well as to see how you are engaging with the world. A bird's eye view on the inter play shows a pattern of reality construction which is happening. If the pattern is unproductive then it gives a scope to construct a new pattern. Meta position also helps to have a systemic perspective to see how interplay is happening between people, system and the influence of culture on this interplay. Systemic view helps to decide on the leverage point where, if necessary changes are made it will give the maximum results. Hence developing the skill to have meta perspective from a meta position will help in clever reality construction.

The above methods are helpful in constructing a shared reality in an organisational context. Having this question, "what kind of reality I want to construct now?" will help in constructing that reality. Organisational realities are co-created and we have a choice of creating an empowering reality.

**– CHAPTER 7 –
IRONING OUT THE CREASES**

IRONING OUT THE CREASES

"All will be well at the end, if it is not well at the end then it is not the end"

- Indian Proverb

Every progressive effort even if it is not successful, when seen from the learning perspective, gives an opportunity to dialogue, to change plans, share responsibility and performance till the new initiatives yields results and the focus is achieved. As I travelled along the path of becoming a competent organisational consultant, I learnt small minute details which helped me spread my wings.

Some techniques and details came about in my learning conversations with Schmid and some concepts I developed on my own taking a clue from what he said. I am sharing some simple learnings that signal a red flag in the path of a developing consultant, pot holes that one needs to be aware of, which if not attended to with awareness can become an obstacle in achieving the set focus in organisational development work.

Falling in love with my own Ideas

As my work was becoming successful in organisational developmental work, many many senior managers in one organization started consulting me on various issues regarding work. I was comfortable sharing my views with them. One day based on the organizational reality I had heard from various levels, I thought a change in line structure will help the organization to build a common shared reality among employees. I also made new design of line structure and I had hopes that this new initiative of mine will help the organization.

I shared my ideas to Schmid before taking it to the management of the company. Hearing the passion with which I spoke about my ideas Schmid said, "Geethan you have fallen in love with your own ideas". This was an eye opener for me. I realised that I had formed a perception, I had gathered

information that aligned with my perception and finally found a solution based on my own perception. I had no idea if my perception matched the organisational reality or not. Had I taken it to the management without consulting Schmid, surely I would have exceeded my brief.

I understood that as a OD specialist, “It’s ok to have suggestions to the management but people in organizational role have to decide what works for them”. An important aspect for learning specialist in organization is not to fall in love with their own idea or perspective and get fixated with it.

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Similar to the above situation, as we get fixed with ideas, we can get fixed with the meaning they have for words. This attitude can become a hindrance in building a common shared reality.

Sharp communication and communication of essence

As an example of people getting fixed with meaning for words, the word strategy has been a part of my language without my being clear about what the word means. Once I was hearing a management consultant talking about the difference between strategy, planning and tactics. It was quite confusing to me from then, “what is strategy and how this is different from planning?”. When I shared these doubts about strategy, planning with Schmid, he gave me a perspective on how we struggle with rigid meanings to these words.

Every word may have different meaning to different individuals. In this context. Schmid clarified the difference between sharp definitions and definition of essence. Communication with sharp definition create a reality or assumption that should have the same meaning for the uttered word. For example a person may say, “you should not use the term creativity in organizations you should always use the word innovation”. This is a sharp definition - “I have this meaning and all of you should have the same meaning” . What difference does it make whether the word is

innovation or creativity as long as we have a common understanding of that something new has to be developed or created and executed.

In using mathematical or engineering or scientific terms we can aim at having a common meaning. For example a gear should mean the same for both the engineers, but the word speed may be different. What is speed for one person may be slow to another. Hence in communication with others we need to be mindful of how we co-create experience through what we say, how it is perceived by the other and to be aware how we construct a reality through our communication.

In communication with others we need to be mindful of how we co-create experience through what we say, how it is perceived by the other and to be aware how we construct a reality through our communication.

In another context, once a learning and development manager said, "I don't believe in having an external resource (consultant or coach) to solve company problems". Though on the surface it seemed quite rude, I understood the essence of what he meant. It may be true that the company problems should be solved by the employees. An external consultant may insist on his\her reality, insist on sharp communication, not attune to organizational reality and hence may not be able to solve the problem satisfactorily.

What is the role of an External consultant

In the approach that I learnt from Schmid, the consultant's work is participative - 50% to attune to organizational reality and 50% holding to the learning frame. In this way the consultant or coach can create a climate for

- The employees to know what they know
- Integrate what each other knows
- Emerging solutions
- Learning frame towards events along with work

- To share Meta perspective
- Elicit unproductive patterns and designing new patterns for organizational health

Learning culture and Learning & Development Managers

When I approach organizations, regarding organizational development work through building learning culture some of the management people say, "meet the learning and development manager." In many organizations the L&D manager do not have powers to bring the people in the right roles into the change process. In my initial assessment if I see that the people in the right roles are not willing to be part of the learning system then I don't work as the learning initiatives will not succeed in such situations.

Responsibility for change

Usually I work along with senior management people and employees at various levels. I encountered a situation where I have to work alone with few group of employees. When I checked with Schmid regarding this situation he said, " You can meet the employees as long as the responsibility for change and improvement is with the managers."

What I understood is people who have authority to shape the organization have to be part of change initiative. If not the consultant alone cannot make a change in an organization.

What I understood is people who have authority to shape the organization have to be part of change initiative. If not the consultant alone cannot make a change in an organization.

Managing Uncomfortable situations

Sometimes a consultant can be called to manage uncomfortable situations. However the consultant or coach has to ensure that the managers and the employees share responsibility along with the coach in dealing with the discomfort.

Case Example : The management of a telecom company wanted to implement a new payment system but most of the team leaders were unhappy as in their view the system implementation would markdown some of the hard work their team had put in. Since the management did not seem in a mood to listen, 70% of the team leaders were planning to quit the job.

Under these circumstances, I walked into a leadership coaching session unaware of the looming uproar among the team leaders. During the course of the day in the leadership coaching session along with me the senior managers and the team leaders were able to come to terms with the current reality and the management decision. . When I processed the concerns of the senior managers and the team leaders concerns about the new system a solution emerged. The seniors said that they will get 60 more days from the management and the team leaders accepted to experiment with the new system within those periods. Though it was a turbulent situation the coaching helped in dealing with the discomfort and face the situation as a joint responsibility.

Using Intuition & Images in OD work

Sometimes when I enter an organization, I get fleeting images. During the conversation I have with the managers, these images confirm my image, what could be happening in an organization. I shared with Schmid the images I get when I enter an organization

Examples

- When I was waiting in the reception of a television company to meet the CEO, I was getting an image of a person in a frying pan. When I met the CEO he was sharing his success story of how he had made the organization profitable. While listening to the CEO I felt incongruence in his narration. Later I came to know that the CEO had major conflict with the share holders and in couple of days I got a message that the CEO had been asked to leave the organization.
- When I went to meet a Business head of a telecom company the image I was getting was, "A big shark chasing smaller fishes" The organization was oriented to sales and the business head was really driving the sales team like a shark.

When I shared with Schmid the images I get and the interpretation I make about the images he said, "One part of our mind is narrative we have constant information in the form of thoughts and images. It is not necessary all the information in our mind need to be used to assess the organization". He further added, "you also need to check whether you have an agreement to work in all areas of an organization. You need to check, "what is my role as a consultant and see if these images you get has any relevance to the role. If you find some more area of an organization needs to be looked at, then you need to have an agreement or negotiate for an agreement".

Though there are limitations in using these images, I see these images have an intuitive solution. Instead of expressing my images to the people in the organization I use them to frame questions. These questions help to dialogue and attune to the relevant organizational reality. This attunement between me and the organizational team gives a right perspective leading to emerging solution which can address the organizational issues.

Case Example

For example when I was working in an organizational coaching situation, I was hearing a word "Leak "in my mind. On that day no discussion was made on the packed products having leaks. I thought of framing a question based on the image and word I was getting. I asked, "what has been the stressing moment in each department for this month?. The discussion surprisingly ended up on the need for arresting product leakage . That had been the most stressing moment in the unit for most of them.

I believe our intuitive mind knows the answer well ahead but as Fritz Perls said the "obvious is not visible" Hence I invite people to dialogue on their intuitions or frame the questions based on intuition. This can guide the consultant and the organisational team towards an emerging shared reality leading to shared solution.

Introducing a new play

While progressing the organizational change there are situations where the consultant and organization may feel stuck. Investing time to resolve the stuck position may lead to a vicious circle. The evidence for being stuck is that the team will encounter a dilemma or the employees will be working more but the outcome will not be proportionate to the invested time and energy or there will be no result. In such a case it is good to introduce a new focus which will address the current struggle.

Case Example :

A company was entering a new market with new products and hiring the competent people was a challenge . Motivating the employees in the team did not seem to help as they did not seem inclined to match the required speed which the company needed to establish themselves in the market. We tried to dialogue to match expectations yet could not get the desired result. We felt stuck.

At this point I suggested that we organize a mentoring program. We identified potential employees down the line and introduced a mentoring program. This new initiative brought in fresh blood into the system. Now the employees who had been slack were forced to build new competencies to match the emerging context, as otherwise they would be lag behind. Slowly as some of the old team learnt to handle the new project other employees also picked up and in a short span of 2 months we had formed a competent culture to handle the new context. This helped in resolving the dilemma of being stuck, by creating another situation.

When I shared my success of my intervention Schmid using theater metaphor said, " if the current play is not giving the right result instead of correcting the play introduce a new play". This new play can address the old issue or bring something new, which is relevant to the current organizational context.

However, there is a question to be pondered on, before introducing a new play.

Are we shifting the discomfort by introducing the new play?

One way to check this is, are the employees in the responsible roles also are part of this new play? Are they willing to involve in constructing the new events and do they have the resources?. By answering these questions and knowing that the employees are committed to making new changes, introduction of a new play is viable.

On the logic of introducing a new play Schmid says, a dilemma or a stuck situation exists because the situation is seen or approached through an existing frame of reference. As long as we hold to the same frame of reference any approach to resolve the issue will not give result. At such time introducing a new play will bring a new frame of reference which has the potential to resolve the dilemma. This new play is also evolved through the dialoguing among the team and hence a common shared reality can be ensured before introducing the new play.

Is experience in learning and development necessary before involving people in OD work ?

In building learning culture for organizational development employees various levels are involved. Some senior managers who are in the guiding position may not have experience in the learning and development methods. Hence it is important for the consultant to assess the managers before involving them in the learning and development work. At the same time the organization need not wait till all the managers are equipped. What needs to be done is have an agreement with the senior managers that they open to being coached along the way.

Secondary Judgment

It is also important to build an acceptance for secondary judgment also among the people who are involved in the organisational development work .Secondary judgment is the judgment of any other person other than the employees involved in the change process, who can validate the progress of work. At any point when an organization development process is progressing this secondary judgment can help in validating change. These secondary judges can be other consultants or employees from other department or the management representative etc. whoever can validate the progress can be the secondary judge. In my experience once the learning culture gets rooted the employees and even the senior level managers welcome inputs from secondary judges.

Ethics in OD work

Schmid and I had discussion on ethical issues which come up during such organizational work. Schmid did not believe in setting standard ethical codes as a tight procedure. He told me ethics is one more perspective to be included to any context. Our reality gets constructed based on the perception with which

Our reality gets constructed based on the perception with which we see the events. One of the lights to be switched on is ethics.

we see the events. One of the lights to be switched on is ethics. Then employees can dialogue based on ethics as a perspective and evolve ethical thinking and practice context by context. In this way an ethical perception is included as a process rather than as a content which in itself can become inflexible over a period of time and can be the cause of a dilemma.

One of the ethical perspective I choose to dialogue with employees before building a narrative or dialoging culture is " what will you do with the information shared in the group, how will you use the information for constructive purposes and not penalize the employees who share openly?".

As the part of dialogue on ethics, solutions emerges on a context to context basis. Often, before I start the program I ensure the following agreements as a part of dialoging on ethics.

1. The senior managers assure the employees that their sharing will be seen from a learning perspective.
2. Senior managers share their vulnerabilities on work and build a mistake friendly culture
3. Control behavior through dialoguing
4. I meet employees at various levels and dialogue with them how to narrate situations as an aspiration and not as a complaint.
5. Any sharing is based on specific examples and reactions to the sharing is dialogued

Since I work with the employees for at least 6 to 12 sittings we dialogue on ethical perspective at regular intervals. Since the learning team is a group construct regular feedback on ethics also ensures narrative among employees as a constructive exchange. There is no ethical code I follow but I dialogue on ethics and use whatever emerges as an ethical practice then and there.

Psychotherapy vs organisational consultancy

The ethical conflict I had as a psychotherapist in the organizational practice was, " how to ensure confidentiality". In organization when I am hired I may not share the personal information but if I sense some employees are not able to match roles or not adequately equipped I may have to talk to appropriate people in roles. In an organizational context a consultant or a coach may be seen as a professional who will share information and not as one who will maintain confidentiality. In this way the employees can choose what information to share and what not to share. As long as the employees and the consultant are open about this I don't see any ethical issues. Often, I openly share with the team I work with, that I will be sharing such and such information with the management. Knowing what will be shared and the context in which it is being shared gives them the confidence of making a conscious choice on what they want to share and they appreciate my effort in supporting them in constructing new realities.

Limitations in culture building process

Sometimes I have wondered if introducing a learning culture in one division will influence the other divisions. Schmid and I concluded that this can be true sometimes and also not true at other times. Sometimes what was successful in one place need not be successful in all places. Once I introduced a learning culture in a factory as part of organisational development work. The productivity increased to an additional 40% without increase in machinery or man power. The management was very much appreciative but the same management did not want to have the learning culture in their head quarters.

Schmid used to tell me to stand before the mirror and ask myself, " what is my role and where does it begin and where does it end? I can never define my role independently when I work in an organization. My roles are also shaped though narratives which also helps me to know my limits and accordingly build the culture as a consultant.

Time to grow

This culture building process needs time and space for it to grow. This process is like sowing a seed and protecting the plant till it is stable by itself. Till then the new culture needs to be supported. It is not like a culture could be built in a targeted time frame. It needs people in competent roles coming together and aligning with various levels of employees for the learning culture in organizational development work to be weaved in as a part of organizational reality. Till date I have successfully been able to see positive difference in 6 sittings to 12 sittings within a year.

Fire fighting situations do not help in culture building

This kind of building learning culture to fire fight situations may not be of help. These are built at times when organization is willing for the long term and consistent result. When the organizational heads plan their future course, they also need to account for developing a culture that will help to reap and sustain the future growth.

Prototype

This type of learning culture cannot be rolled as a one time initiative. I remember a CEO who took charge of a multinational organization stating, "I want a new culture from now." And another CEO stating, "If chickens have to pull the train they have to". In my perception these are good fantasies.

The prototype for culture building or culture change needs to be initiated in one unit, in one level of an organization. This sample will help in learning the organizational patterns and facilitate initiating change in gradual steps. Once the learning culture becomes strong in one unit, it can be spread easily and as Schmid says, "culture will breed culture."

Once the learning culture becomes strong in one unit, it can be spread easily and as Schmid says, "culture will breed culture."

What I have shared so far are the minute lessons I learnt along the way. Some were evident immediately, as long as I was rooted firmly in the current reality of the organization I was working with. Some of these lessons became obvious only after a lot of trial and error. Knowing my limits and the confines of the role that I play in the organisational development work, helped me stay on course in my work.

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Afterword

I learnt valuable lessons in my journey as a caterpillar developing wings and becoming a butterfly. I have shared them here in the hope that professionals who aspire to be OD specialists can benefit from the information, knowing fully well that these are merely guidelines.

Each caterpillar will transform into a butterfly in its own unique way. And that's how it should be.

In the next volume, I will share my initial learning as I turned into a butterfly and learnt to spread my wings.

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THIS BOOK IS ABOUT NEW PERSPECTIVES IN ORGANIZATIONAL COACHING AND A STIMULATING GUIDE FOR PROFESSIONALS WHO WANT TO BUILD AN ONGOING COACHING CULTURE IN ORGANIZATIONS.

SOME OF THE KEY CONCEPTS IN THIS VOLUME 1

This book is about new perspectives in organizational coaching and a stimulating guide for professionals who want to build an ongoing coaching culture in organizations, methods to the dialogic method of training in organizations.

Some key concepts in this volume includes:

- Introduction to building a learning culture in organization through dialogic organizational work.
- New perspectives on learning & development and the need to move from current training methods to the dialogic method of training in organizations.
- Guidance and insights that emerged when Bernd Schmid (Dr) mentored Geethan in becoming an organizational consultant.



Bernd Schmid

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