

**THE OPEN SPACE  
ON  
OPEN SPACE  
VI**

**November 14-16, 1998**

**Monterey, California**

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## Introduction

From November 14 to 16, about 70 people gathered to participate in the sixth annual Open Space on Open Space. People came from Australia, Canada, Colombia, England, France, Germany and the United States. Our theme was "Growing the Space for Open Space." The space was opened and held by Brian Bainbridge, Peggy Holman and Linda Olson.

## What is my name?

I am open space  
I am one, I am all in one  
I am no one  
At all

Do you come to me in dream time  
Will you walk with me in waking  
May we be together all ways  
Have you seen me lately

Safety is my container  
Danger is the order of my day  
I wrap my paradox in a blanket of simplicity  
I compose a quilt of ambiguity with a single thread  
I chicken-scratch and penstroke and wave run  
I compress a fevered brow, and I pressure blood  
I am a weapons cache and an eagle's aerie and a siren's song and a jalapeno pepper  
I am so much fun I frighten people

I am open space  
Have you seen my friends  
Do you know my lovers and keepers  
And takers and hard drivers, my embryo dreams and prodigal children  
Can you travel in my circles, please, and mutter in my ranks

I am open space  
Can you run the fingers of your mind along my boundaries  
Can you penetrate my emptiness  
Can you fill my corners with cares or woes, or fourfold ways  
Can you move me

Can you get me open  
I am open space  
Can you fill me up  
I am open space  
Can you shut me down  
I am open space  
Can you empty me out  
I am open space  
Can you answer me  
I am open space

Can you question me  
I am open space  
Who am I  
I am open space  
I am everything  
I am open space  
I am nothing  
I am open space  
I am anything  
I am open space  
I am old  
I am open space  
I am new  
I am open space  
I am the same  
I am open space  
I am different  
I am open space  
I am I am I am I am

– Ralph Copelman

## 1. Open Space & Leadership & Appreciative Inquiry; Where is the Open Space?

**CONVENOR:** Russ Volckmann

**PARTICIPANTS:** 5 to 6

### **DISCUSSION/SUMMARY**

Presentation of holarchy model and its use with appreciative inquiry and coaching in working with leadership systems for high leverage rapid change at the top of the organization. Question: How can open space inform this process?

Key point: AI process still consultant led, consultant designed (?) while open space gets the consultant out of the way and creates the space for the energy and spirit of the system to transform rapidly. We discussed ways of practically including open space approach in the process.

## 2. Healing and Open Space

**CONVENOR:** Michael Onewing

**PARTICIPANTS:** Tom Mastandrea, Suska Davis, Carmen Liddane, Becky Peterson.

### **DISCUSSION/SUMMARY;**

Open Space lends self to open relating. Non blocked feelings. Healing can take place.

Michael Onewing experienced her own awakening as healer and now working with workshops as a facilitator and mediator, following specific training in the area of healing. Mediation and facilitation are to do with healing by their nature.

### POTENTIAL OF O.S. FOR HEALING..

How? By electing issues about healing, by people who need group healing inviting others within the wider group to help in the healing of that individual.

For communities such as people concerned for the healing of the planet. Example given of a group of academics who are experiencing burnout due to their role as educators about environment. For them and for others was an extreme concern or fear. O.S. could provide opportunity to discuss and heal on all kinds of levels.

Healing works around respect, which is true of O.S.

O.S. can enable people to let go of their fear around others. Essential in healing.

### CONSIDERATIONS;

As a facilitator need to meditate , to be centred, much as a healer would need to be.

The healer gains as much as the healee.

The openness that arises from working together in O.S. can be linked to the state of openness that arises when healing takes place.

Chants, music may have their place in O.S. as they do in healing.

### 3. Capturing the learning from OS

**CONVENOR:** Stella Humphries

**PARTICIPANTS:** Linda Olson, Ralph Copleman, Lois Fein, plus walk-ins

#### **DISCUSSION/SUMMARY**

The topic was to inquire into how we capture the learnings from OS experiences in a way that is credible in a corporate context.

We concluded:

- If the intention is to convince others of the “validity/usefulness” of OS then we should consider that there is no way we can reach everyone.
- People who intuit the value are likely to come on board – especially if they like/trust you. Therefore we need to model open space as a way of being.
- People who are not inherently aligned may be willing if they “hit the wall” i.e. nothing else has worked and they are desperate. The facilitator has to remain alert to openings/opportunities to bring OS into the conversation.
- Experience is the best teacher – invite people to participate.
- To gain an insight into the learnings: you ask the participants: what did you learn? What has changed? That deepens their learning and gives you stories, anecdotes.



#### 4. What Do We Want To Learn from Research on Open Space?

**CONVENOR:** Leon R.De King

**PARTICIPANTS:** Stella Humphries

##### **DISCUSSION/SUMMARY**

How capture critical moments in, and evidence of change from old, narrowly focused, control centered processes to Open, Sprit fostering processes?

How capture “Value” contributions of Open Space practice?

Direct measures?

Indirect measures?

Pre / Post

Costs

Time

Attendance patterns

Safety records

Stories about the group.

Video records of meetings.

Forget controlling for “Hawthorne Effect”: plan for it.

## 5. Open Space Institute of the United States [OSI(US)] Annual Meeting

**CONVENOR:** Roy Mayhugh

**PARTICIPANTS:** Peggy Holman, Sheila Isakson, Leon De King, Ann Blackstead and Michael Pannwitz

### **DISCUSSION/SUMMARY**

Leon agreed to continue to serve as OSI(US) Recorder.

Peg summarized results of the Summer 1998 Survey of OSI(US) members interests (See Attachment A).

Agreed re Leon's request for OSI(US) approval of his proposing a 1999-2001 (US) National Science Foundation(NSF) Innovation and Organizational Change(IOC) research grant, for which Prescott College of Prescott, Arizona, would serve as the "sponsoring academic organization," were that: A) OSI(US) should collaborate as a co-sponsor, with Prescott College, of this research project; B) proposal documents' "sponsor" references should be modified to include "in collaboration with the Open Space Institute of the United States OSI(US);" C) this research should be as internationally-globally oriented as possible; and D) that OSI(US) would assist in facilitating the distribution of reports of project research activities and findings..

Other issues raised included:

A) Should OSI (US) plan on maintaining archives of all Open Space activities?

B) Are we in the U.S. and the "west" becoming "so well wired" that we can begin able to function as virtual organizations?

(1) Six months experience in OSI(US) monthly teleconference Board meetings shows that participants do not yet feel the same spirit they would expect in a face to face meeting.

(2) Persons without e-mail are effectively excluded from participation in this virtual world.

(3) Agreed was that OSI(US) should be aware of this exclusory potential and exert efforts to prevent its actualization

(4) Noted by Peg was that OSI(US) has reached out with other (non-cyber) media, but at major work hours and \$\$ costs, but that assistants dedicated to the performance of specific tasks would help overcome this problem.

(5) Agreed were that OSI(US) would:

a) try to get OSI(US) members to take charge of the goals identified in the Summer 1998 summary; and

b) "Put this desire out" on OSLIST and seek volunteers.

C) Planning of OSONOS VII postponed until Tuesday, 11-17-98.

D) Peg presented OSI(US) financial statement (See Attachment B) showing a \$6-7,000 balance. Procedures applied to attaining and maintaining this balance were approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Leon R. De King,  
Recorder

## Attachment A

### **Open Space Institute (US) 1998-99 Plans**

#### **Organization Purposes**

- Mutual Support and Connection
- Mentoring and Being Mentored
- Learning and Research

#### **Community Wants**

- Make sure information about Open Space Technology is easy to get.
- Make sure there are ways to connect with the Open Space community.
- Gather and report the Open Space stories and supporting research.

#### **Resulting Projects**

- Improve the web site
- Create an online newsletter
  - Continue community gatherings
    - Annual Open Space on Open Space
    - Online e-mail list
    - Publicize community sponsored events
  - Pursue Leon's NSF grant, Peg's research idea

## Attachment B

**Total Assets as of Nov. 11, 1998:**            \$5,777.78

### **P & L Statement: January 1 - November 11, 1998**

**Income**

Products	4,205.40	
Membership Donations	2,618.56	
Womens Event	420.71	
Interest Income	19.98	
		<hr/>
		7,264.65

**Expense**

Product	5,234.03	
OSI Board	391.74	
Communications		
Other	71.12	
		<hr/>
		5,696.89

<b>Net Income (Loss)</b>		<hr/> <hr/>
		1,567.76

## 6. Integration classical & OS techniques

**CONVENOR:** Diana Griesshammer

**PARTICIPANTS:** Linda Olsen

### **DISCUSSION/SUMMARY:**

Classical conference style:

In the classical way people will listen to person speaking in front of them. They expect to get information. They paid for it. The gold-nugget of that method is the speaker. The organisator is responsible for inviting the best speaker and for offering the best informations the participants can get.

OS conference style:

In the OS way people are responsible by themselves to get the desired (or till now unknown) informations. They are the gold-nuggets. They are responsible for their inner grow.

Conclusion:

This two ways of getting information and handling responsibility are quite different. That's the reason why it is difficult to combine a conference in OS and front-lecture style.

Two possible ways for integration are coming up:

1. The OS style should dominate the mixed conference.
2. Separation on two days: doing the classical part on the first day and the OS on the second day.

## 7. Shared Leadership and Ongoing Open Space

**CONVENOR:** Chris Weaver

**PARTICIPANTS:** Liz Campbell, Susan Brayton, Polla Pratt, David Paul, William Ashton, Chris Weaver, Eric Hansen.

### **DISCUSSION/SUMMARY**

Everyone present was interested in how open space can become a systemic process or culture in an organization.

### **PERSONAL CONTEXTS & QUESTIONS**

Liz: on faculty at California Institute of Integral Studies. How could more progressive shared leadership emerge in an established organization?

Susan: How could open space help an emerging effort to bring affordable housing to Marin? Also, how can art help people as a way of knowing?

Polla: is facilitating her first open space in February for a big Somatics conference. How can the Somatics industry use CLUSTERING or other models to become a focused, shared-leadership network? Also, how could concrete, experiential knowledge (body knowledge) be more a part of open space work?

David: is Principal at Pathfinder School in Seattle. How does a community build responsibility and trust among its members for authentic shared leadership to work?

William: does consulting for environmental groups in Alaska, including working with Native people. What can an open space consultant do to help the space remain open after the consultant's work is done?

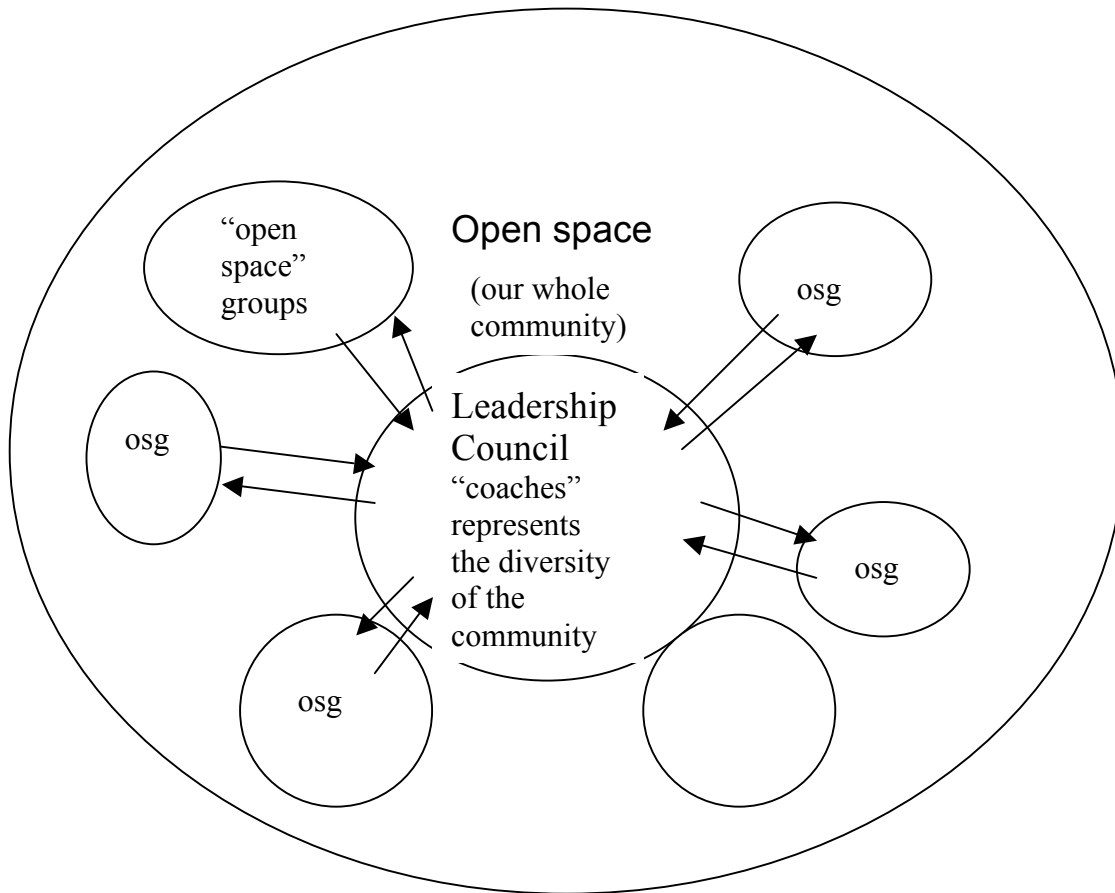
Chris: teaches at Pathfinder in Seattle. What are the elements of models of shared leadership that support ongoing open space?

Eric: directs ECG, an economic strategy consulting group that works internationally. What models and processes empower a community to keep open space alive as a means of economic self-organization over time?

### **DISCUSSION**

Chris presented Pathfinder's shared leadership model as a reference point for discussion. It involves a leadership council that is in service to the whole community. ("Leadership" here is defined as an energy that is available to any person who is called to use it, not as the defined roles of a leader-by-position). The leadership council is really a group of facilitators (16 in our community) who keep the space open and who partner with convenors of open space groups to coach them.

The leadership council meets bi-weekly. All active open space groups are invited and encouraged to make a brief report at every council meeting, for networking purposes. Open space groups also may craft proposals to be put on the table at a leadership council meeting for a consensus vote. Each group's coach from the leadership team works with them to determine if a proposal needs to be decided in council or if the group should go ahead and implement.



Any person in the community may convene an open space group at any time. They submit the convenor’s name, group purpose/issue, and meeting time/place to the weekly newsletter, physical bulletin board, and website. In this way, the people who care can be a part of the groups.

It is a convenor’s responsibility to seek out a coach from the leadership council. Council members have carefully developed their role, so that the leadership council functions as an organ in the body of the community, an organ with a specific purpose and practices. Proposals are never crafted in council meetings. That happens in open space. The council is for networking, holding the community space, and facilitating the decision-making process (which is another story).

This diagram, scrawled in red pen, was a reference point for the group’s discussion. Eric talked at length about his work in Morocco. In his story, the existing leadership was in a position to approve or block the work of the open space groups... actually, in this large project, the “open space groups” were “industry cluster groups,” each with its own action teams clustered around it. So, with central authority blocking progress, the industry cluster groups formed their own central “council,” which explored private-sector funding solutions to the groups’ initiatives. We talked about the complex work of a consultant in this situation. David pointed out how the practice of hand-picking leaders of groups, to “volunteer somebody,” is a real danger and against the spirit of open space, even though it is tempting from a strategic mindset. We talked about the power of graciously inviting people who oppose the change process to take part in a significant but not

derailing way.

William raised the issue that different styles of intervention/facilitation are appropriate to different cultures. He also told us about how Alaska Natives have adopted a short version of their traditional consensus process for quicker decision-making that is still inclusive and rooted in local practice.

Liz discussed forms of decision-making that move beyond consensus. Her students have learned methodologies of inviting people to put themselves (mind, heart, body) into an “opposing” person’s position and really FEEL it. If this happens, then a synergistic solution can emerge. Susan added that art can be a part of this process:

- 1) draw or paint your position, or what the conclusion would be like.
- 2) Draw or paint the “OTHER” position.
- 3) Make a third drawing! In the third drawing is the synergism...

Polla added more about concrete/experiential ways of knowing and about how they can help move a group beyond disagreement to a better solution than intellectual consensus alone can achieve.

It was great. We were done. No concrete action plans emerged.

I hope I did not misrepresent anyone in this report. Needless to say, many wonderful contributions to the discussion by the pool were left out, and were carried away by seagulls. You might profit by asking them.

Respectfully Submitted, CW



## 8. Coaching on incorporating a non-profit

**CONVENOR:** Claire

**PARTICIPANTS:** Ralph Copleman, Sheila Isakson

### **DISCUSSION/SUMMARY**

- Board of trustees is key – find people really willing to serve, who represents constituencies
- Be explicit about goals s& mission so they know scope of work & how money will be handled
- Board oversees finances & policy, not micromanaging
- They, not the executive director, have ultimate responsibility
- Lawyer will provide several examples of by-laws
- Accountant will provide audit with written opinion, independent of exec director
- 501c3 can't endorse candidates, limit 10% of budget for lobbying; 501c4
- Read John Carver's Boards that make a Difference

## 9. Opening the Space to Save the Planet

**CONVENOR:** Becky Peterson

**PARTICIPANTS:** Ralph Copelman, Peter Thiss, Estell Jones, and Becky Peterson

### **DISCUSSION/SUMMARY**

The world is in crisis. The people who are working to save it are either burning out or panicking. They need our help to move toward positive change for the planet. In most cases, the people working in these areas haven't understood the importance of these techniques.

1. We will start an e-mail discussion group on this topic.
2. Becky Peterson will try to set up a List Serve on this topic through York University.
3. We will work toward convening an Open Space to bring the players into face to face contact. Our goal is to hold an Open Space "Opening the Space to Save the Planet," in the year 2000.
4. If you want to be put on the e-mail list, send your e mail address to [rebecca@yorku.ca](mailto:rebecca@yorku.ca).

## 10. Open Space for 1000

**CONVENOR:** Chris Schoch

**PARTICIPANTS:** Dorothy Stermer, Lois Fein, Katrina Petri , Romy Shovelton, Nicole Mastanrea, Ralph Copelmann, Derek Roff, Larry Peterson, Linda Olsen, Dee Green, Alan Stewart, Larry Peterson.

### **DISCUSSION/SUMMARY**

**Case:** The Mondeville ( near Caen) manufacturing site of Robert Bosch Gmhb Automotive parts Business. They produce electronic sub-systems for automobiles. In March 97 they agreed on a four stage vision building process : designing the programme; a Future Search Conference fo 80 stakeholders includi ng union leaders, internal and external clients; a two day interactive meeting in Open Space for all 1000 employees; implementation of a change agenda established during the Open Space.

### **Questions Raised:**

#### Logistics:

1. Who handled the logistics of the event?

A partener who is specialised in large scale events.

2. What problems did you encounter?

The main problem was making a music hall with spectator seating and no natural light into a convivial place. Lighting and sound were particularly important. Also large real time TV screens were set up around the circle so that people in the back rows ( there were close to 30 rows) could clearly see what was happening in the inner circle. Small group meeting venues were set up using thin paneled cubicles. These proved to be unsatisfactory noise filters so that we had to reconfigure them and invite people to use the main meeting room- in reality a large stage used for Holiday on Ice –2000 square meters.

3. What about the Wall?

The wall was about 100 meters long- this proved to be too short, we could have used another 50 meters.

#### Facilitation:

1. Did you limit the size of the discussion groups?

We tried but it didn't work. We initially laid down a rule whereby when there were 50 signups or more the convener should ask for an open space meeting and facilitator. IN fact only two groups abided by this principle. There were 5 or 6 workshops with more than 200 participants who did not want to split up.

2. How long did it take from the opening statement to people going into their small groups?About 2 hours in all. There were 200 offerings of themes , and 140 reports actually produced from workshops.

### 3. What surprises took place?

The noise problem had not been anticipated, no more so than number of large groups that didn't want to break up and for which microphones and amplifiers were needed.

My biggest surprise was to experience the strong commitment of the participants to their worksite and community. They put up with a lot of stress and discomfort, poor lighting, noise etc.

#### Preparation:

A lot of discussion dealt with questions about preparation. Who should be involved? How much in advance should people be prepared for such a large scale event? How much should they be told about Open Space methodology?

The experience of the group seemed to corroborate my experience with Bosch. Preparation was crucial to the success of the event. A lot of effort was made to communicate what the process was all about ( Why a Vision? Why involve everyone? ) A volunteer group designed the communication campaign and among other things produced a 40 by 15 foot mural painting visualising the process. A question wall was set up and more than 85 written questions were put to the management and organising committee: each one was individually answered. More than one hundred interactive meetings were held with "communicators" who came from management and those who had attended the Future Search.

Much interest was expressed on the role of senior management. One problem occurred when the facilitators noticed that not one of the 12 group management committee had offered a theme or passion in the first day session. After explaining that this could be interpreted as their unwillingness to speak up, some became conveners on the second day.

Commitment from the Ceo was obtained rather early on. He wanted the whole company to be together and was willing to take his part of the risk.

#### **Conclusions**

What makes an event of this size possible is first of all the existence of a truly interdependent community. If such a community exists then the first task is to identify the benefits to be had from bringing everyone together and getting the leadership to actively support the project. The numbers aren't so important if meaning and congruity are clearly established in the community's perception of the event. This also means that the event must be contextualised: taking into account where the community is coming from, where it is now and what will happen when it's over. All of this needs to be scripted at some stage.

If there is no interdependency or leadership commitment I am not sure that a 1000 person event could really work.

## 11. Multicultural Issues And Open Space

**CONVENOR:** Eric Hansen

**PARTICIPANTS:** Polla Pratt, Gil Brenson Lazan, Carmen Leddane, Michael Onewing, Luc Oirich, Jeff Aitken, Peg Holman, Joell Lyons-Everett, Ruth Ann, William Ashton, Suska Davis, Nicole Mastandrea

### **DISCUSSION/SUMMARY**

#### **KEY ISSUES**

*OST as a North American methodology:*

What are the cultural roots/origins of ost? It has its North American roots. Yet, OST has some of its roots in Native American culture (and therefore is a “pure” form). What is the ‘deeper level’ of OST? Does it transcend cultural come-froms?

At this event, we are all a bunch of white people (gender/age balance ok) but not a diverse group. How can we handle multicultural diversity issues if we are not a culturally diverse group?

OST’s success in different cultural settings, particularly in South American context, has been due the facilitators’ ability to translate and adapt to cultural setting. Sometimes OST must come “through the back door.”

How to translate OST through appropriate language & “packaging”, meeting people with OST “where they are at”

Can they be applied in different cultural contexts?

What has not worked is when facilitators just “use the book” without adapting the rules, terms, “butterflies & bumblebees” into terms that are appropriate to different settings. Some questions were raised about “guru-following” verses more creative adaptation of the OST gospel.

So, the context needs to be set and the training of facilitators needs to be culturally specific. Overall, major questions about whether the international needs for OST have been adequately met.

#### **Next steps:**

*A call to action* for specific passion and responsibility-taking to cover these issues for next year was introduced to the group:

*Next years OsonOS:*

- 1) proactively seek to get more diversity at next years event
- 2) provide funding (eg, “frequent flyers” fund/bank)
- 3) hold event in place that encourages and symbolizes more cultural diversity at the event (eg, indian reservation, South America)

*Task force to compile case studies of os applications in different cultural settings.* [see Peg Holman and Joelle Lyons-Everett]  
--see examples of “appreciative inquiry” newsletter issues for ideas about formating case studies and “stories”

## 12. Diversity in Us and Open Space

**CONVENOR:** Anne Stadler

**PARTICIPANTS:** Romy Shovelton, Estelle Jones, Ruthanne Prange, Derek Roff, Katrina Petri, Suska Davis, Carol Bellin, Liz Campbell, Rosi Barbeau, Nicole Nastandrea, Susan Brayton, Patricia Paul, David Paul, Ralph Coppleman, Jeff Aitken

### **DISCUSSION/SUMMARY**

We're here because:

**We think of diversity as ethnic – why are we mostly white? – perhaps we can bring in creativity to encourage diversity in business**

Am I inside or outside of the group? Others are welcoming old friends. How soon do I have the courage to break into old friendships?

Diversity of people, thought, practice, experience, those who can't afford facilitation

Something other than business?

How does OS allow for diversity?

What do I do in a culture that does not allow for diversity – in mergers, how does it work and how do I sell it – want to embrace the diversity of corporate cultures

Realization of how I migrate to what I know even through I intellectually want diversity.

Gender diversity

Need to be proactive in bringing diversity into my life in terms of other races and cultures. Best way to bring people together is to work on something together – building a boat

Challenge the assumptions we've made coming out of white culture.

What does it mean to work with people who come from a different starting point?

Where's the juice?

How do I go beyond my expectations?

Is OS really a space for diversity? Do we make a space for all the voices? And how about the

silences?

Convening in venues that are accessible cost wise. We may have middle class blindness, not only in cost, but in the nature of the venue.

How does OS itself open the space for diversity?

Finding the language that works in an environment

Expectations often stand in the way of finding the most appropriate way to work with a group. Must have intention without expectation.

Must assume that discomfort is a part of the process of dealing with diversity. Simplest might be a project (like the boat) as we are unified in the requirements of the project completion. We all agree on hammering in the nails excellently. Or, we can find a resonance in the way someone does something differently from us. We see in another way something that's useful to us. And how do we find value in what someone else does when we don't like it or agree with it?

Is there an implicit desire to move out of our comfort zone? It seems not to be implicit in the way we talk about OS. We must make it explicit. It happens – we have stories – however, we don't have a standard way to deal with that. Is it important to be conscious to accept whatever gift is offered? To keep the circle open, even if participants come from outside the invited group? When people can't afford to come and want to be there, can we make the circle permeable? The circle is attractive. Can we also be open to different ways of facilitation?

How does the first principle really work? The invitation may be a limiting factor – shall we be conscious of inviting a more diverse group?

When the key part of the issue, or when it shows up even when it is not the issue because it is so sensitive right now, does OA allow the dialog?

OS is best because it creates a field of love. The Law of 2 Feet leads one to what has heart and meaning. It creates a field in which conversations can take place that have been waiting to happen. We can see the longing people have to be really seen and met as they are, such as the fundamentalist Christian who had never been able to speak of this important part of his life out of his group.

OS provides a space for us to communicate what is real for us.

I have to do my inner work all the time as I'm responding to what's happening. A field needs to be created and held in which the spirit of the place is manifest, to the extent that I realize that whoever is saying something to me is the right person to be triggering that particular stuff. Must have a solid container so that conversations can be maintained at a high quality of interaction.

Why are we trying to contain it – Why is it important to hold it? It's an open space. There is a discomfort with the feeling of holding the space.



Our choices as facilitator depend on our level of fear and how we deal with it.

Fear is real and being safe is important. Perhaps ground rules about the way we communicate. Can *feel* when it's safe. Authenticity can create a safe space.

Safety comes with experience and maturity, because of who you are and how you are with other people.

Universe provides the opportunity for facilitator and group to come together - the right facilitator for the right groups.

People must choose to go to the OS event. We are inside a large self-organizing system and the OS patterns we have to work with that system are robust. Environment allows multicultural interaction.

We can ask a group to start the way they usually start – potential is spacious.

OS is less a limiting container, yet it is visible in the circle which is definite, yet permeable. Holding extremes, not limiting – maybe I'm holding the anxiety of the group.

Perhaps it is not holding, but being conscious that there is something larger going on, attending to the larger picture.

How can I “be” so that what's going on is OK.

I am often the recipient of the negative projections of the group.

OS may create an altered state – that something larger is holding the space, not me. The groups do tend to reach a deeper level.

## 13. Growing Open Space on the Web

**CONVENOR:** Barry Owen

**PARTICIPANTS:** Roy, Gil, Birgitt, Chandra, Ana, Joelle, Fr Brian, Sheila, Michael P.

### **DISCUSSION/SUMMARY**

Barry talked briefly about the Status of the websites now. OSI/US maintains a site at tmn.com and Barry is building a site at Geocities.com. The current line of conversation is how (or whether) to combine the forces of the sites for optimal exposure (service) for the purpose of growing Open Space use in the world. All people directly involved in website development have agreed that a more encompassing site which is easy to find and easy to use for both practitioners and “others” (prospective clients) is desirable. With all of these as givens, the conversation took off with the following “brilliant” observations/suggestions emerging.

- A need for a brief description of the process of Open Space Technology at a VERY easily accessed web address for the purpose of providing a link address for anyone in the world to be able to link their sites and quickly send visitors for a “quick and dirty” description. Such a thing exists in many forms and Barry will make this the first (index) page on the Geocities site.
- Much talk on the challenges associated with collecting “stories” of Open Space experiences from practitioners as these events occur. The observation was made that consultants did not want the “burden” of writing a “paper” at the end of each event . . . resolution: Create a very easy to use input form on the website for submission of stories in story form (NOT formal papers). Peg Holman has such a template form.
- A need for an easy to remember URL (website address) and some talk of what language is currently being used. The word “Global” has an “American sovereignty” flavor and is not desirable for those members from other countries. The word “Institute” seemed to be not totally appropriate for the web site . . . so we were left with “Open Space” and Michael has suggested the use of the term “Worldwide” . . . and so “Open Space Worldwide” seemed to fit quite well . . .
- The need to maintain an international/Worldwide flavor of the site. That this site is the site for Open Space exposure in the world and that each Institute or group of Open Space practitioners anywhere in the world who wanted to be represented has equal opportunity. Thus. Open Space Worldwide is holding a space for open space wherever it may be happening in the world. Any sites currently in existence in the world could easily be linked to the Worldwide site giving the user the opportunity to see all open space web presence from one site.
- The question of accessibility to the “stories” sections of the site arose. Should there be passcode entry to certain areas of the site . . . these areas would be the ones in which “conversations occur” (as currently happen on the Listserve). The concern was that there are an inordinate number of “takers” who are not giving back. These protected areas would also hold the archives of prior conversations . . . and would be searchable by word or phrase.
- As for the actual look/feel of the conversation section of the site . . . perhaps an inexpensive way to get the ball rolling is to “plug in” a “threaded conversation” type of interface. This

idea came to mind as the discussion leaned towards the importance of asking DIRECT questions (Birgitt asked the Listserve for HELP with successful use of Open Space in educational environments with great success). Folks could quickly log onto the Worldwide site and go directly to the “conversation section” without having to wade through a lot of extraneous pages.

- A proposal for the “order” of pages on the site (Roy) 1) Definition for those people who are just “stopping by” to see what Open Space is about 2) Something about “how to do Open Space 3) Stories about Open Space – What happens when you do it . . . this section would probably have a collection of stories for the general user
- More on the order of the site . . . the first page be the brief introduction to Open Space with one link to invite the user to enter the site . . . page 2 – a “Main menu” page with links to each of the Open Space Institutes (and any other Open Space entities out there) and a menu of the links within the OSWW site . . . One link would be “member only entry” – “members” would be those who are members of any Open Space Institute . . . a portion of all OS Institute dues would go towards development/maintenance of the site (Percentage of yearly dues).
- DOMAIN NAME – openspaceworldwide or ostworldwide or worldwideopenspace or worldwideost?
- Philanthropic monies may be available through grants for development and maintenance of the site. Chandra expressed willingness to look around and see what might be available . . . Leon is working on a grant through Prescott University . . . Can these be used while still maintaining the “Worldwide” flavor of the site?
- Michael spoke of a section on the site for setting up “hostelry” for Open Spacers . . . so if you are travelling to Berlin, there may be a person there who will host you during your stay . . . a bulletin board to post these offers and/or requests for hosting travellers.

This report is of the conversation which happened in that hour . . . many of these “bullets” are incomplete at best and I/we hope there is enough passion around the desire to have a solid worldwide web presence that “Open Spacers” around the world will step forward and take responsibility for growing this virtual space in a way which will serve the purpose of “Growing the space for Open Space.”

The “summit” (Tuesday) of all of the Open Space Institutes (and others) is sure to provide fertile grounds for some solid resolutions.

## 14. Integration of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) with OST

**CONVENOR:** Linda Olson

**PARTICIPANTS:** Tom M, Larry, Becky, Estelle, William Ashton, Dorothy, Stella, Romy

### **DISCUSSION/SUMMARY**

Started with an overview/summary of what is Appreciative Inquiry (AI)

AI is a way to inquire (from an appreciative lens) into what the best of the past, the best of the present, in order to create the best of what is possible for the future. AI comes out of the work of David Cooperrider and his colleagues out of Case Western. AI overall suggests that the questions we ask elicit what we find. Cooperrider's five principles of AI are:

1. Constructionist principle – reality is informed by what we know from the past.
2. Simultaneity principle - inquiry and change happen simultaneously.
3. Poetic principle - we find whatever we look for (so organizations are open to infinite interpretations).
4. Anticipatory principle - what people anticipate determines what they find.
5. Positive principle – we could choose to focus on the positive Vs the negative

Linda suggested that AI could be a wonderful front end to an Open Space meeting moving what matters most to specific actions. (See Peggy Holman's article in AT Work)

We spent most of our time exploring the concept of AI and how we are all trained (at a very early age) to focus on a problem solving Vs an appreciative approach. We shared stories of how using an AI approach can radically shift the energy of a group to focus on what's possible Vs what's wrong. We noted how many of us have incorporated this approach in our work without having a name of it...and how wonderful that was.

We discussed the AI process a little. AI begins with some initial interviews around these basic questions:

1. Describe a time when you felt most alive, involved, and excited about your life/work/etc?
2. What is it that you value most about yourself/and/or the organization?
3. What is the core factor that gives you/organization vitality?
4. If you could transform your life/organization in any way, what three things would you wish for?

From the themes that emerge from these initial questions held in one-on-one interviews are generated "provocative statements" (the questions you are interested in focusing the organizations attention on). Refer to Sue Hammond's The Thin Book of AI or the recent Lessons from theField /applying AI.

We ended by reflecting on the thought that AI is a way of being human!

## 15. Shamanism, indigenous knowledge and open space

**CONVENOR:** Jeff Aitken

**PARTICIPANTS:** Michael, Nicole, Joelle, Luc, Liz, Katrina, Paul, Susan, Suska, others

### **DISCUSSION/SUMMARY**

We talked about the two definitions of open space. One is “open space technology”, the way we are meeting together. The other is “crossing the open space”, the process of death and rebirth that individuals, organizations, communities, natural systems, and cultures go through when the old ways are not working any more. The journey of the Hebrews from slavery to exodus to Sinai to Israel is one example, from which Harrison drew in his early thinking.

In Scott Peck’s group dynamics model, crossing the open space is the chaos which we go through in our journey from pseudo-community, thru chaos, to emptiness, and into community (or renewed community). The adolescent rite of passage and the midlife crisis are two examples in our individual lives.

Indigenous traditions commonly engage in ceremonies which enable them to cross the open space. Indigenous science is a way to describe the precise knowing which enables a person in a shaman role to understand how a community has gone out of balance, and to create a ceremony to return to balance. This is a common occurrence because we are continually finding that old understandings have run their course, and we must return to the source (for organizations, the vision) to seek a new understanding and return to balance.

Jeff guided a meditation on the experience of balance from an indigenous perspective – all of our relations – outer and inner- to which we pay attention in order to find our place of balance in a specific place and time.

There are specific ceremonies used to cross the open space in tribal communities. (Harrison wrote about his experience with the Kpelle tribe of west Africa.) The open space process is a way that we are exploring to help ourselves and others cross the open space in their own organizations and communities.

Is the open space process a way for diverse communities to come together toward a sustainable shared future? Jeff’s research is to investigate indigenous ways of knowing, and the ceremonies that emerge from them, for insights to pay attention to as we facilitate a return to balance. We had a rich conversation and learned a lot.

## 16. Creating and Sustaining a Partnership Society: A Research Project

**CONVENOR:** Peg Holman

**PARTICIPANTS:** Liz Campbell, Rebecca Peterson, Larry Peterson, Derek Roff, Tom Mastandrea, Linda Olson, Paul Ask

### **DISCUSSION/SUMMARY**

Peg shared a written draft of a research proposal. Its focus is to create a clear picture of an approach to partnership society that would lead to application. The reason for the research is driven by the belief that:

1. The long-term health of the human species requires a different mode of operating than the one currently guiding us;
2. A well developed picture of alternative possibilities increases the likelihood of substantive change; and
3. There are working examples from which we can learn.

A copy of the proposal is available from Peggy Holman at [pholman@msn.com](mailto:pholman@msn.com) or 425-746-6274.

The discussion provided feedback in several areas:

#### **Partnership as the frame**

Since language shapes what we notice and what we don't notice, the choice of a label for the work directly impacts what it will reveal. We discussed several possible terms:

- Conscious self-organizing systems
- Learning Organizations
- The polarities of partnership and domination
- Co-creative organizations (a somewhat smaller scope than society!)

Whatever term(s) is chosen, define it.

#### **Possible Outcomes of the Project**

A project goal is create a result that is both possible and probable to be applied. Suggestions to further that goal:

- A participative research approach
- Using other media; video taping storytelling could help communicate the trans-personal nature of what we hope to capture. Visual images would also enable sharing results in another form.

A wonderful example of what could emerge is a recasting of old terms in a new light:

Competition, rather than being an exchange based on “how much can I take?” can become an exchange based on “how much can I give?”

### **Coaching on the Research Approach**

There was support for the participative approach to research proposed. Liz Campbell and Rebecca Peterson are both from educational institutions and provided wonderful advice from their experiences in supporting graduate students:

- Make the question much clearer and more focused; looking at a model of society is an ambitious place to start. Inquiring at an organizational level is a good first step.
- Choose a research methodology that fits energetically; if this is about co-creation, use a co-creative approach. By all means be innovative! They mentioned several specific approaches:
  - Ethnography
  - Narrative is “hot”
  - Co-operative Inquiry, a form of action research is possible
- Do some research on research methodologies.
- In looking at related research, Rebecca suggested looking into what is being learned through the Healthy Community Network.
- Include a Co-operative Writing event; invite people with stories to tell, making the writing a part of the process of sharing.

### **Support for Research**

Larry Peterson is gathering information on who is doing research on OS. He’ll make it available via the OSI web site.

We will ask people to identify affiliations with research institutions and what they might be able to offer. For example, Rebecca Peterson indicated a willingness to host visitors who are pursuing OS related research at York University in Toronto, Canada. Peg Holman volunteered to put the word out to her OS e-mail list asking people to identify connections what they could offer.

## 17. Creating a World-Wide Wellness Industry as a New Paradigm

**CONVENOR:** Paul Ash, Ph.D., D. Sc.

**PARTICIPANTS:** Half Dozen

### **DISCUSSION/SUMMARY**

In summarizing our discussion, we realized that around the world, there are many different concepts and definitions of wellness. A new patented system capable of objectively measuring and quantifying optimal health/wellness as well as fitness now provides the world with a scientific yardstick by which an individual, a company or any large group can take the guess-work out of “staying well.” This new invention makes it possible to fulfill a dream and vision of making the world a better place by creating a world-wide wellness industry dedicated to optimal health, wellness, fitness and longevity. It combines the all of state-of-the-art technologies of anti-aging and longevity into a format that provides documentation of changes and measurement of positive results in a way that previously has not previously been available.

For the Baby Boomers around the world, this new industry is already emerging by focusing on achievable wellness, anti-aging and longevity rather than sickness or disease. The need for this new paradigm comes out of the realization that the old illness model of health care focused on the treatment of systems without addressing the causes has dramatically failed to achieve either optimal health or longevity. Genetically, humans should be able to live in high states of wellness to a ripe old age of 150. Currently, we are only achieving half of our longevity potential. A new paradigm is the perfect answer to this problem.

Now it is possible, utilizing the principles of Open Space, to create core teams of highly trained and certified wellness professionals capable of providing interested people with data and information on how to achieve and maintain optimal health, wellness, fitness and longevity. Thank God, the feasibility of creating a new industry focused on “wellness” rather than “illness” has now become a reality. Persons interested in holding the dream/vision and/or participating in the creation of this new exciting industry may send their open space ideas and networking information to the American Wellness Association, P.O. Box 3287, La Jolla, CA 92038.



## 18. Open Space in Education

**CONVENOR:** Carol Bellin

**PARTICIPANTS:** Fr. Brian Bainbridge, Michael Pannitz, Chris Weaver, David Paul, Leon Deking, Dorothy Lee Sterner, David Paul, Patricia Paul, Nell Jones Rich, Lois Fein, Nicole Mastandrea, Carmen Liddane

### **DISCUSSION/SUMMARY**

Chris and David talked briefly about their school in Seattle, where O.S. (open space) had been incorporated into the school where they were teacher and principal respectively.

Nell talked of her involvement in adult education where open space was also effective. She had connected with a visiting group from Ireland, including the mayor. Music had been also a source of interest to her and as educators she offered to share her knowledge. Many of the group members look forward to sharing this in the future.

Leon is going to be involved with the Nat. Science Foundation, with research into innovation and organisational change. The O.S. Foundation here will be a sponsor.

Patricia Paul has designed and run programmes for severely behaviour disordered students. O.S. principals were the basis. Only one student out of the fifty Middle School students returned.

As the meeting progressed others offered diverse ways of incorporating O.S. which they have initiated with students, teachers and teacher educators.

Generally agreed that by honouring students needs, O.S. principles could work. What was needed was a clear holding of the space and a clear definition of the principles.

### **SHARING THE GIFT.**

Chris described the programming of electives within the school he taught in. K-5 students met initially, then on five successive afternoons went to a program offered by a large number of teachers and voluntary teachers from the community. Following the sessions they participated in a festival at the end of the time, sharing their learning by performance or even gallery displays. Much of what happened was self organising.

David Paul, principal of a school in Seattle devoted to Open Space and having a high percentage of American Indian students, offered other examples of self organizing programs throughout the school community, based on O.S. principles.

Chris added that Native American wisdom and ways, could also offer much that was natural and related to O.S. for schools. Talking circle was one example given. Another was the way children could choose their paths and their teachers. A parent told Chris that her child had chosen to leave Seattle to go to Alaska, to live with his aunt and uncle. This was regarded as natural.

Carl Rogers. Appearing in a classroom, allowing the curriculum to be chosen by the students and allowing them to organize themselves.

Carol, who had taught as a Substitute Teacher with Senior School aged students cited this example and asked how O.S. principals could relate directly to her students.

San Antonio, Texas. 1990. Project to involve a bank manager in a school-industry program. Senior students and community links, not for profit making.

#### EXISTING THEORY RELATING TO O.S.

Constructivism. Every learner constructs their own learning.

Emerging Curriculum. Using whatever tools are at teachers disposal to bring about learning from students.

E.g. Input from teacher of background info. Students in elementary school raise issues and starting points. Students then break up into self organised groups.

Would not apply in many schools without background of education in O.S. with teachers, school community and students.

Much discussion about how students could make choices about their learning given their specific goals and their available time and resources.

Notion that we are all self organising to some extent.

#### STARTING POINTS FOR O.S.

Example in Berlin recently of where a school community requested O.S. Initially two hours with Student Representatives from each class. Worked well.

Video made of school where O.S. training occurred. Effective strategy for spreading the word. Just 'doing' O.S. was thought to work in some cases and was thought to be a possibility where teachers proved to be resistant. Recognition generally that teachers were often resistant to O.S. due to personal teaching styles, their school communities.

Fr. Brian Bainbridge mentioned that he has been invited by European Rectors to be part of a redevelopment of the curriculum and structure in universities over the next 5 years.

The most resistant agencies were likely to be accreditation agencies, as well as tertiary teacher educators.

One strategy would be to have a global and electronic O.S. in 1999. It will be important to include the accreditation agencies at all times.

It was agreed that O.S. needed to include universities and schools, at both the teacher and student level. It was also important to include the whole school community.

## 19. Opening the Space for the Divine to Enter

**CONVENOR:** Stella Humphries

**PARTICIPANTS:** Alan Stewart, Carmen Liddane, Lois Fein, William Ashton. Carol Bellin

### **DISCUSSION/SUMMARY**

(we had 45 minutes as the 9:30 session began 10:15) We agreed that the work we do is essentially to bring in the Divine into our way of being. We began with a few minutes of silent meditation to center ourselves and shared why we had been drawn to this conversation. We acknowledged that to be connected with the Divine was ideal, rather than to speak *about* the experience. We shared some of our daily practices which included writing, focussing, meditation. Silence is an essential ingredient for creating the space for the Divine as is our intention. The preparation of ourselves as instruments for invoking the Divine requires an inner search and clearing of any personal issues of ego before the event. Alan shared that he uses clapping as a way that the group can clear the energetic space of what had gone on beforehand in the same physical location. We acknowledged at the end that creating a space for sharing about the Divine was of itself a gift.

## 20. Open Space with Disaster Refugees

**CONVENOR:** Gil Brenson

**PARTICIPANTS:** 9

### **DISCUSSION/SUMMARY:**

**The following suggestions were given to effectively utilize OS in an environment of disaster refugee shelters with the victims of Hurricane Mitch in Central America.**

The first step is to work you the service providers, including their own grief processes.  
The Open Space Process should be kept at a level of simple, self-organizing.  
The use of OS could be appropriate at any level as a model of self-governance.  
The OS processes should be integrated into the group and individual healing processes.  
It should be the sponsor, and not the facilitator, that opens and keeps the space.  
Build activities that pool gifts.  
Appreciative Inquiry approaches can be useful in these situations.  
Open Space “levels the field” when there are political power plays.  
Opening should include food, art, tradition, etc. that contribute to identity.  
OS activities can be framed in religious and other traditions.  
Go to the roots of the circle.  
Follow-up is of utmost importance.  
Treat the group as a learning community.  
Self-construction builds ownership and belonging.

## 21. What Do You Do With Stories

**CONVENOR:** Joelle Lyons Everett

**PARTICIPANTS:** Ruthann Prange, Chandra Christian, Michael Onewing, Linda Olsen, bumblebees

### **DISCUSSION/SUMMARY**

Stories help to define who we are as individuals, families, organizations.

Are stories true? A story that is retold over time probably has a truth at its core, though it may not be historically accurate. In telling a story, we make many choices about what to put in and what to leave out.

Family stories shape our perceptions of ourselves and shape family decisions.

I use stories to teach—my children, friends, clients. A story allows the listener to discover whatever meaning it might have for him. It's gentler and less didactic than telling the same lesson.

Personal stories may need to be rewritten as we come to understand our past. My story and someone else's story about me may be quite different. Which story do we accept as our own?

When we look for information, we sometimes draw a line in the sand between "hard facts" and story, but I think story is often our richest source of information.

Open Space creates a space where stories can readily be told—and listened to.

Ho.

## 22. Cross Generational Dialogue

**CONVENOR:** Ruthann Prange

**PARTICIPANTS:** Carol Bellini, Lois Fein, Michael Onewing, Sheila Isakson, Alan Stewart and a few visitors

### **DISCUSSION/SUMMARY**

Reasons for being in this conversation:

Have something to learn here and to contribute

Just did OS with 12-13 yr olds and 40-50 yr olds. Was big challenge in communicating and thinking ahead but energizing and extremely productive in outcome.

My OS interest is in education and that IS multigenerational

Attended session in Minneapolis on cross-gen communication recently, been thinking about it

Have great respect for children

Have family background rich in cross-gen activities, experience and respect

Trying to create space where multiple gens can experience one another's wisdom and energy

Couldn't find my group so guess here's where I'm meant to be

Exciting examples cross-gen experiences offered by group members:

A community finding ways for kids to have fun on Fri and Sat nights.

Family Council beginning by exploring a book, moving to other topics, plans and activities together (in total group and subgroups) even to people changing living arrangements.

Teenagers coming together to explore ways to be of service to self, community, world.

Archbishop going out in community on series of Listening Sessions

Island in Bahamas, teacher holding sleepovers for teenage girls, new conversations leading to decrease in teen pregnancies (none in 2 yrs)

Visioning project across large community and difference in meetings when all adult steering team joined by 25 teens – different ideas, energy and insights

Feeding the elderly

New Possibilities:

Expand existing forums to include a wider range of ages – as equal participants

Ask people what they are interested in and help connect people with similar interests (without pre-determining what if anything should come from it)

Look into “senior” facilities, nursing homes etc for talent, interest and energy wanting to be engaged. Get past what can we do for them! (same for kids)

Look at what’s going on or proposed in schools and think about how to expand who’s involved.

Themes, Principles:

RESPECT for each and all is core, different ages offer different wisdoms

LISTEN

Be open to outcomes, don’t try to predetermine

Opportunities are everywhere, just try something!!

## 23. Holding the Space Beyond Open Space: How to Develop On-going Relationships with Clients/Communities After the Open Space Event

**CONVENOR:** Katrina Petri and Romy Shovelton

**PARTICIPANTS:** Chris Schoch, Larry Peterson, Brian Bainbridge, Chris Wheeler, Lois Fein and others.

### **DISCUSSION/SUMMARY:**

The group spoke about moving away from OS as a single event, from instant change to sustainability.

The importance of what happens before and after the event.

Contracting with the client ahead of time to have a feedback meeting right after the event, another meeting with the client one month later and another meeting three months later. Part of the feedback session could be asking the sponsors “What did you learn about yourselves from the Open Space?” Some of the long-term coaching is centered around helping the management team to keep the space open because often they are the first to close it. Helping them to learn to open the space.

Someone said they have a friend who uses another process (Strategic Change) and her friend does give the client her reflections on things she noticed.

The importance of the client reflecting on process – For example, how they communicated.

Someone asked if there are models for how leaders can keep OS on-going. The healing circle or medicine wheel is used by some as a metaphor (Take risk, articulate vision, how to let go, how to learn from and manage the line of what emerges.)

With respect to his work on the 985-person Open Space, Chris said he was clear with the client from the beginning that they would be the sponsoring group and that this idea is important to reinforce. After the OS initial generative stages, he set up a coordinating committee which made 6 people responsible for converting ideas into action projects including mission letters and terms. (You had to be a convenor at the OS meeting to be in the steering committee.) Two of the six people were on the executive team, 1 was an assembler. Some needed coaching on trouble-shooting and the idea that they didn’t need consensus of everybody in the original group to act. This steering committee has been a challenge.

Open systems are hard to live in because sometimes you get redundancy. Keeping groups in synch is a challenge. Management has to take active roles. They’ll revert back to the old systems. Importance of taking responsibility for what happens.



**Other ideas included:**

Doing some type of weighted voting with TASC (a computer program that is good to use with large groups because you can get the tally back within an hour) or with dots placed next to topics. Then, as you see what topics emerge as priorities ask the group, “Who would like to take leadership for this topic?” Then, ask people to get into the groups they have energy for. The Action Teams fill out a form of when to do things by, the resources needed, who is going to do it etc. This form gets filled out before the end of the event. Convenors get together a month later.

“Vision Fairs” at the end of the Open Space with three-pages to fill out and the creation of an “Action/Planning” mini-poster with the headings “Priority,” “Recommendations,” and “Sign-up.”

Information in action groups might include knowing if the group is ready to do the action or if more information is needed or if another Open Space is needed.

After the top topics emerge another participant said that he asks the convenor to convene the action step group and instructs the groups to find a champion of the topic who will be the champion in an on-going way.

Creating an intra-net web site for the group to continue the dialogue and posting of the progress of topics. Using a matrix to help the client visually map the progress of topics. Recognizing what policies already exist that may hinder the group’s work and what policies could be created to enhance it.

## 24. Year 2000 – Readiness and Preparedness

**CONVENOR:** Rolf Schwarzer

**PARTICIPANTS:** Ralph Copleman, Bruce L. Erickson

### **DISCUSSION/SUMMARY**

List of issues critical to the Year 2000...

- #1. Keep a paper record of all your documents and made sure you have the copies of them in your possession
- #2. Consider replacing your computer, upgrading your software (if in question) and include surge protectors on both your power lines and telephone line into the system (surges thru the telephone line was a serious problem in West Coast Storms)
- #3. Look at simple techniques of...
  - A. Community building (proper roles models if helpful)
  - B. Get to know your neighbors
  - C. Do some community planning in concert with neighbors.....  
...water, food, backup power, money and emergency resources
- #4. Open imagination to ways you can apply Open Space Systems to effective response to the situations
- #5. Allow for the feeling that your never quite prepared even if your are
- #6. Look to see what other communities are doing or have done successfully in the past to handle crises (i.e. telephone, CB, messenger written note trees for emergency community communications)
- #7. Being in touch with appropriate emergency service networks and know how they operate (i. e. The National Institute of Urban Search and Rescue, state, regional and local agencies) and how to best support their efforts being more effective
- #8. Establish a database of necessary community resources, find out whats needed and create if needed (this includes people their talents, services, community supplies and links with other local communities)
- #9. Establish community Open Space Forums to create a dialogue for the people

## 25. Taking personal responsibility for growing the space for Open Space

**CONVENOR:** Barry Owen

**PARTICIPANTS:** Michael, Linda, David, Birgitt, Ruthann, Joelle, Chris, Jeff, Leon, Alan, Gil, Diana

### **DISCUSSION/SUMMARY**

The question was posed: “What are people doing parts of the world to Grow the Space for Open Space?” Barry suggests that a lot of the work is creating and holding personal open space all around us

- Chris: “Honor the elders in the beginning of OS work.”
- David: “Open Space is a natural for schools . . . desire to use open space in his school and expose other schools to it . . . It will make a significant shift for OS in education.
- “Responsibility for growing Open Space is in living it . . . modelling”
- Michael: DOING Open Space – He has done 35 events in 2 years and uses it in ALL situations possible – He always has 2 facilitators (one male and one female) AND 3 “assistants” who are not paid but are not required to pay admission . . . they are given “jobs . . . 1) Write up the event – a publishable story for newspaper etc . . . 2) Record precisely of how the OS had progressed – statistics of how long things take and how many groups (how many people per group) . . . 3) Observations of the look and feel of the group at beginning/middle/end and report out of this
- During OS training Michael made a professional movie for distribution throughout Europe
- Michael has created a handout for new facilitators including examples of invitations, checklists, samples of reports, some OS story successes
- Still Michael – In Germany, they are doing a learning circle on a Saturday every 6 weeks (mini-OSONOS) 2 people do the facilitation in Open Space and get critique from the group. The theme is always the same “Large group intervention with Process Transformation” Half of the people who have attended these signed up for the training.
- Suggestion – develop NAFTA learning circles similarly structured
- Birgitt – There is such abundance in this work – Role modelling – keep selflessly doing it – business actually increases . . . What hurts is when it is not done well . . . Be associated with other consultants – Network
- Mentor – Learning – Support – Telephone coaching . . . Help people do their practice well
- Send materials and share learnings
- Birgitt “If there is enough Open Space in the world, we will have peace in the world”
- Gil has many activities in South America including Web-site . course-work – OS modules – LOTS of OS work in communities
- OS markets itself – When done well, each event generates more opportunities
- Idea – Team up with local Newspaper . . . Newspaper sponsors events around local burning issues and writes a story of the outcome

## 26. Open Space Principles in the Sacred Sexual Relationship Rituals of the Ancient Goddess Societies

**CONVENOR:** Paul Ash, Ph.D., D. Sc.

**PARTICIPANTS:** Half Dozen

### **DISCUSSION/SUMMARY**

In summarizing our discussion, we realized that the basic principles of open space in the matri-centered [partnership] societies of the past provided both women and men with extreme longevity, optimal health and wellness. This openness provided each person with resources of incredible energy and vitality that made work more like fun and made it possible to effortlessly fulfill one's life purpose/mission or vision. By implementing these open space principles in our lives today, it is possible to fulfill our wildest dreams and make our visions of making the world a better place become a reality. Individuals interested in holding the dream/vision and/or participating in the creation of new exciting open space principles leading to sacred sexual connections may send their open space ideas and networking information to the Millennial Conections, P.O. Box 3287, La Jolla, CA 92038.

## 27. What is Open Space and What is it not?

**CONVENOR:** Birgitt Bolton

**PARTICIPANTS:**

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**DISCUSSION/SUMMARY**

Birgitt presented the group with the question of What is Open Space and What is it not? And noted that the question is much harder to answer than meets the eye. The discussion that followed was creative, interesting, and deep. It recognized the components of both form and essence and that often folks new to Open Space are after form only, and that essence is much harder to get.

- ❖ Os is an attitude to a setting. Love, acceptance, open space
- ❖ Os is authenticity from the heart
- ❖ Os is an epistemology—a way of knowing
- ❖ Os is a circle, a group created synergy
- ❖ Os exists throughout the world, not necessarily named so ie: a “minga” in the Andes
- ❖ Os is a way of knowing and a way of co-creating reality
- ❖ Os is a way of being which precedes a way of knowing
- ❖ Os is a ritual that creates a container for evoking to occur
- ❖ Os is a format to regain our natural ability
- ❖ Maybe anything that is less than 2 ½ days is not OS—needs a period of time to run through all that really happens
- ❖ Often people learn the form or the essence. Very few OS practitioners learn both. They need both.
- ❖ In OS the seed gets planted, and often does not materialize until after the Open Space looks like it is done
- ❖ The term OS is used in lots of connotations ie: landscape
- ❖ OS is inner space and outer space
- ❖ The physical manifestation of a circle is profound---a fundamental pattern of the universe
- ❖ The difference felt when in Open Space is palpable
- ❖ The role of the facilitator is invisible
- ❖ Appropriate control is about the timing of the structure. Be careful about saying that OS is not about control. It does have appropriate control

- ❖ Possibly we can't not control – we all tend to control but need to be sensitive to leaving our control behind and leave it open for group control
- ❖ Some people are so open minded their brains fall out
- ❖ Control of self rather than control of others
- ❖ OS is a discipline—setting of standard—root of discipline is disciple (learner)
- ❖ OS is about control by words—or is this a function of the people who do open space only in words rather than using other creative means?
- ❖ OS thrives on a clear theme and time pressure
- ❖ OS is about commitment
- ❖ There is control in initially setting form, in creating ritual—the space is not opened until this is done at which point we have a transformative moment that is no longer about control
- ❖ Is it discipline?
- ❖ Is it intention?
- ❖ 7% of what we communicate is the words. 93% is non-verbal
- ❖ control is about intention. This can be intention about good service or about self service. Intention about good service is needed to Open Space.

## JUST A THOUGHT...

Some of us treat the practice of open space as if it were a religion. They're devoted and sometimes have dreamy eyes when they talk about it.

Some of us treat open space as if it were a simple tool. They're convinced and sometimes speak with real conviction when they talk about it.

Some see it as both. Or neither. Or some combination of things.

Everybody's right. It's okay.

Ralph Copleman