

Open Space
ON
Open Space

Dulles Day's Inn

November 12-14, 1994

Proceedings
and an
Invitation to Attend
The Third Annual International
Open Space on
Open Space

The Second Annual International Open Space on Open Space happened just the way it was supposed to. Good colleagues from around the world gathered to share emerging insights and great fellowship. The record of our gathering follows.

Several things are now quite clear. First, Open Space has definitively gone around the world, and one might almost consider the whole venture respectable. Second, The Third Annual International Open Space on Open Space is going to happen. You are invited.

The great event will take place at the Marriott Suites Washington Dulles. The dates are December 9 - 11, 1995. We will begin on the evening of the 9th at 8:00 pm and conclude by 5:00pm on the 11th. Accomodations at the Marriott are \$77.00 *per night per suite*, and apparently 3 people can fit, if you are prepared to be chummy. Fee for the conference will be our now usual \$0 - \$200. You decide what its worth and what you can afford.

Above everything else, decide early. Last year we had to turn some folks away, and although we have more space, we also have more people. To make your reservations at the hotel call 703-709-0400 and ask for H.H.Owen and Co/Open Space Technology. And of course, I will be pleased to receive your check made out to H.H.Owen and Co.

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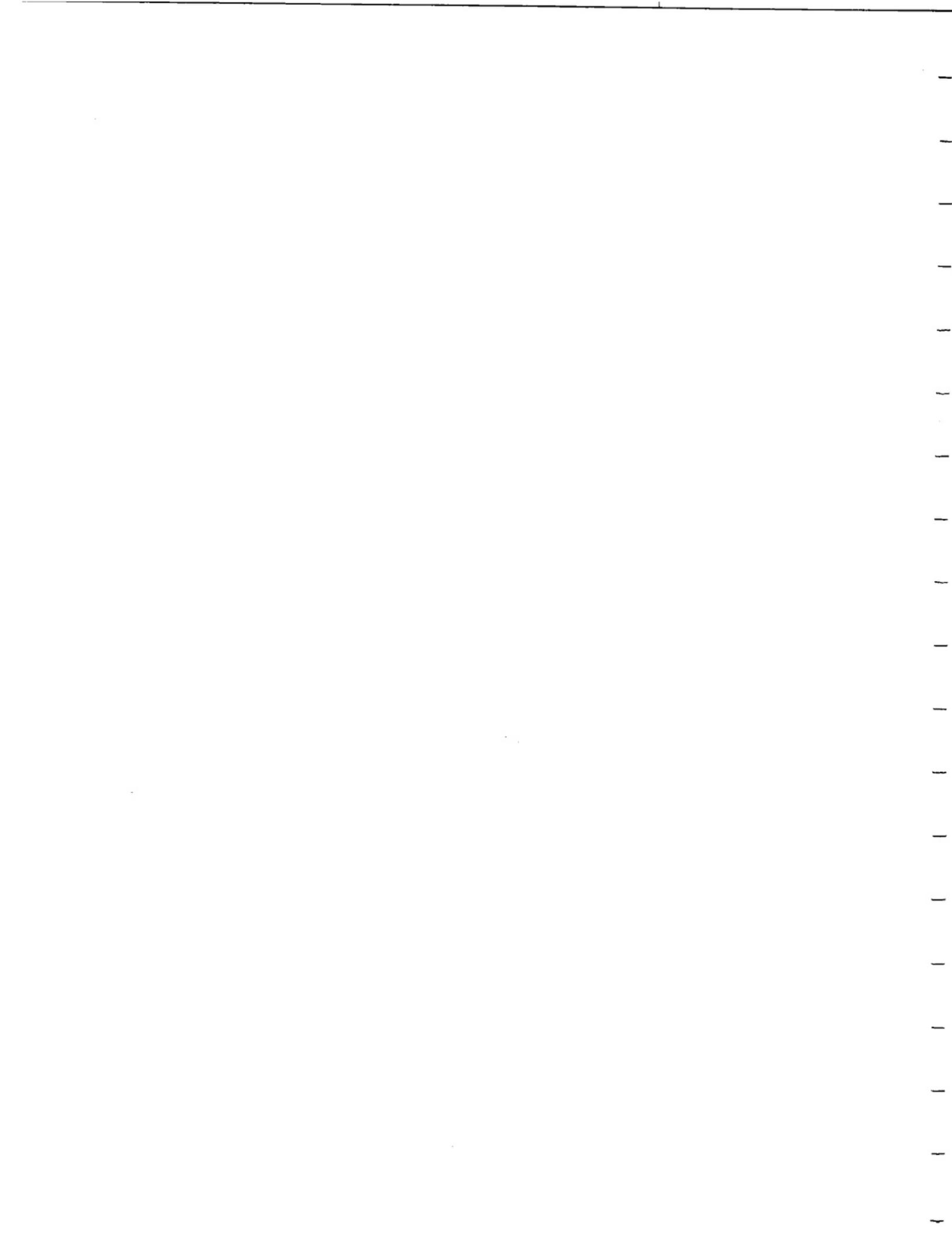


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Issue: Ethical Considerations of OS Facilitation: What is our global, cosmic and social responsibility?

Convener: Eleanor Belfry-Lytte

Participants: Jeff Aitken, Marcelle Bastianello, Karen Davis, Giles Hopkins, Donna Nelharn, Sherry Peck

Discussion / Recommendations:

Reason for Convening: As Eleanor experiences herself as channeling the spirit during an OS event, and understanding the powerful impact of an OS event, it raises the question: What is my responsibility in the broader environment?

The discussion began with each participant sharing what brought him/her to this particular session:

- The topic raises the issue of where we are in our own spiritual process. And also the question: what do we mean by ethical?
- OS is growth directed and this raises the question of how we direct the growth.
- It would be helpful to hear the moral dilemmas we've faced.
- This question has to do with knowing who I am and where I am from. OST provides a way of being in balance with myself and with others, and provides a way of ongoing healing. Being in balance is the spiritual end toward which I am moving.
- 'Ethics' and 'Cosmos' represents two extremes, is provocative and therefore an attractive topic.
- The group is small.
- This discussion explores the relationship between believing and knowing and provides an opportunity to dissolve believing into knowing.
- Coming to this discussion was intuitive. It brings up what it that draws me to OST: it is a place where people can be "adult", an opportunity not always available.
- Looking forward to the opportunity to look at the bigger cosmic issues.
- An interest in making choices about using OS for healing vs. going into organizations who are looking for band-aid solutions.

Further Discussions on Ethical Issues:

- How do I know that I am being ethical in this process?
It is important that OS be done within the guidelines that I have learned are essential for OST and that there is a congruence between what I believe is necessary and what happens. An example: I would not 'drop in' to do an OST event without adequate preparation and pre-work with the client.

- In general, OST must be done for the right reasons. However, this raises the question: what are the right reasons. As a facilitator, I provide the space, it is not my right to say what will happen. Even in the process of holding the space, I am already providing some kind of control for the event. Any opportunity to facilitate an OS event is probably 'growthful' no matter how it turns out.
- What about the question of doing OST in the broader global context. Are there ways to use OS more towards planetary healing, e.g., the generative nature of OS as an "Asian healing model" or an "acupuncture model". From a holographic model, we can understand what we do as working on the small inner pieces and the larger whole simultaneously.
- This discussion raises the question of language. I've stopped talking about "doing Open Space". Instead I have an awareness that the Open Space is already there and that I am "channeling" or opening up the space. [Actually, it's more like "shovelling manure", to get to what is underneath.] There is a clearing in this process of working with clients about whether or not OS fits. This is actually the most satisfying part. I feel I can be completely congruent about describing what OST is - OST provides its own litmus test. Then I feel free to let clients decide for themselves whether or not OST is what they want and do not see it as my responsibility for making the judgment. I am not making the choice for them - and I do not take it personally if they decide that OST is not appropriate.
Some organizations are not ready for OST. They may need something else other than OST for shovelling through the manure. If you look at the organization as a living system, then we might say that the system, i.e., the organization, needs to be at a bifurcation point in order for it to be ready to make a shift in organizational process. This is not an 'any day, any time' kind of thing. It takes a certain amount of evolution, growth and interaction with the environment, for the organization to get to this point.
- Coming back to the question of ethics: The only unethical thing is to deny that OST is there or to pretend we are "doing OS" when we are not.
- And coming back to the wish to do OST for the benefit of the cosmos - how can we do that?
In actuality the healing of a small group can have major implications for the planet. An example is healing a client and her organization that is actually putting programs in place throughout the world. Healing her/her organization effects the way the programs are to be carried out throughout the world. This brings to mind again the acupuncture model: find the meridian, the pivotal point, and effect healing throughout the larger system.
- Are there times when it is unethical to do OS? Has anyone ever been asked to consult for an organization whose business made him/her feel uncomfortable, e.g., the manufacturer of guns? This opens up exploring the shadow side. If we hold the space - when you

unleash it, it can go in any direction. OS is like an empty vessel - it can be used for good or evil.

For one thing, we need to explore the assumptions to know whether or not there are ethical issues involved in doing OS for a particular company. For example: Pacific Gas and Electric (name ?) who had been expanding nuclear plants held a series of meetings (not OS) in which they explored the basic reasons they were in business. The leadership realized that their intent was to provide energy and discussion led them to work with clients around ways to conserve. Both client and company save money and they then developed plans that precluded the construction of any more nuclear plants for the foreseeable future.

For another thing, regarding the shadow side: we need to be sensitive to and respect any fear that comes up in the preliminary discussions. When there is an underlying pull in an organization not to do OS, then it may be because some or all of the workers might not be able to feel contained in such unstructured space. OS is like being in chaos. When we ask people to come to the center of the room, they may feel like they are being asked to put their ego on the wall in front of their peers and their management. So the organization decides in some way that this is not the time.

OS is a letting go process: Taking people out to the brink is the right thing to do. It is growthful and people are excited about it. This brings up the image of the high wire and taking people into the process of OS. It is a wonderful recognition of your power when you see what you are able to accomplish.

"Spiritual Law of Wing Walking": When the old wing walkers went out on the wing, the rule was to catch hold of the next strut before letting go. The spiritual law states that you must let go before grabbing for the next.

One more time: it is about letting go. But it is also about connecting in a deep way about what is your life purpose.

There is something that is attention getting in some recent literature: Donnella Meadows and others who are considering systems models on the planetary level say that we have about 10 - 20 years to make the shift. Thinking globally is a motivator to being willing to move to the brink for the sake of growth.

Issue: Open Space + Six Months: Now What

Convener: Marcelle Bastianello

Participants: Barbara Bunker, Mark Carmel, Marlene Daniel, Sherry Peck

Discussion / Recommendations:

What Brings Us Together for this Discussion?

- There is an underlying question about what happens after Open Space, what follow-up needs to be done?
- There is a shift that takes place from the OST Event to the process that goes on in the organization afterward. The experience of some is that there are far reaching ramifications. And this raises the question: does the OST facilitator need to plan / market two events, or one event plus . . .
- One discussant reported on an experience. The success of a two-day OST was to some extent based on the opportunity that people took to discuss where it was they wanted to be. Afterward, there was a problem in that top management did not walk its talk. The leadership of the company was seen to play an important role.

Discussion:

- The question that seems important is whether the specific reason the client has for using OST makes any difference in the outcomes. Marlene alluded to the work at Rockport. The culture going into the meeting was that of one big family. They used a generic business issue to convene the meeting: What are the issues and opportunities facing Rockport? Through the process they self-organized to become a more self-empowered environment. Some of the value of OST was that it became a training laboratory. Part of the problem afterward was that they knew how to make things work but did not necessarily have the leadership to support the new process. In general, this particular example speaks to the need to deal at the front end about the outcomes at the back end.
- If the leadership gets focused on the bottom line results that can be achieved with OST, then there is no focus on the team that emerges, on the shift in the organizational process and on needing to be prepared for the shift that is to happen.

This raises the question of whether when the request for OST is around creating a team rather than 'bottom line items' if there is any difference in the preparedness of the culture to shift to accommodate the new process.

- Mark described his work with the 650 members of the community who came together to understand how to deal with the loss of funds. On the one hand, the school board was responsive to the outcome, creating a panel to reviewn and select best opportunities that were to be detailed after the initial work was completed in the OST event. Was this because they, as a group, knew they were empowered because of an election to their position? Critical to this discussion was the subsequent removal of the School Superintendent (appointed to his position) who, having heard many good ideas from the community, went forward to the press with a statement of his vision, and his ideas.

Relative to the serious outcome for the superintendent, this discussion group was struck by the ethical issues that surround adequate preparation of the leadership for what might result from the meeting.

- There is a shift in the consciousness during OST. People come out of the event changed in some way. There may be unexpected fall-out as people move on to new challenges and personal growth in an environment that has shifted. The best that can be done is to prepare the client for the outcome to the extent possible. We must ask the leaders to think through what might happen. They must be ready to respond to a possible explosion of energy. When a crisis hits, people often revert back to old ways. Therefore, there must also be a openness to the possibility that this may mean that some will not 'get' what it means and may then need to leave the environment.

References:

One Minute Manager: This book was mentioned during the discussion on ways a worker might manage his perceived role change and what he might do when he saw possibility for empowered activity. He may need to negotiate his new role with such comments as: "Can I have the authorization to proceed with moving forward on . . ."? or he might say: "Can I make a recommendation and then go forward"?

Principle Centered Leadership, Steven Covey

ISSUE: Self confidence & OST - before, during and after

CONVENER: Barbara Benson

PARTICIPANTS: Doug Silsbee, John McCann, Joe Miguel, Larry Peterson, Paul Tremlett, Darcy Cunningham, Mark Carmel, Robert Potter, Barbara Bunker

DISCUSSION / RECOMMENDATIONS: "thinks" - can I do this justice? so much went on - what did I miss?

So..., one person's view of the session.

My reason for raising the issue: "we are born with intrinsic motivation, curiosity in learning and joy in learning, and our society kills this by, inter alia, recognizing the v. few who come first and viewing the rest as failures" (W. Ed Demming); how restore self confidence and self worth so people take part fully in OS conferences and beyond.

Issues/matters raised

1 "Benefits of failure" - as illustrated by a blaming mentality/practice such as blaming upper management; a book was mentioned "When Society becomes an addict" - and people put themselves in victim mode. OST is one way of breaking this powerlessness. This lead to discussion on

2 "Collusions" - which I heard as ways in which we collude with one another not to be totally open or honest or responsible, and to have a tacit understanding that we both know what we are doing - and don't talk about it. The suggestion was made that all systems have collusions - in nature this is seen where parasites/bacteria live in a symbiotic relationship with hosts. There was a continuum of views on collusion from - "I use collusion all the time" to "the people colluding are not blameless"; which lead to some comments about

3 Human nature, including collusion is in contradiction to human nature which is to take responsibility/initiative; and it is human nature to project our limitations onto others. examples of collusion: staff - when things go wrong, blaming upper management; management - ditto , "see; I am needed" to fix things

Consultants - fear of obsolescence; if I really let go and leave the client to get on with the doing (for example, after OST event), am I doing myself out of a job?

Therefore, collusion m'ment/consultant Consultant - I need to follow up - job Management - I need you to follow up - shared responsibility, i.e., not where it should be, with the participants.

BOTH - interdependency/self perpetuation.

Example; work with a high rope and letting go the given resources AND achieving the objective.

Which lead to:

4 Is fear of obsolescence a fear only generated by the existing idea of a consultant's role? Would this fear disappear with a paradigm shift to a different role/s? Example of annual dental checkups because the system (teeth/mouth) is dynamic, as are the organizations which consultants work with. Which lead to

5 "Search for organization honesty", with the emphasis on search. Example from skydiving and development of the role of the aide as the person moves from being a beginner to taking part in group dives - and, along the way, the role of the aide changes as the needs vary.

One person expressed the view that they may reach a stage deep within an organization when they do not have the skills to take the people to the next level. There was also a story of a person who found their role as a participant at OSTs has changed from one of holding firmly to beliefs about how to behave and participate to one of "go with the flow". Which lead us to remembering a first session on Sunday and a manager in tears and the differing perceptions of that event - the consultants and the managers.

Question: Should we never collude with dishonesty? Never is too strong a word; maybe the time is just not right for such honesty/openness.

Lead to discussion about

6 The role of the consultant in working with the vision of senior management and how the management applications of that vision may not accord with the ways the staff prefer to apply their work. Example: in the area of homeless people; management application would not be adopted if staff given the opportunity to OST the application of the vision.

Another example in the area of a Canadian Deputy Minister and the conflict of open space for the organization and accountability/responsibility to Parliament where the D.M. was calling up the highest agenda.

[My experience is to agree with this and try to hold the management vision at as high a level as possible to allow the people who actually implement that vision to have the greatest say in how it is applied.]

This lead to discussion about

7 Means and ends and the relationship thereof.

Example: Orange County and achieving goals but people v unhappy; job rotation high; etc. etc. Suggestion - maybe goals are too low; think what could be achieved if people wanted to work there?

Which lead to discussion about

8 "Appreciative inquiry" - what is the best of the past which we can take into the future? and how work has been going on for about 5 years on how to measure this - one name was David Cooperrider at Case western and the Gestalt Institute; and another Carter at the G. I.

Thank you one and all; next time you are in Melbourne, I invite you to take part in a longer OS on the topic of self confidence and participation in OS with the executive of the Dandenong Australian Taxation Office - and see how we have developed our views.



ISSUE: OPEN SPACE

CONVENER: BAINBRIDGE BRIAN

PARTICIPANTS: Freeman Marvin, Bernard Mohr, Doug Carmichael, Karen Davis, Mark Carmel, Eleanor Belfry-Lytte, Angelo John Lewis, Sue Inches, Marion Yuen, Joe Anderson, Donna Nelham, Fred Harmon, Sherry Peck, Giles Hopkins, Sam McGill

DISCUSSION / RECOMMENDATIONS: Open space allows the impact of the external environment (- e.g. the Gulf War) so that the external context has its proper effect on the organization and what it is doing at this time. O.S. will and should work that way.

Implementation after the O.S. needs some more attention - else the outcomes don't happen as they could, maybe. Who holds the space after O.S.? Better if all involved in implementation are also involved in the O.S. The structures of the organization inevitably impact on how/if follow-on occurs. Change evolves; it can't be imposed.

Workers/organization members really do know more than they are given credit for. We have to "trust" that they have that knowledge, even if senior CEO's don't honor that.

Desirable to get prior commitment from CEO / "chief-contractor" to de-brief after the session. It matters a lot.

It can help to have a set of recommendations emerge in/from the printed reports and to have "who to do's" defined - then get those "who's" together to act/ recommend/progress the matter in whatever way possible.

Re-convening an O.S. will almost always be a new O.S. - otherwise the changes in between are not allowed for. How to "navigate" through this process to do new/next O.S. is the skill. It's like a "pulsing" process, though the direction may well be already set somewhere else in the environment/context, whether that is known or not.

The outcome will almost always "take it's own time" (like the gestation period of a kangaroo) from the environment. But some organizations don't - or can't or wont - allow this to happen.

C.E.O.'s have a special place in all of this - mainly to allow the environment to be there rather than control it. We can "call them into their real role" to help the organization flow/grow as it can.

We (Space-makers) often need others to ask us the obvious questions. And when a re-do occurs, make sure that there is sufficient CHAOS present - add new people (e.g. clients, donors, board, beneficiaries) otherwise the comfort zone takes over and it becomes "just another staff meeting"!!!

Major questions exist about leadership and the way O.S. impacts on it. An understanding of leadership styles matters here, and a searching into its nature. The whole question of divergent and convergent leadership - they seem not to fit together at all, in practice.

ISSUE: What are the defining characteristics of OST? When would you NOT do it?

CONVENER: Barbara Bunker

DISCUSSION / RECOMMENDATIONS:

- How voluntary is an invitation to OST from your CEO? Some people expressed concern that even if people "enroll" after they get there, they are not volunteers in the usual sense of the term.

- Barbara read in conditions that were mentioned in a morning discussion: Wouldn't do it if: 1) Client was told to do it 2) Top management and I don't talk and they don't really know what its all about 3) When top management or the client really wants control. 4) when they are not ready to open up "the can of worms" i.e. really look at the whole situation fully 5) the set up is that I take all the risk 6) the V.P. has got the outcome he wants ahead of the OST

Harrison's defining conditions and example:

Hi Ambiguity

Hi Conflict

Hi Divergence

Mind boggling complexity

If you can think of another way to deal with this situation, then do it that way!

Example: the current mess at U.S. West re their re-engineering project that is not producing the promised results

DISCUSSION OF CASE EXAMPLES:

Sam's strategy at Boeing re Re-designing the way they number the 4 million parts that go into the plane. This represents a fundamental change in the system even though it sounds like a bean counter problem. He is proposing to gather 500 people in OST vs the Gant chart 2 year plan...could save the company at least a year. Discussion of readiness to use OST for this and appropriateness

Downsizing example....would you do OST when 1/3 people could be subject to layoff....wouldn't they rather participate than have it done to them?

WHEN NOT TO USE OST

- When you already know the answer or what to do
- Process improvement
- In a small part of a bigger system (if it takes off it may outstrip the larger system....in general, try not to mess with the system unless you mess with the whole system

OPEN SPACE IS ALREADY HERE AND OUR JOB IS TO UNCOVER IT

When participants put up a burning issue that is part of the process of uncovering what is already here. We don't DO IT. Underlying dynamics, state of being vs doing it? Creation out of nothing requires that we look into the cosmic abyss. The Hero's journey makes it safe for us to travel (Campbell) We have to understand this dynamic even if we don't talk about it, especially in these words.

THE PARADOX OF OPEN SPACE (Unlikely to be understood in the West)

The sense of individuation increases

The sense of group cohesiveness/community also increases

Who says they can't both be true?

ISSUE: Variations on a Theme

CONVENER: Darcy Cunningham

PARTICIPANTS: Jeff Aitken, Fred Harmon, Robert Potter, Sue Inches

DISCUSSION / RECOMMENDATIONS: The question to start with was what variations on Open Space have people used, what has worked, what hasn't and what "sacrifices" were involved--ie what was lost.

Variations discussed were horizontal slice vs diagonal slice of the organization, half days, two facilitators sharing the opening, facilitated action planning after an open space, using OS to end a Search Conference, self-organizing around the themes that come up

The tension was between meeting the client where they are and doing only "partial" Open Space where a client was not ready for a full open space right away, and holding off until they are truly ready. An analogy from earlier is that of taking a dog for a walk on a leash, letting them run loose for a while and then putting them back on the leash. If this is the result of the variation, then is this ethically ok or doing the client a disservice? Or if it helps move the client along the path and opens the way for more and more open space, is it ok? Evolution vs revolution.

Most of us have tried half days and found they worked reasonably well. Clients often said they wished they had more time and were willing/eager to try open space again.

We also discussed possibilities of doing prework for an open space session that would heighten the work in open space. Harrison uses questions in data gathering with the clients ahead of time that get at the stories in the organization and raise awareness. The questions are "What's it like to work here?" and "What should it be like?" He then reports back to senior management re what he has heard and uses this discussion to help them frame the theme for the open space. Jeff also raised the view of org development from spark to vision to understanding to manifestation. And focusing on the open space between each level.

Open space followed by guided action planning-- yes open space becomes more of a meeting technology but it gets the client closer to where they want to go and opens a the door to doing more real open space down the road. We discussed the question of whether this builds a dependency on the facilitator and the problem that ownership is less invested the participants. In the short run it opens more ideas and people bring more of themselves.

The question becomes too is the client truly not ready, or are they afraid of the future. Are we as facilitators of OS not helping them push their envelope more because we don't yet truly trust the process and/or trust ourselves? Each of us has to make that decision for ourselves. Doing smaller, "partial" OS's may help build our trust in the process and in ourselves.

We also discussed the need for closure to a one or 2 day OS. One person has groups use last hour to report out. He then works with a subgroup to structure next steps. There was discussion about who owns the results and process here.

We also discussed the options of "virtual OS" eg using metanet and decided that while a great option, we didn't want to ever totally forsake face to face OS! Wondered about the possibility of using this technique inside an org in addition to e-mail.

We finally got to a place where we agreed OS can be used both as a meeting tool and as larger Org change vehicle and its ok to "Take baby" steps using it more as a meeting tool, as long as you know it's more, and are clear about your motives, and use this to move the client along to the broader OS.

Another analogy was to cooking: follow the recipe the first time so you understand it and the outcomes, then improvise as needed in the future.



ISSUE: WHAT Does the Shaman Know That Could Help Organizations Change?

CONVENER: Joelle Everett

PARTICIPANTS: Birgitt, Marcelle, Dan, Suzanne, Eleanor, Brian, Linda, Doug C, Doug S, John M, Marion, Paul, Barbara, Michael

DISCUSSION / RECOMMENDATIONS: What draws us to this question?

*My struggle to live my life as one piece.

*The idea of doing my own soul work to prepare to help organizations work. Understanding story, dance, silence and song.

*Looking for balance in my life.

*As a manager, I started squashing parts of my life. Now, I'm exploring what we have subordinated.

*We lose time fretting about success, when we could just let that energy be, let it flow.

*I've done a lot of letting go; I come back to what is true and real for me. Flow happens despite me and opens me to my inner wisdom.

*We don't need to look in other places, other traditions--look right here. What we are talking about is accessing Spirit.

*Our management systems destroy people. Our context has what we need to transform.

*I've been studying Indian mysticism, body centers, energy fields. Personal healing clears the field and enhances my ability to help another.

*I'm learning about the realms of ability in which a shaman functions. I want to become more familiar with the territory.

*A shaman is a person with insight--this is the direction I'd like to move.

*I hope leaders can be brought to the place where work is joy and joy is work.

What might we take from shamanism and other traditional disciplines to use in personal or organizational work?

*From Oriental traditions, I've learned to ground and center my body. This grounds my facilitative work.

*I've discovered that I may use trance induction to change the consciousness of a group and encourage people to try new behavior.

*I find it very important to keep my feet on the ground.

*When a difficult one-on-one meeting is needed, go outside and talk while walking in a natural environment.

*I'm a massage therapist, and I have not done massage when I am filled with grief.

*The shaman recognizes that we have an inner differentiated structure, and can move from one state to another. This seems more useful than our typical assumption that no change is possible.

*I'm learning the importance of my personal spiritual practice and my own faithfulness to that practice.

*As a therapist, I question the assumption that the client needs to deal with and heal the past. The past is easier to name, a defense against dealing with the present. Whatever needs to be changed is in the present.

*Releasing is a letting go; healing is a piece of work.

*Strip away everything that isn't really you. You don't need approval from outside.

*Often the need for change is seen as criticism of the past. We need to honor the intentions of people in the past, then move on.

*Dismembering and remembering is a fundamental shamanic process.

*How do we deal with past, present and future?

We can choose key values from the past to carry into the future.

We can acknowledge the past and what no longer fits.

We can use the tension between what is and what we want as energy to make a shift.

*Organization transformation can't happen until there is a critical mass of individuals who are in personal transformation.

*Does the system resist change, or does it resist acknowledging growth that has already happened?

Resources we offer:

Focusing, Eugene Gendlin

Insight: A Study of Human Understanding, Loneigan

The Heart Aroused, David Whyte

Quantum Consciousness, Steven Lovinskie

Awareness, Antony Demillo

Teilhard de Chardin

ISSUE: Diversity and Conflict Resolution in OST

CONVENER: Angelo Lewis

PARTICIPANTS: Marcelle Bastianello, Bernard Mohr, Marlene Daniel, Sherry Peck, Barbara Bunker,

DISCUSSION / RECOMMENDATIONS: THE convener began the session by suggesting that the group begin and conduct its session in a novel way -- through the use of dialogue. The attempt was to create community through discussion, rather than having a polite, competitive argument. The dialogue process incorporated ground rules. After the dialogue, the group agreed to debrief the process of the engagement and the outcomes, i.e. implications for work "back in the world"

Ground rules:

- 1) talk from one's own experience (not theories, generalizations etc)
- 2) put aside assumptions that we understand and are masters of the subjects of diversity and conflict resolutions. That we are instead a learning community, attempting to move as a group to the next level of understanding about the topic
- 3) honor the speaker: listen

We had a symbolic movement into dialogue through a 30 second moment of silence and then began our conversation...

The convener began by sharing his experience as 1) a diversity trainer who has incorporated OST into diversity training, i.e. as a closing exercise where people brainstorm plans for the various aspects of diversity for their organization using the learnings from the training and focus groups as preliminary data and 2) as the founder of Diversity Circles, an experiential peer-to-peer dialogue format on Diversity that uses as a rule: "Insofar as possible, participants should attempt to speak from their own experience with regard to diversity and attempt to learn from, rather than impose their views upon, others."

Marlene reported her experience at Rockport Shoes. After OST, she interviewed people of color re: their experience of inclusion during OST. The group said that the passion of the OST experience freed them up, enabled them to talk about the unspeakables. They felt heard, respected, and were able to contribute. Some plans were implemented, some not; that may be an indication of individuals at the top of Rockport who are no longer there. Message: beware of commitment to follow through.

General discussion: Unfortunately, sometimes afterwards, passion and enthusiasm wanes; people return to their individual concerns. An example was cited of a government group in which management was a champion of diversity and OST (diversity in the sense here of cross-functional diversity). Employees came up with a plan and management was disappointed,

wanting something more, something more creative.

Marcelle talked about the need for some form of prework, predisposing management as to what might happen after OST, suggestions of the need to prep client well as to how to follow through. Mariam agreed.

Angelo, following a comment by Paul, said that the issue of "who comes" is a critical issue for diversity. Although it is an axiom of OST that "whoever shows up is the right person(s), the fact of the matter is that often, people of color will not come. Same is true for gay folks. They don't want to a) educate white folks again, 2) restimulate these painful areas again, only to face disappointment or 3) put themselves to a potentially hostile group.

A discussion ensued about conflict and OST: how conflict gets handled in OST. Marcelle talked about a situation in which she facilitated an engagement that involved OST. She did some considerable prep work (the goal, in part, was to develop a vision statement). In the prework, M. got a good grasp of the organization's mythic history and shared it with the group during the beginning of OST. She also knew that there was a potential of conflict between a director (who was learning disabled) and a subordinate. During the OST, the two began to give one another feedback, i.e. they resolved the situation. Pivotal to this was talking about the future during the OST entry. It was OK, in other words, to bring up baggage, but then it was imperative to let it go to plan for change.

At Rockport, it was known in advance, that "if a certain topic came up, someone was going to pay." A supervisor told his subordinates that. Nonetheless, the issue came up within about 12 minutes of Open space. It was an "us and them" issue that was resolved by bringing people together who had information about it: one group was operating under an illusion. Public resolution with top management there to protect against reprisals helped.

Pre-OST presumes that the group can do the work. In diversity work, can a homogenous group handle that, i.e. can we assume that a homogenous group will surface issues of people of difference. One possible solution was to utilize more dialogue techniques to help surface hidden issues: some in homogenous group may not have a clue about these areas.

One needs substantial under-representation of people of difference present during diversity work.

One solution is not to deal with everything in the session, but to delineate certain aspects to deal with.

At Rockport, temporary culture of OST allowed people to come alive. Different story after OST.

Query: is there an ethical bind. Can one raise hopes of minorities who have had hopes raised before and dashed. Consultant needs to assess beforehand what might happen later in this regard.

Similar situation, an organization about to do through downsizing is about to use OST. Input about this would be appreciated...

Concluding statement: can we guarantee inclusion? or at least have a good feeling about it? Do we have a sense beforehand that management is sincere...

Debrief of dialogue:

- 1) we stuck to guidelines and spoke from our experience.
- 2) we were attentive to others.
- 3) follow up discussions offline were needed on conflict and appreciative inquiry.
- 4) people appreciated the discussion on constraints of the use of the OST for diversity.



ISSUE: CHOICE - WHAT'S THAT?

CONVENER: John Perkins

PARTICIPANTS: Linda Pope & Joe Miguez

DISCUSSION / RECOMMENDATIONS: Linda joined me while I sat at a table making a mind map of my beliefs about "choice." She thought I was sitting out the first round of groups; actually I was feeling like the only person here competent to address the issue. I shared with Linda my recent discovery that the basic ideas upon which we build our work occupies whole sub-fields in ethics and philosophy.

What does it mean to choose? A decision to enlist in the army immediately means the loss of a great many other options, and being absent without leave (choosing to leave) brings harsh consequences. Linda talked some about a concept from Robert Fritz: our primary choices often entail secondary choices(or implied choices) which in our full freedom we could well do without. Getting degree might be my primary choice; being in debt for decade would be a secondary choice.

Some choices work like a ratchet--once made one can never go back to old the way. The choice to cancel an open space event, after the rooms are rented and masking tape bought, can be done but would entail a great deal of loss of good will or face.

Continually we returned to knowing that we best decided when we begin with the most global, meaningful decisions first, then cascade down to smaller decisions and ultimately to our day to day decisions. Some writers on this subject we mentioned were Krishnamurti, Jane Roberts, Montagu Ullman, Charles Tarren("Waking Up") Robert Fritz, and the family therapist Insoo Kim Berg.

Insoo runs the Brief Family Therapy Center in Milwaukee. About 10 years ago she hit upon a particular way to ask people a question that instantly facilitated their thinking in global ways. After gathering information about the problem which brought them in to the office, she says, "Let's suppose went to sleep tonight and by some miracle you awoke in the morning and all of the problems which brought you here were miraculously solved. But it happened during your sleep so you are not fully aware of how it happened. What would be the first thing you would notice in the morning when you got up which would be evidence of this change haven taken place.

A technique pioneered by Montague Ullman helps groups avoid defensiveness. He uses it in dream sharing groups, but the basic principles can be applied anywhere. Person X shares dream (vision, idea. . .) with the group. Group members listen, then ask content specifying questions only, which the dream answers. This is to clarify in listeners minds who is in the dream, the sequence of events, etc.. Next they ask questions to clarify feelings.

Then, the facilitator invites the dreamer to be silent, and the members discuss the dream but each takes the perspective that it is his or her personal dream. The dreamer listens. After this part the dreamer can share with the group specific reactions or offer clarifications of where details might have been confused. Then the group conducts another round of discussing the dream.

After the final round the dreamer may choose to discuss the impact on them of this process. Or pass and process the dream in the intervening week between groups and report back next time.

Linda said most people think of work or change as involving stress, struggle, sacrifice and strain. Yet alternatively it could be easy, effortless, enjoyable and exciting. The challenge of course, is discover and sustain the principles which facilitate that as an ongoing experienced reality in our personal day to day living.



ISSUE: Experiencing and Facilitating the OS Process

CONVENER: Linda Pope

PARTICIPANTS: Freeman Marvin, John McCann, John Perkins

DISCUSSION / RECOMMENDATIONS: THE Role of Dialogue:

An overview of formal Dialogue was reduced to its most fundamental form, namely setting minimum conditions (air all assumptions and consider everyone as equal) and thereby holding a creative space to allow a higher level of understanding to unfold where all participants experience a greater awareness.

The formal Dialogue process was compared to OS where passion, the absence of control, self-selection and the law of two feet allows for dialogue to happen WITHOUT explaining the conditions of dialogue. That is, both Dialogue and OS take you to a new space where trust, respect, and love can occur without wasting energy on defensive routines. A key to whether either process is working is the absence of defensive behavior, i.e., the participants would rather be effective and reach a higher level of understanding rather than be right.

Additional facilitation issues included:

New Premises - new ways of facilitation like OS call for new beliefs for the facilitator:

Trust that people will really learn how to take care of themselves
Trust that we are all totally responsible for creating our experiences.

Learn to let-go especially with breakout groups.
If anyone tries to control, have the courage to 'walk'.

Two quick forms of OS were discussed:

- 1) When working with a group without introducing the concept of OS ask them to identify topics and for each person to take responsibility for the first sentence on the topic discussion.
- 2) Facilitate a group's progress in terms of a 'better problem'.

Also, some process enhancers to facilitate formal OS were discussed as ways to help integrate the learning and awareness; they included:

- 1) Building in down time during the day either by scheduling it or by including vignettes/role playing.
- 2) Passing out 'wild cards' to encourage people to trust the process and allow some integration time for themselves during the process.

Dialogue concluded with the assumption that it would be of value to distinguish between two levels of reporting:

- 1) WHAT happened - the output

2) HOW it happened - the process

In other words feedback on content reporting and process reporting would both be useful. The feedback loop is twofold: both to the process as well as to the input. The larger context is learning how we learn in the spirit of co-creation.



Issue: Research into Open Space - Tracking the Before and After

Convener: Chris Carter

Participants:

Chris Carter
John Perkins
Marlene Daniel
Jeff Aitken
Marcelle Bastianello
Suzanne Maxwell

Discussion

Marcelle: Just beginning dissertation with a clinical background. Interested in what happens after. Not interested in quantitative research. More in qualitative, narrative research. Open to ideas.

Background in physics, a degree in business and work in psychology. Field theory has something to say about the collective consciousness that gets created in OS.

DOCTOR Marlene: Just completed the dissertation! Tracking the before and after for Rockport Shoes. Likes talking to the whole system, not just training and development. Found Productive Workplaces by Marvin Weisbord - considered for dissertation but then found Open Space. Much more interesting and harder to pin down. Then linked to Margaret Wheatley and the New Science.

The development of a dissertation about OST:

- org culture
- self organizing
- Dialogue (David Bohm)
- org learning (Chris Argyris, Gregory Bateson)

John: Started PhD in July. Wanted to track use of OS within one org, but size and scope is an issue. Track mindset changes. Free flowing way to investigate something that is free flowing. Background in conflict, mediation. Like to combine family therapy and intentional communities somehow (consensus building and process description). Still in search mode.

Jeff: Wants to finish Master's thesis first (appreciative inquiry). OS will be part of the discussion section. Related to the Empowerment Organization. Indigenous Science! An agenda for research into OS:

Practices

- dialogue
- expressive arts
- process-oriented psychology

Methods

- Appreciative Inquiry
- empowerment evaluation

Contexts

- networks
- visions/purposes
- organizations
- diverse cultures

Theory

- mythos
- euro-tribal
- process work
- chaos & complexity

Chris: A PhD in the future? Wants to learn about the various methodologies to track interventions. Action Research may be a method. What about other objective & subjective methods? How do you measure the impact and effectiveness?

Suzanne: Also interested in measurement of OS. Uses ethnographic methods in her practice. Offering to a research site for us - lab for Albuquerque Public School.

Dissertation format discussion. Some institutions have rigid formats (like Marlene's). Other's have more definable formats. Methodologies include ethnography (similar to narrative) or action research. Need a collection of stories to start generalizing to form a grounded theory.

Quantitative work is easier when more qualitative work has been completed. We're not there yet but getting there. Where you can get in sometimes drives the research.

Questions for research:

What is happening three months later?

What's the evidence of change?

How OS differs from Dialogue?

A list of sources:

Brenda Zimmerman: dissertation

Arnold Mindel

Gareth Morgan: Imaginization, Images of Organization

Margaret Wheatley: Leadership & the New Sciences

Complexity (author not remembered): the next level of chaos

A suggestion from Joe Anderson, Nynex:

He ran an OS as a result of an HR blanket survey. Then do a questionnaire 30 days after event.

Compare to see if issues move.



Issues: Sharing Stories about using Open Space as part of an Organizational Change Process

Convener: Sue Inches

Recording duties shared with Chris Carter

Discussion

Sue's Story:

Retreat, purpose to develop strategic plan in 1.5 days

First afternoon - shared values, core competencies and material (data), surveys. Second day - Open Space for about 5 hours: 25 people - 14 issues. Then 1.5 - 2 hrs to develop action plans, which worked well.

OS took the group to the heart of the issues

Didn't have the time for more formal methodologies

Follow through not evaluated yet - only two weeks ago.

Theme of OS: What things can we do together to better serve our customers?

Aside: What's the formula for number of issues, length of time and size of group?

Two short snapshots of OS. (1) Telluride, Colorado: an OS without preparation and gave the group full authority to help themselves. Reduces focus on facilitator. (2) Department of Energy:

Was not as successful in giving authority away. Having a stake in some of the outcomes (i.e. helping to implement a computer system) affected his participation as facilitator.

Emergent consensus from a group is an amazing thing to watch.

How do you differentiate from outcome attachment and our role as coach to set the theme/context?

Some responsibility to coach clients not familiar with OS.

What has the client hired me for? It's a contracting issue: is it our role to create the strategic plan, or manage the process?

"Keeping the process moving" is not OS.

Before the meeting, preparing the space/capacity to support the issues that come from OS - front end work.

The introduction of OS is normally part of a longer term consulting relationship and it changes the dynamic of the relationship.

Planning for the transition back to the "real world": implementation, the group needs to own it. Letting go of the process.

Suzanne's Story:

Manager wanted people to take more responsibility. The group took over the management of the meeting. The manager had a hard time understanding the complexity and the internal changes needed when the transition occurred. "It's all coming apart," the manager said, when sobbing in the hallway. ""It's all coming together," Suzanne replied.

How can the consultant know what the client really wants? It turns out the manager's manager was the true client. Can we be clearer about the possible outcomes?

When starting OS, talk about leading edge and values (which is what Harrison did today), making emotional impact and creating personal meaning. Meditate about the people and the space ahead of time.

Australian Story:

Office of 800 people. Why would you come to work if you won a whole lot of money? 160 people attended. Client expectation of ongoing consultant involvement.

Marketing OS: Go in with the mindset that OS is not appropriate for that organization, therefore I am not invested in the outcome of forcing a "sell" of OS. The client then decides the appropriateness. Many places are not ready for OS.

When not to do OS: When top management and I don't talk. When the client really wants control. When OS is mandated. When the answer is already known. When you are contracting with somebody who has a manager who is actually controlling the process?

When to do OS: When self-organization is needed.

Three things that Birgit would change:

(1) Future Search creates agreement on future paths. One example of a large scale systems intervention. Open Space is one of a set of tools/processes that can be used.

OS is like the shift from arranged marriages to love. Trust and a sense of values. It's a method but also an attitude. Turning over authority.

One cannot control the speed of organizational transformation. The door opens at its own pace. The tension between the need to control and open communication. Once started, it will just happen. Is crying in the hallway a "bad" thing or what needed to happen? Staff are less affected than the leadership - they take the learning with them more easily.

OS is like a painting or sculpture, a creative process. Our role is to create OS and maintain OS. Who is letting go? Ourselves, the client? Going into the unknown. We're asking to pin down something that may be unknowable.

Personal preparation for OS is critical. Pick the right theme. You can't push people.

Take off the consulting hats during our discussions here. What would happen if consultants didn't have to worry about getting paid? What would happen if we didn't have to worry about the short term? Take the risk to be in total awareness and in connection with the people in OS. What "check marks" are we looking for as consultants from our clients? Move from "I don't know what I don't know" to "I now know that I don't know." What are the givens and what is within our locus? What can we work with? This may help in using OS in shorter time-frames. This is a matter of degree - determining what's appropriate for opening.

Exhibit faith that people will be truthful. What is true will come out or not come out. Ownership happens. The less degree of engineering means more ownership by the group. Speaks to credibility and honesty.

Don't ask the client to trust you, but rather ask yourself to trust the client. What about our comfort level with trusting the client - whose needs are we addressing? We "know" it can work but the client doesn't know it yet. Do I trust myself with trusting the process?

Some disappointments about how the structure of an organization "shuts" down the benefits of OS. Systems of domination is real. We come against this in OS. Are there "good" or "bad" clients? Does the quality of outcome make them a bad client? Is part of our role to see that we are targets of blame by the client. Take responsibility together with the client for the event. Anticipate its occurrence - potential for explosive situations.

Where the perceived risk is greatest is the place of greatest potential for. Fear is borne of the anxiety.

The world is self-organizing whether we turn OS on or off. The world is already in OS. Speaking the OS that already exists. What is the organization already open to and use OS to spread the word, to expand the conversation. Faith and trust are the well-spring of a healthy organization - recognize that we are not value-neutral as facilitators. Creating the conditions for change - a state of "crisis" is one.

There are many examples of using OS for the creation of new ventures and organizations. Creating dialogue between agencies.

Issue: Weaving Open Space into "Traditional" Conferences

Convener: Chris Carter

Discussion

The IAP3 (International Association of Public Participation Practitioners) is holding a conference for its members in Whistler, Canada from September 24-27, 1995. Roughly 450 people are expected to attend. Chris is helping in its logistics and process.

This is the fourth annual conference for this group. The first was in Portland, Oregon in 1992 when 200 people attended. In 1993, the conference was in Kananakis (near Calgary) when 300 people attended. This year the conference was attended by 400 people in Washington, D.C.

Preceding the official conference are two sets of events. The first is an Indigenous People's Conference, hosted by the Squamish Nation and is envisioned to be a type of "potlatch." The second is a series of Skills Development Workshops. These will occur on the Saturday and Sunday.

The main conference begins on the Monday and continues to noon on Wednesday. There is a grassroots desire to have a "un"-conference next year. It has been decided that Open Space will

be incorporated into the conference. But how? Two proposals have surfaced (with some variations):

- 1) Mon - traditional conference with speakers, panels, etc.
Tues - Open Space
Wed - closing circle and ceremonies
- 2) Mon/Tue - dual tracks of OS and traditional conference
Wed - closing circle and ceremonies

What are the stories and advice from the group in this session about what to do?

Advise against weaving back and forth, hour by hour! But a "topic of the day" speaker (slide presentation) worked well to lead into OS.

Rocky Mountain ASTD Regional Meeting recently used a format called Virtual Space, created by Ward Flynn (and trademarked!). It uses accelerated learning format of 1 hour sessions (50 min + 10 min break). A "home town" is a bridging concept to relieve anxiety. 80 people of the 300 attended. Some questions: Was this OS? Seems dependent on facilitators? People commented that they actually wanted to experience the chaos and freedom but the VS did not allow this occur.

Comment: The two stream approach is like putting one foot on the gas while having the other on the brake!

Why? To make people more comfortable:

- 1) We don't really want them comfortable
- 2) Now we're in the wrong place.

When you start OS, stay there.

From ODN '94, one and a half days of workshops then one day of OS facilitated by Harrison. This worked well.

Another example: A four day conference that started with an evening presentation followed by a one day OS. The theme was related to the topic presented the night before. The following days were training, workshops and trade shows. Some prepared sessions were not well attended but the formal presenters attended the OS, so this wasn't as big an issue as one might expect.

Seeding OS with some prepared speakers doesn't really work, based on one person's experience in a 3 day OS on community.

Questions: Who are the decision makers? (IAP3 board) What is it that you don't think will happen if we are is OS? OS surfaces agendas. One need that the traditional conference satisfies is a forum for academic presentations, which is a valid need.

What about encouraging the Squamish Nation to run the whole conference?

Keynote speakers can be a lead into OS, especially if framed as a series of questions. Big names helps marketing and gives permission to attendees to participate. With the speaker, do it the night before if possible. This helps provide focus and context for OS.

What is the reason for coming?

It is not selling - invitation!

Having OS on the Tuesday following from the Monday "traditional" format proves an opportunity for conversations to continue. If you need more of the same, do it!

Accentuate the positive.

Robin, who presented the OS workshop at IAP3 Washington, facilitated an OS for emergency health care. First three days were traditional, and the last two days, OS. Not all stayed for the OS but it was by far the most interesting part of the conference.

The topic of this session is about weaving OS into traditional conferences. OS may become the traditional conference soon!

OS takes some courage. It is perceived to be "risky." We are asking people to take a risk yet not taking the risk ourselves. What's the risk? Identify the significant happenings for people from their experience of other conferences. Connect with their experience and frame of reference. We are already in OS.

The amount of time needed in OS is indeterminate.

The recommendation of this group to the IAP3 is: Use your good judgement!

What do you want to get done? Works best with high levels of ambiguity, conflict and suggestions on how to get there.

Issue: Organizational Learning from Open Space, Long Term Learning

Convener: Larry Peterson, Linda Pope

Participants: Joe Anderson, Paul Tremlette, Jeff Aitken, Freeman Marvin, Brian Bainbridge.

Discussion:

--How do we help organizations to learn from Open Space Events? Is there something we can do to maximize the learning? How can this build long term relationships in an organization?

--Paul and Larry were recently involved in an Open Space event. In a follow-up meeting, Paul encouraged the senior management team to reflect on what they had learned about the organization when they opened some space for initiative. However, they seemed to be more concerned about the formal evaluation.

--Brian told the story of his walking out in the middle of an Open Space event. The group was unwilling to go beyond things as usual, and he left the event. The facilitator walked out.

Those participating in the event sought him out afterwards. He did not initially respond. After several tries, they convinced him that they were willing to engage in Open Space, and he led another event. They had decided to let go and the next event worked. It was clearly not things as usual. An Open Space facilitator willing to take this risk of letting go can greatly enhance the learning.

--The trust and relationships must be there to engage people in learning. Working with the CEO or other managing leadership before an Open Space event. If Brian did not have a relationship of trust with that leadership, his walking out would not have led to the same learning. However, that is the risk of letting go.

--Brian does not follow-up on Open Space events as do some consulting companies always looking for more work. If the information comes to him, then he is pleased. But, letting go of an event means trusting the group to do its own learning.

--Can an organization hold the space on its own? When does it need an external (at least to that unit) person to hold that space? If leadership

has a vested interest in particular outcomes then it cannot hold the space. Learning is short circuited. This requires some learning about learning in Open Space. Learning when to, and not to use an external facilitator.

--Linda described Quantum Leadership. It is an organization that builds long term relationships toward productivity. It does not contract for specific events or processes. It is retained month by month by clients to build relationships that will improve productivity. It sees its task as a multi-year learning process.

--What is organizational learning? It includes individual ah ha's. However, when learning becomes organizational it is embedded in the pattern of relationships that make up the organization, in the collective unconscious. It can include consciousness of self as a system (even an open system). It can also clarify boundaries (even if permeable). It is incarnate in the stories of the organizations (living artifacts) and in the formal processes, structures, buildings and other forms.

--When we work with organizations, we don't physically see patterns of relationships, we see individuals. (However, we can discern both patterns and spirit.)

--We discussed for some time the nature of objective measures of learning? How do we know when it has happened? Qualitative measures can be explored. Quantitative measures related to output are also possible. However, some effects of an Open Space event occur six or more months later. (It is systemic change, and there is often a time lag between cause and effect.)

--This was an exploration, to be continued.

Issue: Simple Principles for What Happens Next.

Convener: Giles Hopkins

Participants: Some Good Folks

Discussion/Recommendations:

Many of us who have co-created Open Space with clients who are an in-tact work group of some kind have been experimenting with various processes for facilitating and encouraging follow-up and follow through from work done in Open Space. To the extent that Open Space has been a process that has uncovered a range of options, what is the natural process by which decision might get made? What is the analogous metaphor to the coffee-break for decision-making and implementation?

Here is a sampling of thoughts and points-of-view:

Management thinkers are suggesting that organizations need to move from the metaphor of the football (American variety) team to the soccer (real football) team. Organizations no longer have the luxury of a linear, sequential process of planning and execution (the huddle and the play). Now the players on the field must be making a constant stream of real-time strategic and tactical decisions. Decisions and implementation are virtually simultaneous.

One way to view open space is that it IS the field of play and decisions or at least choices are being made all the time. What may be helpful is to think about ways for participants to RECOGNIZE the choices they are making and the inner rightness of the choices made in the stream of action.

In Open Space, parties affected by the decisions to be made get their concerns on the table. The principles of Open Space tend to neutralize the effects of rank and status in the process.

There is still an assumption by many people going into Open Space that implementation is something that will happen afterwards and if nothing happens then the client is likely to see the process as a failure.

Where facilitators have used processes to converge on

recommendations for actions within the Open Space or as an immediate follow-up, Open Space seems to keep the ownership and responsibility for implementation with the participants and emergent leaders.

What is the role of formal leaders? Is the Open Space truly open to directions that are not planned on by the leadership of the organization? Formal leadership could approve or not. Key role of leadership is in establishing wide/clear enough boundaries for the field of play so that the work can get done.

One possible impact of real time decision making in the soccer analogy is that each single decision is less risky and the learning is increased by more frequent and shorter feedback loops. This doesn't preclude that a pattern of mistakes would prompt the coach to pull a player and put in a substitute.

Decision making must take place on the field of play and formal leadership must be absolutely vigilant in not taking back authority it has delegated. Rather than taking decisions, it should be approving proposals. There is something bigger which creates the field of play that is the proper role of leadership, call it vision, policy framework, boundaries, performance contract, etc.

Open Space is a kind of search in which participants make discoveries (different from decisions or choices). The question then becomes what are we going to do with and about these things we have discovered? What do they mean? What are the implications?

Open Space can be extended into the future by having participants report or post the NEXT STEP each will take. This then provides a point at which alliances can be made before the event is closed. There is a significant difference between planning an implementation process to which all participants agreed and the simple process of having each post his or her NEXT STEP.

Issue: Personal notes from the conference

Convener: Mark Carmel

Participants: Everyone at one time or another

Discussion: After arriving home from the "2nd International" and reviewing my notes, I knew I must type them up. I called Harrison and asked if he would like them mailed for inclusion in the book. He said, "sure." My head is still spinning from the many forces placed within it.

So what follows are simply my personal notes taken from the event for which I am most grateful to the special people who imparted their pearls of wisdom to my pen. Where *possible* I am attributing quotes made to those who made them, with the exception for Ghandi and others who, although not physically present, may have been there in Spirit when their words were quoted.

On the flight out, Harrison's words (from *Riding The Tiger*, pg.5) were resonating in my head as I thought of my own journey in the world of an Open Space facilitator. His words: "The journey will not be without pain. There is no free lunch. Leaving our present state, in order to achieve our future state, will not be accomplished with out genuine loss and no small amount of anxiety. We can, however make the journey infinitely more painful by refusing to take the trip - seeking to alter the course - or getting off in the middle of the ride. Those who ride the tiger need to understand that the tiger is in charge. Attempting to alter that situation can be very painful."

I made note of a quote from a consultant as I read an article on self managed work teams. Gary Kraines, Pres./CEO of the Levinson Institute (a Waltham, MA consulting firm) said, "The real challenge is how to keep accountability and also take advantage of the judgment and creativity of all your people." This was a perfect intro., I thought, to Harrison's first opening comment.

Harrison's Opening Comments:

"People will see the difference between real Open Space, where people are invited to be all they can be, and just another way to control."

"Be everything you are in totally mind blowing ways... to push the envelope as far as it will go."

"Open Space happens as soon as you think it."

"There is not a richer group in the world as those of you here. Make a genuine contribution to peace in the world. As far as I'm concerned this is the only game in town."

Sharing stories on using OST as part of organization change processes:

Sue Inches used a theme asking "What can we do together to better serve our customers?" Sue uses 'checkpoints' along the way to follow up OST progress with some of her work. Discussion centered on when to use or not use OST. Do not use OST when results are known or when the leadership *must* know all the answers. Do use OST when prepared to trust people doing the work; when the answers are unknown or unknowable; when self organization is desirable to take

responsibility for creative solutions; when an organization is moving away from middle managers and wants to turn responsibility over to the organization. A sentiment was expressed which captures potential readiness for OST: "I now know that I don't know." Ah ha's were heard.

Someone reflected on the quality of Harrison's opening comments and said, "You damn well better pick a good theme that connects with social responsibility during the opening comments." This observation led to the following conclusion: *"The leadership task is theme development."*

Other pearls of wisdom overheard:

- ◆ Have faith that people will be truthful
- ◆ How much do you open the system?
- ◆ As OST consultant, I do not have all the answers. I am not a fixer.
- ◆ I do not say, "I will fix your organization," but I do say, "I am able to help you if you want your people to fix the system. I can help you help yourself."
- ◆ I am not asking for you to have faith in me. I am asking you to have faith in your people. If you trust them they will do the right thing.
- ◆ "One day it dawned on me, we are all adults. If we can self manage our lives, why not the organization?" This inspiring quote was by Sam who is with Boeing
- ◆ The world is self organizing whether we like it or not.
- ◆ Faith and trust are the wellspring of healthy organizations.
- ◆ As the writer openly reflected on how Open Space was shut down in his organization, Larry noted, "irreversible conditions have been created by closing down Open Space which make for a future crisis." At that point Robbins encouraged him to "go to the battlefield." Thank you!
- ◆ An external consultant in OST gives organizations protection yet freedom.
- ◆ ISTJ = Anal retentive person who may never embrace OST.
- ◆ "I don't want people to be comfortable at the start" - can you believe that H.H. himself said this?

Regarding conferences using OST:

For the best results, do formal presentations first, then OST. A question to pose to conference organizers is, "what is it that you think will happen in a normal conference that won't happen in Open Space?" When considering how you can meet the needs of people in authority, it may be helpful to point out that working less and achieving more (especially in the design of a conference or organizational improvement) *certainly* meets the needs of people.

According to Harrison, the best method to set the stage at a dinner the night before a OS conference is to have the speaker pose a series of questions. Because the subconscious works during sleep, people will be ready when the space is opened.

"I will eat my shoes if the most significant accomplishment from your last meeting did not come from the bar, coffee break, or restaurant!" - Harrison Owen

A helpful hint from Harrison: "How you surface the theme is driven by the nature of the business. 'What do you want to do?'"

Thoughts About Already Being There and How To Communicate With Leaders:

- ◆ "Folks, you're already there. What were talking about is how to navigate the Open Space" - Harrison paraphrasing what he says to leaders of organizations.
- ◆ "It's not about doing Open Space Technology. It's recognizing Open Space exists beneath the surface and we just simply uncover it. Its as if we shovel away the mess on top to expose what is there all along. ...Each time a person grabs a piece of paper from the center of the circle, you uncover Open Space piece by piece." This wonderful metaphor is courtesy of Giles Hopkins. Giles said this example has changed the relationship with his clients (he was smiling when he said it so I assume it changed for the better). Giles encouraged the group to tie the metaphor into what leaders already know.
- ◆ "The basis for OST is mindboggling complexity, ambiguity, the need for speed, diversity and high levels of synergy and creativity. If you want all these great things from OST - do it. If you don't want it - don't do it!" - H. H. Owen
- ◆ "Confusion and multiple agendas already exist. You can just choose to bring it out in the open." - Giles Hopkins
- ◆ "Anyone who sees a problem affecting the organization has the opportunity and the responsibility to convene OS." - another Owenism

More thoughts and quotes found in Open Space:

Harrison fondly referred to a book of Joe Campbell's journey that is called (if I heard right) Cosmic Abyss speaking of the "Chaotic Void" that will enable the creation of something out of nothing. Wow, that sounds like OS!

- ◆ Someone asked in passing, "Why does this (OS) work?"
- ◆ Community and individualism appear as contrasts but BOTH thrive in OS.
- ◆ For an idea on a theme intended to unfold structure, try *"What we can stop doing to make this organization a better place."* Thank you, Giles (not that the government needs this).

Paul shared a theme, "The future is in our hands: Let's make it real" Paul also shared the format used with this theme (for the book): Topic; Who called the meeting?; Who came?; Major elements of the discussion; What action will be taken, by whom?" This meeting was with the Canadian Federal government.

- ◆ "When you take the leap of faith into the void, you are free. You will feel incredible exhilaration when you set yourself free and live with integrity." - I believe this was either from Brian Bainbridge or that it appeared from collective consciousness

- ◆ We've talked about advising others to let go. But what about ME?
- ◆ "We are aligned with forces holding us back which we must be aware of" - Doug C.

Larry (from Canada) said that, "spiritual journey begins with autobiography" in reference to a book he recommended by Sam Keens called *The Celestine Prophecy - Searching for Unnamed Gods*.

- ◆ "It's OK to be concerned about the ego - but don't make a big deal about it."
- ◆ "Anyone who knows God must have compassion for his children for they live in pain." - this is a line from a Sofrates (sp?) play
- ◆ "We're too hung up on selling change; on selling the future. Why not sell continuity?" That's a great question, Doug Carmichael
- ◆ "Only we know if we take the opportunities before us such that we can rejoice."

"The way you want to be is the way you are."

- Doggone it! I can't remember who said this.

Doug Carmichael shared his morning ritual. He gets up, runs around the block, studies Japanese for half an hour, plays an hour of tennis then eats breakfast all by 8:00 a.m. Doug says that this is how he creates Open Space for himself. He said he noticed that life is like tennis. You make mistakes 50% of the time which is acceptable on the court but denied back on the tennis court of life. I was thinking of how Steven Covey (in his book on seven habits) talks about "sharpening the saw" when Doug mentioned creating OS for himself. When I asked Doug if that is what he meant he said he preferred to *not* think of his morning ritual as "cutting through things."

- ◆ "Sickness and illness comes to you when you are not centered with your true purpose in life. Listen to your body." - Robbins Hopkins relating how her back trouble once led her to the above conclusion although now, she said with an encouraging, huge smile on her face, "I really feel healthy!" As I rub my back, Robbins' words from last year still ring in my head, "maybe you have a bad client" (or could it just be my lousy chair? Ouch).
- ◆ Someone said a marketing guru advised that there are four kinds of people: talkers, takers, doers, and givers. The story goes that talkers are takers and doers are givers. Where is Paul Harvey when you really need him.
- ◆ "Life is a process. Let go of that which you can not control. If you want to be miserable, Godspeed!" - ????

From the Discussion on Contributing Peace, Joy and Hope in the World:

- ◆ Someone asked the question, "Are there any miracles?" to which Harrison said (at some point in the discussion) "If you're trying to do the pain gain analysis you will find you can't have one without the other. Its never less than magical, it's never less than miraculous, it's never less than unpredictable. The pain becomes rocket fuel. Embracing the darkness quickens the light. What we are talking about is the process of birth. It is our choice: Be born or die?"

Harrison told the story of the meeting in South Africa with previously opposing parties. As a result of a "kid" standing up to say, "my issue is fear" and from what ensued, simultaneously hands were joined and PEACE HAPPENED! Then Father Brian told the story of the South African video that Valerie showed last year and when he got to the person who said, "they killed my wife" there was not a dry eye in the circle nor a mind not focused on the need for peace.

- ◆ "Only when I work on what's inside was I able to work on what's outside of me. Peace starts from within." - Robbins Hopkins
- ◆ "If we walk our talk, it will help us find peace" - ???
- ◆ Without painful experience, openness doesn't happen. Success can be your enemy while every crisis may be your best friend.
- ◆ Joe Miguez related a phrase that created the image of peace for him. His phrase is, "The Freedom of Purpose" as when one performs an act of faith.
- ◆ A book was referenced: *Blue Highways* by Edgar Casey about our will versus creator's will. The following was attributed to this book, "Pray to your God and then work like hell to make it happen." Belief + Work = Destiny. A looking in to see what we can put out.
- ◆ "Sharing and working together is peace." - Brian Bainbridge
- ◆ "If you want to change the world start with yourself." - Ghandi
- ◆ "When your head is not clear the problem is much bigger." - Brian Bainbridge

Thoughts Regarding the Decision Making Process:

- ◆ "I've never met an organization. I've met people. Trust the spirit of the people working there. Recognition of the spirit allows it to grow such that then people are prepared to risk. This carries in us a huge responsibility to let go." Thank you Father Brian!
- ◆ Decisions are not made, they're implemented.
- ◆ When the status person of authority makes the decisions, more often than not, the actual results are no results.
- ◆ "Executives do not make decisions they do not need to make." - Barbara Benson
- ◆ Barbara described how her Australian tax office supports OS. In weekly executive meetings feedback is discussed by asking, "what are you hearing in the organization?" The exec's will view e-mail to see and choose what follow-up meetings they may want to sit in on. Barbara says they help people with the process through "constant vigilance."
- ◆ Ownership by the implementers is a key to enable decisions at the point of delivery of service.
- ◆ Giles told a story of how for each decision there is an issue, a solution, a decision and a decision maker. With OST, you bring all together in real time. In "normal" processes, the error is in the fact that the official decision makers are not even on the field of play.
- ◆ Robbins asks leaders if they are willing to have decisions made and actions implemented.
- ◆ "I simply refute the idea that the only way to get organizations to change is by force. I believe the starting point for real change is to focus energy and direction on this one key question: "Can we involve the expertise and experience of everyone in the

organization? We can't ignore that question. we've got to figure out how we can avoid the temptation to design things for people instead of engaging them in creating their own responses to change." - Meg Wheatley in an article from *Industry Week* on *De-engineering the Corporation* that was circulating at the conference.

Issue: Open Space Co-op

Convener: Harrison Owen

Participants: Larry Peterson, Mark Carmel, Karen Davis, Birgitt Bolton, Marcelle Bastianello, Angelo Lewis, Chris Carter and more...

Discussion/Recommendations: As with most things related to Open space, the notion of a co-op was not the product of careful planning and thought. Rather it appears as the acknowledgement of an existing state, and the hope to enhance it. In fact there are already a number of cooperative ventures, and the following represents both a statement of the present and a wish list for the future.

Pre/post OST mentoring and coaching: While Open Space is quite easy to do, it is always nice to have friends around before, after and during. The role here need not be student/teacher, but rather co-learners with one person taking the function of observer. The mind boggles at the task of institutionalizing such an effort, but there is no reason why individuals, utilizing the roster contained in this document, could not select/invite their own mentors/coaches.

Data Base — Who's Done What with Whom. Everybody agreed this was a critical need, absolutely essential for the advance of the state of the art. However, when it came right down to it nobody, with the possible exception of Marlene Daniel, seemed ready to step up to the hard work of assembling and maintaining such a thing. M.D. offered some forms (one of which is appended to this document) in the hope that folks would report their efforts. Another possibility is the utilization of OSTCASES, an already existing conference on MetaNet for the purpose. Presumably as the need gets strong enough and localizes in the heart and mind of some particular person(s), appropriate action will be taken.

Consultation / Online Usage. Cyberphobia appeared to have taken its toll, and the suggestion was made that this dread disease might be mitigated were folks to be inoculated with a brief shot of computer usage during training programs and/or Open Space on Open space gatherings.

Community Service. Present experience indicates that OS can and does have a powerful positive impact on the resolution of community issues of all sorts. Many communities, however suffer from limited to non-existent means. The possibility of a win/win situation presents itself here in as much as practitioners need a place to practice and community ventures could provide such a

place. Doing all of the above would fit well with the notion that Open Space is not the private property of anybody, but the birthright of all. Or something like that.

OS Research What's happening anyhow? There is now a sufficient body of experience to begin usefully asking the question what's going on here, and how would we do it better. Of course such an effort requires a data base, but maybe the research enthusiasts will have the necessary horsepower to create such a base? As a source of this horsepower, there presently exists the Gang of Five, or is it Four? Anyhow it turns out that four people are just about at Thesis state and seriously contemplating a little Open Space. Marlene Daniel, of course, has already done the course.

Local Support Networks. This one seems to go together with the whole business of Mentoring, but also goes beyond. thought would be that as the various training programs take place in local areas, the participants would form naturally created support structures. Such structures will emerge and be maintained, of course, only to the extent that anybody cared to do that.

So What Next for the Co-op? It was more than interesting to me (this is HO) how many facets and functions of a good Co-op are already in place. It would be useful to have some others, but I can't help but feel that they will appear when and as the need is sufficient. In the interim, I propose to offer several things which may serve to set the context. A) Training programs: There are a dozen or so of these around the world, and that seems about right. I know of some other folks who are also offering programs, and I think that is wonderful. The one thing I want to avoid is useless competition on the one hand, and needless duplication on the other. There is no automatic way on this, and for sure I don't have the patience/endurance/desire for a Coordinating Council -- of some such thing. So I guess we just talk to each other. B) Open Space on Open Space: Two efforts in this direction suggest that the gathering is fun and needed. As long as that is true, I will be delighted to host the criters. It strikes me that the Proceedings (as in this present document) can or should become a useful vehicle for disseminating the Ways of Open Space. Therefore I propose to send it not only to those folks who actually came to the OSONOS, but to all those who were invited as well. C) Publications: Five books and two videos currently compose the list of Open Space Publications. One of those videos is Hugh Huntington's, and I would be pleased if others would contribute to available titles. I don't however, want to get into the publishing business any more than I have to, so I would propose a continuation of the current practice with Hugh. Anybody interested in offering a title is free to do so, provided they pay the production costs and maintain inventory. I will list it in my promotional materials and sell it at a cost plus basis. As a possible new item I would see the *Open Space Journal*. Consisting of occasional papers, case studies etc. it might come out annually, or perhaps semi-annually with one issue being the proceedings from this conference. D) OSTNET OSTNET lives, albeit not very fully. There are several conferences 1) OSTCASES -- case studies. 2) OSTLIBRARY -- Occasional papers. 3) OSTREGISTRY Cv's of practitioners. 4) OPENSPACE -- general conversation conference. I have noticed a radical increase in use since the OSONOS, and if that continues we may well have a live one. I am up just about every day from wherever, so if you want to get me for whatever reason, that's the place to do it.

LATE BREAKING NEWS FROM JOHN !!

Notes from the First Ever Open Space with Teens

by John Perkins

The context: Each year, for the last 10, King County's drug prevention outreach workers have held a camp for teenagers throughout the county. This year started on Friday, November 18th, and concludes on Sunday afternoon, November 20th. The Saturday night dance has become a tradition, as well as camp games like the Singing Lost and Found: you lose something you have to sing during dinner to get it back.

This camp gets a wide range of teens recruited from high schools and community groups. Particularly important has been our successful recruitment of gay/lesbian/bi-sexual youth over the last two camps. Returning campers help us run the camp.

In January, after I completed the 5 day training Harrison did for Antioch in Seattle I knew that OST would be ideal for this camp. But it wasn't fully up to me, so I showed the Presbyterian video (Chicago OST with 500+ people) to my prevention peers. Way back in April or May they thought it would be a great idea.

The Fun Begins: I understood that I personally could not run the Open Space part of the camp, which we'd carved out for Saturday from about 9:30 to 3:30. I got the group to agree to hire Jan Gray, an Antioch Management School graduate who had attended the training session with me. Several times the question of shouldn't we do this with our own talent — like you John — came up. I stressed two points: (a) as a member of the group I wanted to be free to play — convene sessions or attend them — which I couldn't do as the OST facilitator; (b) if I ran the OST that's the only thing I could do. I would arrive on Saturday, do the Open Space and go back home. I would not be available for van transport, patrolling the grounds, crisis meetings during camp, etc. That seemed to be the more decisive argument and as a consequence the admissions coordinator gave me a private room. This allowed me to hold the space with Jan during the three days of camp.

An additional benefit for the OST which is not readily apparent: by having an outsider lead it the event itself is protected from being watered down. The re-structuralists kept seeking to relieve their anxiety about all of that unscheduled time by scheduling other "little" activities for the whole group. As the sponsor but not the facilitator, I could offer my best advice, and if that didn't sway them suggest we take it to Jan.

Much can be gained in keeping the time between the decision to do an OST and the event itself short. In a short time the work of creating the event leaves less time for those lurking anxious feelings to surface. The worst case possibility that a group of kids would want to play volleyball all day seemed a safe enough risk to take to me. None of my peers, who had hounded me with

this ticklish theoretical question for weeks voiced it to Jan when she visited our last planning meeting. I had to repeat it for them to avoid having to cope with the complaint that she did talk about volleyball problem.

We modified one OST role to discourage kids from leaving the group and getting into trouble (potentially causing us legal headaches). Specifically we only mentioned the Bumblebee role and for those uninterested we had an *Apathy Room* set aside with music and art supplies for them to hang out in.

The Day Arrives: Compared to the two previous camps I have attended this year's camp felt more relaxed and easy flowing. Campers were told about Open Space from the first moments of camp. We had four informational and preparatory workshops on Friday for which we did not assign meetings to until we saw the degree of interest in each topic, which each camper personally voted for. In previous years we prepared four workshops in advance and, after being divided into four groups, we ushered each camper through each workshop. Exhausting for the adults, but the campers were so little engaged that they could stay up all night playing and talking if we let them.

On Saturday, Jan arrived with her partner Dorothy as scheduled (I let go a sigh of relief). We had a brief last minute huddle and then supervised the arranging of benches into an oval. Across one of the walls I had taped the names of each room we would use, and under each room I had put three stickies with the times.

Jan walked slowly around the circle 4 or 5 times as people finished getting seats and the last few standees were brought into the fold. She said her knees buckled with the excitement / anxiety / energy.

And then she started speaking (roughly paraphrased as Jan carried my recorder the whole time, but forgot to turn it on): You are here as young people with a purpose--to return to your school and help your peers and the whole school make wise, healthy choices. What will that take? What will you need to talk about, think about to bring that into a reality. Whatever that is there is no one better qualified to see that it is discussed except you...This is not to be seen as a popularity contest...I am holding the cover of the book you're going to write by taking notes of your sessions and turning them in to us...let me acquaint you with the principles, the law and how this works...

Then she paused for questions, only heightening my suspense, and perhaps that for the teens as well for when she said, Okay, the floor is open... several dove for paper and markers and we were launched!

Jan did two things which I see helped a lot. She paused for questions and she let everyone rush to write their topics and tape them up. After the first crush she asked them to come to the microphone and announce their topic to the group. This worked very well and kept the different activities discreet.

A list of the 16 topics:

- Respect and Racism--Gang Violence
- Teen Violence and Racist Violence
- Tobacco Counter-Ad Art Contest - 1st Prize \$1000
- Abortion/Teen Pregnancy
- Interactive Games, Bonding
- Feminism
- Gangs, Wannabees and Stereotypes
- Role Playing to Communicate Probable Situations in Youth Society
- Racism in Schools
- Greed
- We need ideas on how to teach *our* students what we've learned (diversity wise)
- Teen Violence in our community (canceled)
- Understanding why there is an increase in violence and how to prevent it
- Non-violence
- Listening and motivation
- The effect drug abuse & use has on us individually, as a society & as a whole: sex, decisions, judgment, relationships, school etc. What are we going to do?

At the End: The groups were handled beautifully, so well that as us adults bumblebeed around we joked about having so little to do! In the 5 o'clock news student after student spoke of the power of being involved with this Open Space and truly being trusted with the power to call the sessions and pick the ones most personally meaningful. During the closing talking circle on Sunday people spoke of feeling like they had met each person, though that was physically impossible in three days.

They expressed appreciation of having a powerful direct experience of the power of diversity.

Finally I had faith in our teens and they delivered as I trusted they would. I am grateful to my peers in the prevention work who bet the whole camp on a technique untested with teens.

In the final moments of the talking circle I said I always wanted to create history and this open space camp did that. It's a great feeling!

Issue: Open Space Facilitation and Spirituality

Convener: Robbins and Giles Hopkins

Participants: Suzanne Maxwell, Joelle, Joe, Robert, Darcy Cunningham, Doug Carmichael, Sam Magill, Larry Peterson, Karen Davis, Mark Carmel, Sue Inches, Eleanor Belfry-Lytte, plus a couple more I have missed.

Discussion:

Our discussion consisted of sharing personal stories about our own spiritual journeys and how Open Space has informed, challenged, reinforced and encouraged us. We discussed the need to enlarge the open space within ourselves in all that we do. We spoke about walking our talk, opening ourselves up to that which is mysterious and undeniable and feeling the power of spirit within the Open Space experiences we have had. We risked with each other and learned that such wonderful support is there for our continuing to risk.

We talked about running Open Space events and the urge to do our own personal work as we let go of the need to control and the need to insure certain outcomes from conferences we run.

We shared resources which have been meaningful to us on our journeys and we share them here with you to encourage each of you along your way.

Resources:

<i>Artist's Way</i>	Julia Cameron
<i>Celestine Prophecy</i>	James Refield
<i>The Reinvention of Work</i>	Matthew Fox
<i>Searching for Unnamed Gods</i>	Sam Keen
<i>Out of Control</i>	Kevin Kelly
<i>Far Journeys</i>	Robert A. Monroe
<i>Mutant Message, Downunder</i>	Marlo Morgan
<i>The Heart Aroused</i>	David Whyte
<i>Reawakening Spirit at Work:</i>	Jack Hawley
<i>Leadership and the New Science</i>	Margaret Wheatley
<i>Care of the Soul</i>	Thomas Moore
<i>The Four-Fold Way</i>	Angeles Arrien

WHAT WE ARE LEARNING FROM OPEN SPACE EVENTS

Please complete one report for each event conducted. Add what you want. Please return to:
Marlene Daniel; 51 River Oaks Circle; Baltimore, MD 21208-6357

Date(s) _____

Facilitator _____ Phone Number _____

Organization _____

Participants # _____ Stakeholder group categories _____

Promoted theme/task _____

The organization's purpose in using Open Space/Context _____

What happened _____

As a facilitator/consultant, what did you learn? _____

What would you do differently if you did it again? _____

The Meta Network -- Registration

Yes, I want to join *The Meta Network* as an individual member. I understand that the cost is \$15 for the month in which I join and then \$20 for each subsequent month I maintain my account. I understand that I can access *The Meta Network* host computer via the *Internet* or by dialing directly - in which case there are no other costs. Alternatively, I can access the host computer through SprintNet for an additional \$6.75 per hour surcharge. (SprintNet access surcharges are higher from outside the continental U.S. Please contact us or details.)

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- Please invoice my organization or my membership fee and access charges.
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