

PROCEEDINGS

OSONOS IV

Dulles / Hyatt

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ISSUE #1: The Open Space Institute(s): What Do They Mean to You?

CONVENER: Peg Holman

PARTICIPANTS: Marlene, Linda, Chris, Larry, Frank, Birgit, Neil, Karen, Marcel, Juan, Marvin, ++

DISCUSSION / RECOMMENDATIONS: This is my distillation of a wonderfully rich discussion, so if I've missed something, let me know.

WHAT DO WE WANT FROM THE OSI(s)? WHAT ARE OUR HOPES?

A.) MUTUAL SUPPORT: CONNECTION: CONTINUITY (HOLDING SPACE)

A place to be in open space

A place to come home: renewal, reflection, sharing with friends, a place to send friends who want to know more

There is a natural ebb and flow to our energies and our needs: the forms of connections must serve the changing needs of its participants. (The conversations that are old for some are vital and new for others)

Allow the "holders of space" to float with their own ebb and flow, allowing the baton to pass over time; for example, someone with the energy for it, take responsibility for research or a newsletter or books, etc. Even the institutes themselves will develop different focuses based upon the passions of those there and who they are serving.

Much talk on the role of cyberspace in supporting the community

A place for conversation, a place to retrieve information, a place to publish and explore ideas

B.) LEARNING, RESEARCH

How can we demonstrate the efficacy of what we know in our hearts?

We don't have answers to many of the questions being asked.

Understanding the deeper things that make OS work so that we can use them more consciously.

C.) MENTORING

"Shadow" consulting; answering questions about how, before and after an OS event.

Research; support from those who have traveled this path (Marlene may be a "focal" point for this)

WHAT ARE OUR FEARS?

BEING INSTITUTIONALIZED

Losing the spirit seems to be what happens to "good stuff" that is put in an institute

Creating an "in-group" and "out-group" by inventing special language

WHO IS THE OPEN SPACE FOR?

Practitioners

Participants

SOME PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS ON PRINCIPLES

Being multi-generational brings life to whatever we do (the folks around since the beginning, those who've joined along the way, those who are new)

Notice the natural boundaries, governing principles that allow us to create adaptive structures

Giving is part of the role modeling Harrison has provided to us all

Extend, continue to extend and then extend some more the invitation to participate

WHAT SHALL WE DO?

PROVIDE A SUITABLE VESSEL FOR WHAT'S ALREADY HAPPENING TO CONNECT:

Give new life to a WEB site: think about rituals that work for on-line - welcoming in, giving as part of entry; reminders of the intentionality of the space that keeps its spirit alive, speaking our passion as we do by putting subjects on the wall in physical space.

Let the rest emerge as the community expresses the need.

ISSUE #2:cyberspace and world crime and other evils

CONVENER:Francis Friedman

PARTICIPANTS: Cal Sutliff, Connie Chapman, Scott Burns

Cal Sutliff, Connie Chapman, Scott Burns, Francis Friedman

DISCUSSION / RECOMMENDATIONS: We discussed the broad range of the issues related to the use of the internet and other broadly based communication modalities.

It was obvious that people who want to commit crimes will now have a broadly based tool with which to do that. In addition to crime (e.g. smuggling, drugs, stock fraud, etc.) there is also opportunity for other types of "evil" such as child pornography or the stealing of children/women for slave trade.

One of the current scams we became aware of is the use of area code "809". This is used as a response code for e-mail and pager messages sent to people. This area code is an offshore base that costs \$ 25.00 per minute.

We noted the need for systems operators and other systems related management to notify users on the system of the awareness of different types of crimes or swindles that are being fostered on the networks.

We looked at similarities between protecting against this type of crime and the Neighborhood Watch programs that local communities have implemented. There seems to be a relationship between vigilance of the population and the amount of crime committed.

Young people have had an influence in assisting adults to cut down on smoking. This methodology could also be one way to influence the "honesty" of the communications media.

We noted that traffic laws tend to be fairly straightforward and that people can drive successfully if they follow the rules. However, people tend to feel that they are "special" and don't have to follow the rules...and can make up their own exceptions. The similarity to use of the Internet were noted.

The group noted that native cultures have a mechanism to recognize the "shadow side" of the human condition and to make provision for it in the rituals of the culture. "Modern" western culture does not have a mechanism to deal with these aspects of human beings. Possibly these advanced networks can find a way to provide an outlet/ceremony for these "shadow side" aspects.

Also, recognizing that many issues are addressed by the society when they are "put on the table" (e.g. drunk driving) it may be time to raise the awareness of the need to remove crime and criminality from these forum.

Issue #3 OST - ONE QUESTION, SEVERAL LOCATIONS SIMULTANEOUSLY original motivation
- economic justice - reduces cost of travel barrier

Convener

Lynn Thomas

Participants

Adele Milone
Freeman Marvin
Paul Gleiberman
Scott Burus
Lisa Kimball
Michael Herman
Anne Stadler
Devorah Gilbert
Cal Sutliff
Liz Barr
Judy Gast
assorted bumblebees

LEARNINGS

1. Need for process facilitator and technology manager at each site.
2. Need for one meta producer.
3. Participants need little or no tech knowledge/ability.
4. Ask the basic questions - what is cyberspace equivalent of
circle
newsroom
etc.
5. Need ritual common to every site - particularly opening and closing - ie, same type/color of candle, perhaps small ones to represent other sites, lit at start, extinguished at end.
6. still need to hold the space - plus additional importance of preventing energy to be dissipated. Jets of energy redirected within group, or to another site - and acknowledged by other site.
7. Availability of teleconferencing, video conferencing, fax, email at all sites to be used organically - as needs arise.
8. Consideration of all diversity issues including geographic.
9. Consideration of sequential sites, rather than simultaneous - some concern that it risks reducing buy in and may foster hierarchy.
10. Option of reps from each site later convene at a single site. Would likely require ratification from all original participants and/or stakeholders.

11. Finding our voices - Is this more difficult with multiple sites? Work locally on this before the scheduled OST event?

12. "Guerilla" video - each site to make a impromptu video - even if not seen by others - growth producing. Individuals feel heard. May then make collective video articulating diversities and assimilating commonalities among sites.

PURPOSES

Maximize creativity in R&D function.

Level playing field - economic justice - more can afford to participate.

Leaping over barriers - ie., headquarters vs. field

ISSUE #4: Creating the space for at risk youth development in other culture

CONVENER: Lorraine Waddell

PARTICIPANTS::Betsy, Shiela, Liz, Robert, Nellie, Chuck, Connie, David, Jaun, Francis

DISCUSSION / RECOMMENDATIONS: The ideas shared included:

The issue of At Risk Youth is global

We can not heal youth outside of the context of the family

Healing mothers is a requisite for healing youth

It is necessary to understand the cultural conditions that generate the sense of hopelessness and shame

Identity crisis is often a source for risk in troubled youth

Denial of self and, or shame in self is most often a source of problems

There is an abundance of memory in aboriginal blood (culture, history, ontology) that lends to the richness of each individual. To be denied access to or acknowledgment of that heritage destroys self identity

For some At Risk Youth, the pull to practice a culture that denies or suppresses their natural ontological proclivities is a destruction to their spirit and devaluation of their being

Youth (everyone) must be allowed to appreciate that their greatest value is in being who they are as well as who they have the potential of being (Being and Becoming)

Appreciation for cultural and ethnic heritage, guidance from the elders, is a step towards self actualization. Learning who they are and valuing self is fundamental

Freedom of expression is fundamental to development. Youth lack the guidance and spiritual teaching from the elders which traditionally shaped that expression constructively

Youth need to feel a part of something accepted. We must be cautious to avoid alienating them from where they are. They must be able to focus on existing reality, community.

Successful guidance will enable the youth to incorporate what they learn about themselves into the community

Youth must be mindful of the environment. There must be a holistic rounding out of the individual along with integrational relationships.

Free association, open space comes easy for youth. From these exercises must develop the awareness of the ability to sustain ideas and shape their own world.

Our youth must find balance in blending of their multiple cultures. They must be able to value both cultures. They must be provided an opportunity to realize their cultures

Cultural identity is less difficult in a culturally exclusive community. In the United States groups are pigeon held by pigmentation. The U. S. culture lacks the flexibility needed to foster "other culture" identity.

Cultural denial is denial of the fullness of your spiritual being

Youth must distinguish for themselves who they are

Work with youth must build in consistency

Urban earth day activities and focus, saving our community, is a natural adjunct to the focus youth endeavors of the Foundation for the Future of Youth. (David and Robert need to get together)

In working to help youth it is important that they are aware of and can navigate the chaos of all the systems that comprise community and all the major forces that pull elements together. This element of awareness is key to successful transition of your back into their community

Key Questions for Youth:

What are we here for?

What's in it for me?

Why alter personal behavior?

Having made the necessary changes what do I see looking back from the future?

After having renewed self, how do I aid in renewing community?

Is the community renewable?

My passion is to personally relocate to Africa, open a lodge, and use the business to begin a skills training project for at risk young adults (18 and over) In addition to funding a part of the project itself, sponsors will guarantee jobs upon return to the states. The host country experience will include job/skills development, philosophical/ethical exploration, and hopefully identity/spiritual awareness and balance. This session gave me insight on transitional issues not yet explored and linkages such as a local lodge for youth development in some phase of this process.

Sponsors

Political entities

Existing NGOs and Governmental Organizations

Host Country Politics, Social, Economic Issue

Additional Open Space events will help to develop the above and beyond.

If you have advise, leads, and information, please forwarded it to Lorraine Waddell. Check Harrison's participant listing for address.

I and the young adults who are destine to join me thank all of you for the encouragement of your spirit

and those of you who added to the actualization of this creation through your participation in this session

Issue #5: The Shadow and Open Space

Convener: Larry Peterson

Who Came?: Marion Wood, Birgitt Bolton, Barry Owen, Marlene Daniel, Linda Olson, Taruna Thareja, Cal Stuliff, Chuck Baron, Chris Kloth, Karen Davis, Jane Crowley, Brian Bainbridge David Peters.

Elements of the Discussion:

--Larry began with a story of an Open Space event that opened the space for the dark or shadow of an organization to become apparent. It was a voluntary, church organization. A great two day open space led to spirited discussion, power being shared, new ideas and relationships and new possibilities explored. After the event was over, then the shadow emerged. The traditional power group in the voluntary organization, was frightened by the openness. It reasserted its power in the organization and stymied the efforts for change. They had this power before, but opening the space seemed to bring them into the open. The organization struggled for the next two years and believed the open space created more problems than it solved.

--What is the Shadow Side?

--Opposite of what's conscious

--Is always there

--Is what is latent

--Intentional Harm

--is evil or lack of good?

--Fear of it often drives individual behavior

--Open Space Events are like a projective test for an organization. During Open Space, good stuff usually happens. After OS the other stuff emerges. It stirs up stuff in the organization.

--"Safe-space" may be as much of an illusion as a closed system. Open Space is always a risk.

Recognizing the risk and the emergence of the shadow could be part of the conversation in preparation for OS. Some organizations may appear "worse" immediately after an OS event.

--Creation includes both good and evil. Both are part of the journey.

--Some groups are not ready for OS and for others it is not right at this time.

--More controlling process are popular because they appear to keep the shadow down. Real Time Strategic Change emphasizes a list of outcomes, no time to think and orchestrated behavior changes.

--Voluntary organizations (Associations) may respond to Open Space differently than employment hierarchies. There are multiple-hierarchies and interest groups vying for power. The personal stakes are usually high. In churches and similar organizations, God is seen to be on one side or another. Control is exercised behind the scenes. When the space is opened, all of this becomes more apparent, particularly after the event.

ISSUE #6: Encouraging and supporting effective small group dynamics in O.S.?

CONVENER:Betsy Devlin-Foltz

PARTICIPANTS:Judy Gast, Chris Low, John Engle, Robbins Hopkins, Sheryl Schultz, Sandy Callier, Chuck Baroo, Scott "Lars" Larson, Linda Olson, Cal Sutliff, David Peters, Taruna Thareja

DISCUSSION / RECOMMENDATIONS: THIS session was convened to examine whether there is a role for the O.S. facilitator in encouraging effective dynamics in the small group O.S. sessions.

We began by brainstorming characteristics of effective small group dynamics: open, honest, frank groups in which people can take responsibility for issues they care passionately about and which they can really leave if they are not getting what they need.

Some participants had experiences where the power relationships and hierarchy of organizations impeded people's abilities to speak up openly and leave when they want to.

Suggestions for what facilitators can do/have done to address this:

- Distribute a copy of an article on "Victimhood" from Virginia Satyr's book "People making" along with an article on O.S. to all participants before the conference.

- Facilitator's opening remarks can include stories and/or suggestions about problems that have occurred in other client groups and how they have been handled. i.e. A member of the "support staff" in one organization convened a session on "How to engage the support staff in the change effort". One facilitator says: "We have 800 years of collective experience in this organization thinking about what we can't do. Here is an opportunity to try to do things differently."

- Choose the theme carefully. Think of words you might use to bring people out of the cave of "victimhood". Some suggestions: "Balance", "Individual and Corporate Excellence", "Whole Spirit", "Individual and Corporate Excellence", "Empowerment and Disempowerment"

- Facilitator can ask during "Evening News" "I know you haven't worked together like this much. How is the process going in the small groups?". This might be a good idea if there has been a lot of "in the hallway" discussion that suggests there are issues around this.

- Facilitator could convene a small group session on group process.

- Be patient with the group as it goes through the stages of group development (forming, storming, norming, performing). If there is enough time they will get to mature development. If the overall group is small and they are not experienced with O.S. be sure there is enough time for them to go through this process.

(At least a day?). Open Space is a supportive and inviting process which assumes a society rich in possibilities.

We discussed other methodologies that we have found powerful, but did not determine whether or how

they might be used in an O.S. context. Some of those mentioned included:

--"Touchstone": a Great Books type program to help people learn to be good learners in conversation about readings that are both familiar and strange to participants. Part of the work includes helping the group become more aware of its process.

--David Bohm's "Dialogue" in which people learn to listen for understanding and not "sell" their ideas.

--T Groups

--EST

ISSUE #7: Impact on world culture of rapid electronic export of U.S. culture

CONVENER: Francis Friedman

PARTICIPANTS: Kate Griffin

DISCUSSION / RECOMMENDATIONS: The issue is the rapid export of the U.S. culture and business model to the world community through the Internet and satellite distribution of U.S. video programming (e.g. MTV). The dramatic and rapid growth of the Internet is a U.S. based technology and usage profile. We are exporting this technology and its usage to the world community. Satellite delivered programming...MTV, CNN, etc....is also delivering the U.S. model to the rest of the world in real time.

The reverse is not true as regards the active import of world culture to the U.S. The U.S. is not receiving world culture via media. We are receiving world culture through the culture that is brought in via immigrants.

The discussion noted the impact of the small things that are taking place in the world accommodating the U.S. model. For example, the French basically do not have a weight problem. The food they eat, grown the way they grow it and prepared their way, have kept the population in relatively good shape. If we convince the French to drop their historical food patterns and adopt the American model, will we contribute to the downfall of their national health. Are they correct in actively resisting the Americanization of their food/eating habits.

The problem with the rapidity of the changes that are taking place is the fact that the changes are indiscriminate. They can destroy the old ways practiced in a culture that do not work, and they can destroy the essential elements in a society that have evolved over centuries. The rapid changes can easily throw out the essence of the society in a short period of time.

There may be no "answer" to this dilemma. It may be that it is necessary to be aware of the fact that there is the possibility to wipe out a culture in a relatively short period of time with this electronic technology. And to conduct ourselves in such a way as to encourage the world to preserve itself, and to harass the use of the technology to save its national culture and wisdom.

ISSUE #8: Rituals of Open Space - Cultural Perspectives

CONVENER:Dell Drake

PARTICIPANTS:Doug Carmichael, Barry Owen, Neil Holman, Marilyn, Kay Vogt, Kate Griffin, Ann Thomas, Morgana, Essie, Brian Bainbridge, Marilyn, Lars, Liz Ennis, Marlene Daniel, Joelle Everett, Sheryl Schultz, Marlene Blum, Linda Olson, Cous, Adele Milone, Frances Gerhard, ...

DISCUSSION / RECOMMENDATIONS:(Highlights)

We began by saying what brought/drew us to this session and the dialogue grew out of this.

*Open space includes a contract - stating in writing what an issue is and the convener signing that paper is explicating contracting to convene (start) said session.

*Any structure implies some control and some limits.

*Rituals can provide an excuse or a permission to behave differently.

*Rituals/structure/armature, such as called out in the book "Calling the Circle," can move the group from the ordinary to the sacred. The circle holds the energy. It is a container. It is egalitarian.

*Structure can be freeing, providing a permission to let go INTERNALLY.

*There is always a structure. Ritual is like an invitation into a new/different. and perhaps familiar culture. Separateness is an illusion.

*One woman who works often with women's organizations described the circle as being the opposite of patriarchy which is often depicted in a triangle in the form of an organization chart. The circle allows women to be liberated from the system where the person/people at the top [must] have the answer, to an arena of exploring.

*The circle is often seen in a large family when members gather to do meal preparation tasks, such as preparing string beans, and allows for storytelling and other community building activities. It also promoted, in those moments, equality.

*What are the subliminal experiences when using rituals? How do open space rituals fit? What's practical?

*One described as "bastardized" version of open space, where an observer might think s/he is seeing open space, but the topics were preset and participants were told when to spend time on particular topics. There was no ritual, and the result was no sense of community.

*What are the rituals of open space? A few quickly identified were: the Law of Two Feet, the 4 principles, the chimes, the circle. In India, within the culture, it is common to have a fire (or a lamp) in the center of a circle gathering.

*Ritual is also found in the opening remarks--in how the information is given/the process described/the language/the movement.

*Deborah Tannen's books on conversation refer to anima and animus (masculine and feminine energy). Tannen says that women value anecdotal information; men value data. Ergo, include both in the introduction to open space.

*Discussed keeping the center clear of furniture. This session started with 4 people gathered around a small table in the Billiards room, then adding two more small tables. Eventually, a participant asked that we form one circle so that we could see each other. This was done, and the three small tables were left where they were. Did this result in the people behind the tables feeling locked in? Did that make them the authority figures (i.e., behind a desk) and, therefore, less approachable?

*This surfaced a concern that if an open space event is approached analytically, i.e. like a scientists, this would not allow the facilitator to also be a spacemaker.

*As facilitators, we draw on our life experience to prepare for creating and holding open space, just as

shamans do.

*The act of scanning the circle at the beginning of an event, although described as an opportunity to see who is here, is also an act of creating a resonant chamber and a biomorphic identity. It illustrates to subtle genius of ritual.

*The coming together, then separating into small groups, then returning to the large group for evening news, then separating, then returning for morning announcements, then separating into small groups, etc. is like breathing: expanding and contracting. *The circle breathes as people enter and leave. As people move into the center, they experience an increase in the warmth and intensity of the circle. After announcing their topics, and moving to the outside of the circle to post their topics, the "temperature" drops.

*The opening lasts until everyone is breathing together.

*Individuals are like cells; small groups are like organs; the large group is the organism--a living organization/organism. (Also, like a community with specialized functions.)

*One's personal culture influences one's view of structure, what's appropriate and what isn't.

*Open space provides a DIFFERENT structure, not NO culture.

*The Law of Two Feet may be seen as rude in Corporate America, where a preset, announced, controllable agenda is seen as desirable.

*Subjects/topics in open space are usually larger and amorphous in comparison to task-oriented meetings. So, one [the consultant] must determine the appropriateness of open space.

*There is a fear of the unknown; expect resistance, especially in an organization where stated and familiar structures are preferred.

*One could act as though open space is a NORMAL process, not dwell on its uniqueness which can promote fear.

*Don't PLAY with open space; it's a powerful intervention.

*Open space promotes equality. Executives may see it as having to give up status (which may result in resistance on their part).

*Open space is like death and rebirth; an abyss with no control of the outcomes. It demands a ritual of joining that doesn't "bruise" participants.

*Desperation can overcome barriers. If an organization or management is desperate for change because what's been done in the past is no longer working, they will probably be more open to open space.

*What signals is the facilitator wanting to send in her/his opening? What is the client's self image?

*One response was a description of an open space meeting scheduled to be held in a high tech training facility. The facilitator requested that colorful movie posters be placed on the walls, so that participants, when entering the space, would know immediately that this event would be different. The posters implied stories/scenarios. Open space, by its nature, encourages participants to share their experiences (stories). So, even before the circle is formed, a stage is set. Resistance is dealt with the sponsors of the event (the management).

*Use an unfamiliar space, so that participants can make it their own/make it safe.

During a discussion of our various interpretations of images and language:

*The circle creates, by its structure, equality. When someone walks into the center, the dynamics change. The person in the center becomes the focus. What if the facilitator remained seated as a member of the circle?

*Having a lamp, or the poster paper and pens, in the very center of the space keeps any one from truly being in the center. [This limitation seemed to be viewed positively.]

*What about the value of the non-verbal? The use of color and/or movement?

*Brian reported that, in Australia, felt tip pens can only be purchased in multi-colored packs, so he

always has a variety of colors of pens. He believed this encourages people to use more than one color and to draw pictures on their posters.

- *One stressed the importance of using the language of the client groups' culture--the jargon/lingo--in joining with the group.

- *Lars called that "smell their breath" and "lingua franca" (SP).

- *This could be seen in the Evening News by doing something typical for that group, or typical for that culture, such as singing.

- *Letting go allows for "letting grow."

Is ritual context specific?

- *Knowing your client [language, purpose, culture] is a show of respect.

- *Do fieldwork. The facilitator needs to become immersed in the [culture of the] system -- as part of the preparation.

What about the rituals used in closing. Is it okay to appropriate another culture's traditions/rituals for use in open space? For instance, using the Native American talking stick ritual for open space closure. Could that be seen as inappropriate or offensive?

- *Brian says he apologizes up front for "stealing" rituals, saying he doesn't want to offend, but to borrow/use a ritual that facilitates [closure, or whatever].

- *Doug suggested the facilitator asking himself/herself, "What are you trying to achieve?"

- *Perpetuate the dance (this experience) by taking it back to your (the participant's) home culture/organization. AND, facilitate closure of vulnerable areas, particularly at a spiritual level. Create/provide a bridge from the open space event back to participants' homes.

- *Could acknowledge the connectedness of the open space experience by holding hands during the closure.

- *Closing does not necessarily mean ending.

- *Evening News isn't a series of reports, but an opportunity to share impressions and feelings. Eye contact, the non-verbal connecting, also provides a way of taking the spirit from the event.

- *Passing the talking stick allows for everyone to talk, or be silent, to share space and time.

- *Diana Whitney, at the Organizational Transformation 14 conference, gave a handwoven shawl as an optional talking stick (a feminine version). A cedar bough was used in the closing of OT 14, with participants encouraged to break off a small piece to take with them.

- *Another final ritual could be "deaf applause," the holding up of hands, palms facing the center of the circle, a shaken.

- *We can recreate ritual in our lives.

A few stayed on to discuss the anthropological aspects of open space.

- *Chuck described his use of the circle in inner city environs and how freeing participants found it. People at first were bewildered by it, then found value in the eye contact, and in sitting in the presence of others.

- *Connie identified open space rituals that matched Wicca (an old northern European indigenous religion), particularly the circle, the calling on the spirits of the four directions, and the sky; the drawing and discharging of the circle. "May the circle be open, but not unbroken; Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again."

- *Chuck and Connie recommended Starhawk's first two books. The first is called "Dreaming the Dark." The second discusses responsibility and hierarchies.

- *Harrison Owen has written in his books about his West African village experience.

*Connie mentioned int importance of grounding, physically, in Wicca, to return the energy to the group/the Earth.

*If the trust level isn't high, describe yourself (the facilitator) in caricature, then seriously, then ask for the participants' trust.

*Be up front with one's intentionality.

*Describe open space as using a different structure so different outcomes can be generated.

*Avoid paraphernalia. Keep options open.

ISSUE #9: What are the reasons some people don't like to use cyberspace?

CONVENER:Freeman Marvin

PARTICIPANTS:Liz Barr
Steve Brigham

DISCUSSION / RECOMMENDATIONS: THE entire name of this issue is, "What are the reasons some people don't like to use cyberspace and how can we help overcome these barriers given today's technology?"

First, we brainstormed some of the reasons why people don't like to use the technology for meetings.

1. The hardware to participate
2. Training on how to use the technologies
3. Getting participants to participate need more discipline
4. Security issues such as firewall (physical) and data sensitivity
5. Lack of synergy no group energy creative energy disbursed.
6. Might need to convene a face-to-face meeting to ignite the commitment and energy.
7. Feeling of being disjointed, disconnected from the problem and purpose
8. Discussion can wander off the topic without some sort of facilitation.
9. Some people may tend to clog the discussion with long submissions (write only, and tend not to read)
10. Getting participants to share the workload of the group (loafers and lurkers)
11. People don't work well looking into a small computer screen, and it is hard for them to get the big picture.
12. Hard to generate ideas that combine thoughts or pieces of thoughts from different people.
13. Computers help make some things faster (analyzing data) but can make other processes slower (getting input from everyone in a different time and place meeting).
14. More people can participate in a meeting, so you can generate an overwhelming amount of information (info overload).
15. People can't see body language and other non-verbal cues so the conversation becomes very literal and nuances are missed.
16. People do not always know who the other participants are and this may inhibit discussion.

Next, we identified reasons why we would want people to use cyberspace for meetings. We want to make sure we are not just running around with a hammer looking for a nail to pound.

1. Computers can help people process data faster and better; collect, analyze, synthesize, prioritize, and disseminate.
2. Computers can allow a lot more people to participate across time and space; widens the pool of potential participants.
3. Computers allow the use of models which can look at the data in various ways to better understand the issue.
4. Computers allow anonymity if that is an important aspect in the context.

Next, we talked about the differences of on-line facilitation.

1. The facilitator must take on a more active role by helping synthesize the content information rather than just helping with the process issues.
2. This expanded role must be agreed to by the participants
3. The facilitator must more aggressively manage the meeting agenda when it is spread out across space and time.
4. Facilitator must be more active in setting and enforcing rules, like a syop, watchdog or policeman.
5. The facilitator may need different skills, such as computer skills, writing skills, etc.

Next, we started to brainstorm some ways we might help overcome the barriers people have to convening productive on-line meetings.

1. The hardware/software issue is a big problem. You have to ensure that all participants have access to the technology you intend to use. Alternatively, you can design the meeting to be conducted using the "lowest common denominator" of the participants in the meeting.

2. Training is also a big problem. Many people are still new to computers and may not have any technical support to get up and running. We could send them a small manual with "step-by-step" directions, try to arrange for local training from their organization or a local consultant, provide a "hot line" tech support by telephone, and in some cases set up a "buddy" system where computer literate participants help a less literate person.

3. To encourage more participation, we could limit meeting sessions to 30 minutes for same-time different-place.

11. To help people who are not text oriented, we could create diagrams of the conversation, or summaries of what happened and road maps of where it is heading. In any case, we should try to find ways to summarize and synthesize information so that participants are not inundated with information. We should honor people's time and not force them to read lots of irrelevant information just because someone else wrote it.

Finally, we talked about what would have to be improved in the technology in the long-term to make it truly easy to have meetings in cyberspace.

ISSUE #10: Staying Connected: Holding the Space for the Open Space Community

CONVENER: PEG Holman

PARTICIPANTS: Chris Kloth, Anne Stadler, Birgitt Bolton, Kay Vogt, Scott Burns, Adele Milone, Marlene Daniel, Linda Stevenson, Juan T. Lopez, Marlene Blum, Dell Drake

DISCUSSION / RECOMMENDATIONS: INTENTIONS: IN SERVICE TO WHAT?

Create a circle of emerging manifestation of spirit, where each of us has a chance to follow our individual path, increasing our capacity for alignment and expanding our circle. (there is a passion beyond these words that reflected the inspiration and possibility in them.)

We know so little about communities where people bring their whole transforming selves in service. We're about learning about that.

Inner and community connection. Being in touch with our individual passions, accepting the diversity in the community.

Space to support the choices each of us make in being with our own truth.

Safety and courage to risk: "Come risk with me. I'll hold your hand even if you're screaming and yelling." Strong support that allows me and allows the community to stretch.

Relationship work is the height of spiritual work.

FEAR

Many people brought up experiences of being part of something when the "guru" left and it lost it's efficacy. Want to do it differently.

What about those "outside" who do it "wrong," where people are hurt? Traditional responses: quality control, certification, special language... We spoke of returning to source: the essence, spirit for guidance. The fear is the shadow side of losing touch with essence. This is an opportunity to look inward and learn about ourselves.

PRINCIPLES

KEEP ASKING THE QUESTION OF INTENTION

The essence, the vitality seems to come from constantly checking in on this AND allowing it to change: creation existence, destruction is a natural cycle.

Inclusive, diverse, safe, accepting

Adaptive: flexible dynamic structure

Operate in a public way: holding hands, warts and all.

Tell our stories; Honor our heritage (In the days of our ancestors in 1983...); stay in touch with who we are

Acknowledge the human patterns: gathering in a circle, acknowledging the theme, taking responsibility for what we personally care about, reflection and letting go

Notice how others perceive us, relate from our essence, bring in new perspectives

There is the ability for emergent ideas to flow through

Trust people who walk in the door to take responsibility for what has heart and meaning to them

Hospitable to light and shadow

IMAGES

We explored images that our intentions conjured for us:

Circles, overlapping, with arrows in and out; learning circles that keep gathering, are permeable, rippling in and out

Galaxy: gathering, coming in, sharing in the center, spreading out

Pond: rain, pebbles coming in, life below the surface, ripples on the water

Heart beating, boiling water, breathing in and out

Gathering and scattering seeds

Hopi 5 hoops: 5 cultures coming together and sharing who they are in relation to each other, the earth

FUNCTION: QUALITATIVE

Gathering, spreading

Openness to discovery

Touch the essence of who we are, what our intention is at this moment

Adaptive

Permeable

Warmth, humanity (face to face)

Easy entry

Giving and receiving

FUNCTION: PRACTICAL

Gathering stories (library, history)

Spreading (mentoring, teaching, training)

Learning Community (our center) (reflection, pushing the edge out, research, sharing)

Hanging out together (playing, OS on OS)

Tools/Products (bridge to the outside: books, publications)

LOGO

The beginnings of an icon emerged: a galaxy with arms of invitation, entry, a fuzzy center of overlapping, permeable circles of learning community, arms of spreading out

NAME

The Open Space Institute = Open Space Learning Community

ISSUE #11: Open Space & the Start-up organization

CONVENER:Barry Owen

PARTICIPANTS:Marlene, Sherry, Adele, Connie, Dell, Judy, Peg, Neal, and a good contingent of bumblebees and butterflies.

DISCUSSION / RECOMMENDATIONS: THE conversation began with some discussion of what really is a "start-up" and the suggestion that many companies are really in start-up as they go through major (catastrophic) change. Once established that the topic really seemed to cover several applicable current situations (Including the Open Space Institute), the group was ready to dive into some tough issues.

Shared Leadership

Common elements of network-based organizations

Shared leadership - again

Accountability

How do we really approach these issues in an Open Space environment with a start-up where everything is in such a viscous state? How do we define roles and responsibilities?

Looking at the past - What are we going to let go?

Learnings from each item on Past/Present/Future lists resulting in passion and excitement for the future.

Appreciative inquiry

"Who has to talk to whom to get the work done?"

Book - The Soul Of A New Machine

soul- value systems - Why we're doing what we're doing

We need "Leaderfull" groups

Self-organizing is infused into organizational structures creating soul . . . is safety a key issue?

ONE individual is holding the Open Space - safe space

We had an interesting "case" which was the March For Freedom for global nuclear disarmament which was visioned to be a 5000 person march from the West coast to end up in Washington for a big "stand" . . . A couple of weeks into the march the money ran out because it was designed to support 5000 people and only 1500 came . . . so, in the middle of the Mojave Desert the thing was stalled . . . 1000 people took off . . . 500 stayed and self-organized to continue the march. Operationally, things worked perfectly. They moved 15 days each day and when they reached DC, the "community of 500" were

having difficulty dealing with the finality of it all . . . what to do with this success?

What issues had come alive in the story? Fight or flight and shared vision perpetuated the continuation of the march. What made it safe to enter chaos? Commitment to vision/passion.

Ownership is critical . . . how much will people have at the end of it? There wasn't any attempt at convergence on consensus.

Everybody's perspective is important . . . divergence of convergence.

DANGER - Starting with a passion and expecting everyone else to develop that same passion.

The difference between not-for-profits and for-profits . . . What's our product?

Success can be measured by the number of new people coming into the organization.

Be clear about the product.

One is where everything started

Assumptions were made about monotheism/and corporate structure.

Network - person joins with a special set of skills

Traditional ORg - job is created - then the person is found to fit the job.

Fluidity of the product yields who can contribute what is needed . . . as the product shifts, the people change.

Evolve a virtual organization/ Bigger than the product/ Fundamental.

As evidenced by this very fragmented re-cap, this session was "all over the board" . . . a lot of free association. Really, the consensus came around to the fact that a lot of these start-up organizations are product driven and as the product shifts and changes . . . so does the organization and the people "involved."

ISSUE #12: The Global Brain

CONVENER:Barry Owen

PARTICIPANTS:Cal,Taruna,Chris,John,Robert

DISCUSSION / RECOMMENDATIONS: THE session began exactly at the right time in the "billiards" area . . . amazingly the right people showed up for what turned out to be a global discussion which soared to a level I could not possibly convey in this summary, but I shall attempt to honor the participants with this re-cap.

The initial premise of the session was to explore the concept of the global brain and the human interpretations of such. Several books were referenced throughout the discussion.

Ishmael - Not sure of the author - in the "fiction" section
The Global Brain - Peter Russell
Synchronicity - Joseph Jaworski
Isis Papers - Author?
Mutant Message - Marlow Morgan

Our perspectives were certainly global as John and Chris had vast experience with their work in Haiti and were bringing in issues of the real disparity of conditions between different countries and regions. Taruna brought us a fresh perspective from India.

The first explosive concept was that "Oneness is Universal" as a cosmos . . . immediately followed by an acknowledgment of what we called the "human assumptions" that all of this was put here for US to use (that is, the planet and everything that goes with it). We were exploring the sheer magnitude of this idea of the global brain and were trying to get our arms around an idea of definition - what really is the global brain if it exists at all?

"Sameness" - Unity and diversity - Oneness is big enough to contain ALL diversity - We (humans) keep "messing with the earth"

Synchronicity - A common thread is being open to where you want to be and understand what events close down synchronistic opportunities.

The idea that the "human function" on this planet is to provide the nervous system - our role is NOT the top role . . . just a function . . . The brain is not yet created . . . the wildly interconnected conversation flipped to the notion that there is something mystic about the number 10 Billion and that happens to be the number of humans currently living on our planet (or we are approaching that number) . . . The implication is that perhaps because ecologically the nervous system really does form before the brain and that the global brain is actually forming NOW and that maybe only a very small percentage of life forms are acknowledging this natural evolution . . . yet.

"Esoteric religion is all saying the same thing" - Sameness again

Karma impacts the individuals, groups, races - the whole planet

"Where does SOUL come into play?"

"Who's talking?" - the "programmed brain" is the one that is primarily engaged, and the programmed brain contains certain filters of judgement.

WOW! Our free association took us immediately to a discussion of the duality model - the right/left brain . . . yin/yang . . . and the tendencies of us to permit the left brain to take over and crunch along while the right brain remains passive. The notion of "hemispheric synchronization" studies brought into play the idea that we could (with instruments) provide a bridge between the two sides of the brain and create a balance (but to the exclusion of chaos?) Enter the concept of creative visualization and the idea that we can really allow the left brain to do its stuff while entertaining the right brain with music or other stimulation . . . this seems to result in dramatically more vivid visioning skills.

Energy Follows thought.

Being precedes incarnation.

Yes! We did conclude the session . . . but the conversation is certainly not "over." One of our circuitous conclusions tied all of this up in as tight a bundle as we could make it through an analogy of the Material World and the Spiritual World being the two hemispheres of the Global Brain and the idea that these two hemispheres are seeking each other for interconnection . . . much the same as the aforementioned "Hemispheric Synchronization" . . . this will result in formation of the Global Brain.

"Each of our experiences is learning about our own divinity."

"Where is the responsibility?"

As a group, we explored several of the above issues to a depth that I cannot possibly lay out accurately in this report. I only hope that I have complimented what evolved into a completely "grounded" conversation with an amazingly insightful group of people who shared some really "neat" ideas about the Global Brain.

Issue #13: Research/Learning

CONVENER:Larry Peterson

PARTICIPANTS:Amy Eunice (Recorder), Ann Thomas, Connie Chapman, Linda Olsen, Chris Kloth, Marcelle Bastianello

DISCUSSION / RECOMMENDATIONS:This discussion was motivated by the identification from many open space practitioners that there just aren't enough public resources available to both those that lead open space and those that could benefit by being introduced to open space.

Why isn't Open Space getting more recognition? Why aren't journals and other media picking up these stories? How can we learn about other group experiences that surely would help us in our individual group experiences?

Open Space Research Conference

February 20 - 22, 1997 in Toronto there will be a gathering of people to share and stimulate research, learning, and publishing on Open Space. Our discussion today reinforced the need to focus on such an event. Our discussion raised many of the key themes that others have raised in preparation for this event and although we identified some good aspects to focus on, there are many more themes to examine and we need a strategic plan to move on this issue. We hope that those participating in this Open Space gathering will join us in Canada this February.

-Documentation

Need for a place to record personal stories. Success stories as well as lessons learned.

Open space facilitators have responsibility to convey participants reactions and insight without bias. Different levels of gathering feedback and information on process: during, immediately after, month later, year later, etc.

How will research be conducted? There is a need to focus on the qualitative more than quantitative.

-Information already available

At this point are we conducting research? or is it still search?

Who has written about OS? Checkin with facilitators in this group to see if they have recorded any documentation.

Where is it? Some discussions on MetaNet in Open Space conference.

How to look for information? Maybe at this point break down Open Space and look for information on individual principles, rituals, practices of Open Space. Also might be useful to compare and contrast with other documentation as a source of comparison, such as self organization, collectives, other types of group facilitation, etc.

Can we use Open Space to the research?

-Funding/support

Who will pay for research? Who will conduct? Currently individual clients may be conducting research on Open Space for their own use, can they share this?

How to attract the media?

Until someone (or team of individuals, or organization, etc.) owns the responsibility to focus on the research, we can fill the gap by continuing to dialogue with each other, share resources, etc. The internet

seems like a strong candidate of a place for this. There is already a space on MetaNet, but still a cost to participants. Can we design a space where everyone can have ready access on at least an introductory level?

ISSUE #14: Global Shift of Consciousness

CONVENER:Robert Potter

PARTICIPANTS:Liz Barr, Morgana Morgaine, Karen Davis, Sheila Isakson, Marlene Blum, Linda Olson, Lorraine Waddell, Essie Silverman, Sheryl Schultz, Kate Griffin, Sue Blouch, Lynn Thomas, and others

DISCUSSION / RECOMMENDATIONS:To explore a phenomenon that is happening all around the world in many ways. It is subtle, but many are feeling it. Here is a conversation on the topic:

- o We are shifting to new paradigm, from 'Newtonian' models to 'quantum' models, from patriarchy hierarchy to the rising of the feminine.
- o Remembering who we are and why we're here, collectively.
 - in order to do this, we need to let go of psycho-social baggage
- o Feminine energies are coming back to the planet, OS feels like feminine model
- o Keep going back, it's an ongoing process, peeling the onion to new and deeper layers within ourselves, increasing subtlety
- o We are connecting, networking: We have a critical mass, we just don't know it.
- o Institute of Noetic Sciences: 25% of population are 'cultural creatives' - participating, co-creating the integration of body-mind-self.
- o We have spiralling evolution; our 'wounds' cut across the turns of the spiral and re-appear at different levels.
- o Riding the roller-coaster: either hold on tight (in fear) or let go and enjoy the ride.
- o The "patriarchy" is threatened; need to be careful
 - safety in defenselessness (Course in Miracles)
- o Fear is a major problem, letting go of the old paradigm can be terrifying; freedom can be terrifying.
- o Scandinavian work: "Business that nurtures life", based on D. Bohm's Dialogue process.
- o Ben Cohen (of Ben & Jerry's): every business decision must pass 2 filters: 1) ethical, 2) economic.
- o Opening your heart: when it feels closed, just open it again.
 - it can be hard to do (according to the operative world model)
- o Myths can be very useful models, they are not lies.
- o Book: The Fifth Sacred Thing.
- o Leverage points, find the right places & times
- o Holding our space is a life skill.
- o Book: Conversations with God, by N.D. Walsch
- o Books: Kryon series, Lee Carole; What is Light Body? Tashira Tachi-ren: karma can be voided in lieu of more important things

- that we need to be engaged in now.
- o OS empowers people to co-create
 - o "Appreciative Inquiry", David Cooperrider: asks 'what is working?' not 'what is wrong?'; then ask 'how can we have more of this?'
 - o Need to work on clearing emotional, etheric, mental blocks on an organizational, as well as personal level
 - o OS beauty is the speed at which it brings change
 - o Challenge of using OS in a 'closed' organization: you have to bring openness to OS for it to work
 - o Existing 'patriarchical' paradigm energizes separateness, can prostitute the feminine models, techniques, when placed into hands of 'control' people. Not a 'clean' feeling.
 - o Non-judgement is important; need to keep presenting the truth until it is recognized - we all know the truth deep inside.
 - o Birth metaphor useful: ties in with feminism, nurturing, embryonic stage of the 'shift'.

ISSUE #15: Fundamentals of OS training (creating a learning expedition

CONVENER: Anne Stadler

PARTICIPANTS: Frances Gerhard, Birgitt Bolton, Juan Lopez, Lisa Kimball, Amy Eunice, Liz Ennis, David Peters, Taruna Thareja, Ann Thomas, Chuck Baroo, Linda Stevenson, Paul Gleiberman, Nellie Stone, Chris Kloth, Larry Peterson, E. Brian Bainbridge, Betsy Devlin-Foltz, Devorah Gilbert, Alome Stein

DISCUSSION / RECOMMENDATIONS: What is the passion which brings you to this session? Sharing our awareness of what **MUST** be present whenever we create a learning opportunity for others to learn OST (formerly known as "OST training". What are the irreducible fundamentals? That was Anne's intro. as to why she convened the group. Here are some passions which were expressed as we went around the group:

- doing OST learning in ways which are based on best practices of adult learning;
- kicking off capacity to do more "trainings";
- we have implicit theory-- need to make it explicit and put into conscious practice;
- want to enhance institutional life by using OS as medium;
- enhance everyday living in organizations;
- do **BETTER**, by using more advanced ways of sharing the distinctions on which OS is based;
- explore the philosophy of OS and how to teach that;
- BE an open space;
- "training" is a patriarchial term. Find vocabulary and practices which move us beyond that;
- do it OS education ourselves on-going as opportunities and needs arise so we don't have to wait until HHO can come and do it for us;
- create conditions for learning to live in OS;
- learn about "tales from OS";
- OS is a way of being; a method for orgs. to operate on-goingly; and a format for an event. Explore all of these re. what is the essence of each?

We agreed to proceed with Dialogue method of deep listening and following the emergent thread of Spirit. Started with silence.

Out of silence, Birgitt suggested we share stories which illustrate our experience of essence of OS.

L. Stevenson: When I realized "I don't have to do anything. When the moment arises someone in the group will know/say and group will evolve." Told of experience when that happened.

L. Kimball: As we met together over the years, we noticed that all the good stuff happens in the halls. So we began to ask "could you make a gathering which is all "halls"?? And we realized you really need to have a MINIMAL structure so wouldn't be cliquish and so people who were new could find other people, etc. So, minimal came about.

Chris K.: There was a situation of conflict and anger in highly diverse group of people. He said "what the hell" and convened an Open Space. And it was amazing. People actually began to listen rather than to talk at each other. So realized OS is a space for LISTENING.

Juan L.: The four principles are really powerful and important. When I saw a really difficult group use them (and I had the patience to let them "get it"), I got religion.

Joan DeNew: Trusting in the benevolent universe. I see OS as a way to be in connection with that

Spirit.

Larry P: He realizes that he connects with the OS inside himself as he does OS with others. This is "a wonderful gift which keeps on giving";

Frances G.: What resonates with me is OS is a space for listening, for taking responsibility for you really care about, with enough structure to let Spirit in everyone work.

Amy: I haven't done OS, but it sounds as if the listening, and having the experience of "deep hearing" is integral outcome of OS experience.

Devorah: (HHOrecap) OS is the dramatization of the Hero's Journey, initiated by the shamanic act of creating the circle, and then transferred to everyone by the consistent application of the four principles and law of two feet and maintenance of the circle. The beauty of the death and resurrection part of that journey is that it is as a community that you complete the journey together. So bringing the Spirit to life in that circle of sacred/profane is THE essence of OS.

Anne: So in OS the convener opens the circle, directs participants attention to their circle(connection) with the sacred (via: "take responsibility for what has heart and meaning for you"), and EACH person enters on his/her own Hero's Journey during that time and space-- thus evolving the group in that time and space.

David P.: I try to run my MBA classes in OS with varying success. I do get some people responding that I should be less of a facilitator and fellow learner and more of a transmitter of knowledge and traditional teacher.

Chris Kloth: Points out distinctions @ facilitating, leading, facilitator, leader.

Anne: Isn't the training a "learning expedition" in which we create a circle of learners? Some are new, initiates, some are experienced practitioners. All are available to learn and teach each other. So it's not really facilitating or teaching, it's about co-learning, co-creating a learning community? and holding or maintaining that space and intention?

Lisa: Creating space within which sacred events happen.

We need to stop using medical models and terms deriving from medical models eg. intervention, etc. as is still current in OD Network.

Leadership became focus of discussion:

What is "leadership"? and how can acknowledged leadership in an Org. really open the space?? People get REALLY

upset when you say that's what you want to do.

Is "leadership" in OS "opening the space"?

Do you have to be an acknowledged leader? Can't you just notice the "space is really open" from wherever you are in the organization/group/conversation?

You need to be present in relationship. Your WAY of BEING is crucial, wherever ;you are.

Maybe what we are calling "leadership" in OST is being a convener. My task is to show up, and to bring the circle into being, and then, let go, and then let everyone show up and BE leaders as our creation emerges.

Listening for the integrity of the circle is also crucial. And maintaining the integrity of the circle. Being is the active verb.

Staying open is constant work.

Letting go requires attention, intention.

It is modeling for the group.

What animates the "being"? Love.

It's so non-linear that what comes up for me is holographic. If you're truly holding the space, you know it's holographic. All you have to do is BE HERE NOW and the rhythm/flow happens.

Bureaucracies are uncomfortable with this and threatened.

So maybe the way into this is to ask, say what I'm about, and raise the questions, initiate the conversation?

Larry: Let's focus on the conversation BEFORE an open space event happens. That conversation really sets the context, so ask this question: how open are you willing to be?? And ask: are you willing to let go of your desire for specific outcomes?

So it starts with that conversation and this is crucial for anyone who intends to do OS.

Devorah: If the conversation is about how can we control the outcomes, you could ask Where are you IN control? So that people get in touch with the fact that being in control is not the nature of the world they are in.

Can open space include closed, structured space if it is opened with the intention of "being" open and if that intention is maintained by the convener/facilitator?

Question: Could we look at what's the difference between controlled space (such as large system interventions) and what we're talking about?

Their question is how can we leverage planned outcomes?

That's one difference between OS and their space.

Another might be, that our focus is accessing the intelligence which exists throughout the organization.

Also, OS produces ownership and continuing commitment to what people take responsibility for.

You can get leveraged outcomes, but it comes from WHOLE group taking responsibility for what each one cares about-- and you cannot plan or control what will happen in advance.

Brian: In fact, I did an open space for an organization, and the top person didn't want to support what people cared about, so I found him being vomited out by the organization six months down the road and the people who took responsibility for what they cared about still working on the task they took on in the aftermath of the OS.

If you are asked/called to do work with a "sick" organization, and they don't want to do OS, you can go in and find the space to open up space and do what needs to be done. Birgitt told story of how she managed to do that with national staff of a health org.

Conclusion: sometimes you have to go in their "door" and know that inside there will be opportunity for OS.

Questions: Are there any weather conditions which we need to help people notice?

You can notice that you are the one being called to be there. So, if I'm a self-aware person, and I'm called to be this place, and I show up and pay attention to what has heart and meaning, I will be being and attracting and enabling whatever open space which exists to manifest.

You need a high sense of humor and a low sense of significance. Crucial is showing up, paying attention to what you truly care about and letting go of outcomes, you create co-creative living in emergent space where it's safe to care about being whole: for individuals and for the group.

Anne said she will convene another session re. applying these fundamentals (and whatever others come to us later on) in formal learning expeditions for enabling people to DO OST.

ISSUE #16: OPEN

CONVENER: ANNE STADLER

PARTICIPANTS: ESSIE SILVERMAN, KAREN DAVIS, Fr BRIAN S. BAINBRIDGE, DEVORAH GILBERT, LISA KIMBALL, JUAN T. LOPEZ, MROGANA MORGAIN, NEIL HOLMAN SANDY CALLIER, MICHAEL HERMANN, MARILYN WOOD

DISCUSSION / RECOMMENDATIONS: Converse with participants re meaning of Open Space. versus telling them - need to be aligned with the principles.

Each culture has its own variations - training must be accessible e.g. languages, celebration, food customs, music use, etc.

Osmosis tends not to happen. But "BEING" the person who runs it matters. Showing up is one thing, then what do you do for the next two days.

Training tends not to be in OPEN SPACE - talked about elsewhere with Harrison Owen in terms of "not walking our talk".

It's started by making some changes. It's now four and a half days, a learning expedition with experienced and non-experienced participants, and including part-time experienced too as "mentors" and uses OPEN SPACE from the start. Harrison talks re chaos theory/environment and the Millennium Organization - and then people are in small groups to explore same. Read OPEN SPACE TECHNOLOGY before coming. Share stories each evening and help that as a learning mode - emphasize this.

What if we didn't have a "lecture session"? It would catch up anyway.

Perhaps we should start with OPEN SPACE. Some think this. Or perhaps offer 2 options (Open Space or lecture).

Talk about chaos theory is less effective than feeling it and then identifying it.

"Build a learning community" is maybe more relevant. "TRAINING" is the term that fits organization budgets, so it matters there.

What is it that "comers" think they need - usually a new technique and even exploring new ways to be in organization.

Jumping in seems best for some - least successful is the older way it has been done. Maybe we should use all of the above, and offer multiple options - lecture and/or experience.

But, using OPEN SPACE, you don't know the needs until they turn up.

Tendency for some is to talk a good deal.

Some major chunks are needed :

- Chaos theory and learning

- The environment in/of organizations and cultures

- The Millennium Organization (new way of being in organization)

- Experience of being the convener of OPEN SPACE, convening it, walking the circle, thinking about it, the reflection time

- The invitation

- Letting go

- All the nitty gritty's

- What people need - the fundamentals.

Must be done in the spirit of OPEN SPACE.

"Reflecting on" is a vital element, too.

Preconditions - who's going to use and what for - need different approaches - impact differently - and

reflect the relevant culture.

Spirit is vital to "catch". The "leader's" spirit is to be aware of and ready for this, especially in terms of doing/reflecting sessions. "Teacher" is to pay attention to what emerges (or not) from the reflection. A check list is a net of awareness of what's needed to be the OPEN SPACE person/maker.

Having it be present versus bringing it forward - that's the OPEN SPACE way.

Chaos is the entry point to holding spirit. Acknowledge that it is valuable as an understanding of OPEN SPACE in reality. The concept of self-organizing systems.

Each "expedition" may well be framed in different ways e.g. art people, tech people, etc.

Need a vehicle to share learnings about "training".

Need to work at "creating the organization/community we've always wanted to live in" - the theme used in such development programs now.

Holding the space

- making sure all are welcome
- open and close the space
- be in the thick of it and allow yourself to be yourself
- do it my way

Days are structured - start/finish is the rhythm of the day and program.

What you'd like to bring that would help the space be more good.

Be open to whatever emerges.

ISSUE #17: Being In Balance (or intentional imbalance) Personally

CONVENER:Cal Sutliff

PARTICIPANTS: Scott "Lars" Larson, Joelle Everett, Marlene Blum, Linda Stevenson, Sue Thomas, John Engle, Linda Olson, Sheryl Schultz, Chris Low, Liz Ennis, Sue Blouch, Marilyn Woods and several others.

DISCUSSION / RECOMMENDATIONS:1. A few of the balance areas we mentioned: work vs family/personal life; doing vs being; too much work vs not enough work; being in balance vs being in chaos; etc.

2. We "paused" and identified our individual ASSUMPTIONS about being in balance. Here are some:

- * it's desirable; it's healthy (mind-body-emotionally-spiritually); it's a way of being; it's fluid
- * balance is frequently not seen/appreciated until it is significantly absent
- * balance is not juggling, not weighing, not evening or leveling but meeting, mixing, leavening, engaging - a little here, a little there; a wholeness in being...a harmony in living
- * being in balance is good; is possible;; I'm more likely to be in balance when I'm moving than when I'm quiet
- * when I'm in balance, I don't know it; it's only when I start not to notice, that I'm not in balance
- * balance is reaction to the world as a whole; extremes exist in order to balance the world (like a pendulum); I balance my life by simplifying it in a family system which is crowded materialistically
- * it is a key to me discovering inner-peace; inner-peace is necessary for me to access my creative potential
- * there is no such thing as balance; you need to create the moment most needed in your life at the time; if you don't create the space for what you need, someone, something else will fill it
- * balance has become a difficult world and replaced with movement; a 360 degree dance and some central mystery of my soul
- * balance is dynamic; over time I have choice; multi-media dimensions for my life; different multi-media for my social circle; also for my (the) world; balance is wholeness
- * coming into equilibrium...energy modalities are always shifting, predictably and unpredictably; aspects to deal with: spiritual, physical, play, family, social, community, travel, nature; emphasis shifts among these to bring me back into equilibrium
- * I need to have balance in my life to be effective; I also need to be somewhat out of balance or I feel dead in the water; balance and chaos are in a beautiful dance in most situations

3. Some of the images we used:

- * balance a post-it pad on the end of a pencil (it can fall in any direction at any time)
- * in dance there is movement (often violent) in many directions simultaneously...yet the dancer is in balance
- * balance may come from a solid foundation, yet that very foundation may make one vulnerable: examples, IBM is deeply rooted (and in trouble) while Microsoft is less rooted and flourishing
- * flexibility may be more important than strength: example, the mighty fir tree may topple...the birch tree bends and then returns to upright; the oak is hard and strong...yet bamboo has greater tensile strength
- * a wave has enormous balance, yet is constantly shifting
- * a pendulum is in perfect balance only at the bottom of its arc

4. Miscellaneous quotes:

- * I'm more in balance when I'm moving than when I'm still.
- * Aristotle's definition of wisdom is equal parts of experience and reflection.
- * I seem to be surrounded with people who are going through the dying experience...and I'm asking myself "what am I supposed to be learning here?"
- * when I jump from the steaming sauna into the ice cold lake, am I in balance?

5. Observed: when we asked who meditates and who does not, all the meditators were sitting in one half of our circle...ALL the non-meditators in the other half. What profound, insightful message could we take from that startling observation?

6. Some good questions we "framed":

- * When I feel out of balance, what is the feeling?
- * When I feel out of balance, what do I tend to do?
- * Are chaos and balance opposites?
- * And is one necessary to have the other?
- * In nature, is balance a natural state?
- * Is balance only a matter of the distance of your perspective?
- * Am I more in balance when I'm moving or when I'm standing still?
- * When is flexibility strength?
- * How might we organize an Open Space on the topic of BALANCE???

ISSUE #18: Managing the Convener's Open Space in Real Time - Spacemaker

CONVENER: Ann Thomas

PARTICIPANTS: Marlene Blum, Brian Bainbridge, David Peters, Betsie Devlin-Fowlkes (others not identified...learning: pass a participant list)

DISCUSSION / RECOMMENDATIONS: Question: How to not be distracted/be drawn off center?

- * I know when I am "there", on center
- * Try not to get emotionally involved..if I am, become aware of what issues are being raised for me personally
- * Notice own anxiousness, observe, broaden vision to include

Question: What do facilitators do during sessions to be present, but invisible?

- * Can be involved by "picking up cups, etc." without actually entering into the center.
- * May join in after awhile when there is a greater comfort level with group
- * Find a place to hang-out while being invisible. Participants wanting to speak with the facilitator will seek him/her out.

Topic: "Space preparation"

- * If possible, it is important to go to the location several days prior to the event to become familiar with the room, obstacles, lay-out etc.
- * On the day of the event, arrive several hours early to get in touch with the space and build on the energy of the room.
- * Take time to meet the staff, they are important to the success of the days.

Topic: Expanding our field of vision

- * Expand the "Now" to include all that is going on, including all our thoughts. As the open space event begins, the "now" may be narrow, but as the event progresses, our "now" also expands.

ISSUE #19: Ideas/Experience accomplishing 3 days worth of OS in less time

CONVENER:Kay Vogt

PARTICIPANTS:Marlene Blum, Alome Stein, Jiles Hopkins, Kirk Stromberg, Frances Gerhard, Micheal Herman, Joan DeNew, Lorraine Waddell

DISCUSSION / RECOMMENDATIONS:Clients resist making a commitment of 3 days for doing an OS event. The discussion took two forms: 1) Words to use to sell clients on the longer time frame; and 2) ideas/solutions to working in shorter time frames:

A. What would it take to get the decision makers to devote three days:

1. Ask the client to reflect on times they have experienced a feeling of open space. The idea that open space is there all the time, but is generally covered up by lots of other stuff that gets in the way.
2. Don't focus on OS per se but the results they can expect.
3. "This is a really efficient way to accomplish a lot."
4. Get client to talk about what experiences they've had in the past with "retreats" and then you can address their concerns. Puts the responsibility back on the participants, shortcircuits the "armchair critic" syndrome; not a feel good session but will come away with all the issues identified and discussion and a concrete plan in workgroups that are self-managed.

B. Accomplishing more in less time:

1. Just invite people but put in the invitation that if they decide to come, they must commit to staying for 2 whole days. Prior to the event, ask what data would you need to know regarding the issues on which you feel passionate. Ask participants to come to the OS armed with whatever data they need. In one case, a briefing book was published prior to the event with background on certain issues.
2. For shorter time frames, rather than post-its, have a matrix on the wall that is large enough to accommodate the actual subject sheets. This reduces "time at the wall" and makes it easier to reschedule/move topics. Also, open places in the schedule are easier to identify.
3. Post "veteran strategies" which is a list of what people who have done a 3 day OS have learned. I.E. "get a co-conspirator", or "have subsequent sessions designed to move from discussion to action plan", etc.
4. Several short OS events separated by time (such as weekly or monthly meetings). Start by presenting the day not as a closed unit, but as an extended process. Although you lose a lot of the spirit that is generated by a longer event, it is possible to have a discussion say on a Friday night. Ask for a report to be submitted by Tuesday. Reports can be made available back at the meeting the next week. read and think about for another week. Follow up or action plan can be in person at a subsequent meeting.
5. In a one day, there's not much time for extensive introductions. An alternative is a word association

game which begins things in a playful way, and can also be used at the end of the day. You start with a phrase related to the theme, we used "condensed open space". Ask for a related word from the group (we came up with slinky). Repeat the word three times. Ask for a second word and repeat the first two words three times. repeat until you have four words. Repeat the process, only this time you act out a gesture for each word.

6. Is it a good idea to skip lunch in order to gain time? Must be culturally sensitive, in some cultures this would be anathema. Rather than schedule regular sessions during lunch, block off an hour for lunch, but tell people they can convene a short session by parking themselves at a table and announcing the topic.

7. After voting priorities, have the main issues as trees, with issues that didn't make the "top 10" as leaves. Need to be sensitive to honor each person's passion. Frame as not "the most important" issues, rather what should our discretionary issues be devoted to.

Issue # 20: HOW BETTER TO DO "THE REPORT"

CONVENER:Fr BRIAN BAINBRIDGE

PARTICIPANTS:DAVID PETERS, MARCELLE BASTIANO, FRANCES GERHARD, MARLENE DANIEL, MARLENE BLUM, NEIL HOLMAN, DELL DRAKE, AMY EUNICE, BETSY DEVLIN-FOLTZ, BARY OWEN, LORRAINE WADDELL

DISCUSSION / RECOMMENDATIONS:Use an "ACTION OUTCOMES" pro-forma listing topic, leader, participants, and action outcomes.

Hand-written reporting can be helpful in getting the report out more quickly, reinforcing ownership, saving time in typing before photocopying, not needing processing by the facilitator after the session, and allowing people (especially in a small OPEN SPACE) to spend their time participating in sessions rather than spending time at the laptop.

A "LIST OF AUTHORS/PARTICIPANTS" can be included, as appropriate.

Each report copy can have the name of a participant on the front - to help personalize and to check if any reports have not been picked up in the final distribution.

Some use laptops in sessions as they go.

Flip charts can help, too, and sometimes they are graphic and can be photographed or scanned into the report. Graphics are very valuable.

"Author" list may be not a right expression for some people, so be wary of same.

May be useful to spell out "Action", "Responsible Person", and "Time Frame" as part of the pro-forma where that kind of expectation is involved.

"Recommendations" is not a good word to use in that it often does not portray ownership.

Making changes to the initial report can be important in some cases, especially on tight details. Those who care will attend to such matters.

Technical language can be a problem if the report is left to the facilitator to action and implement.

Audio recording may be useful in rare cases, but is often very drawn out and time-intensive in handling.

Typing and such are important in larger groups - perhaps above 15 or 20.

Depends on the client and the client expectations as to the way of producing the report. Smaller groups are often more informal and tolerant.

The "nowness" of a report being presented at the every end of the program and being taken home by the participants has a special impact.

Diversity of reporting standards could be a delicacy, but not the general experience, so far.

Catching the spirit and magic is probably not possible, though telling/capturing stories may approximate this. It is in the participation that the spirit is manifest, it seems.

ISSUE #21: SMALL OPEN SPACE EVENTS

CONVENER:Fr BRIAN S. BAINBRIDGE

PARTICIPANTS:LISA KIMBALL, BETSY DEVLIN-FOLTZ, JUDY GAST, AMY EUSTICE, SHERYL SCHULTZ, LINDA OLSON, GILES HOPKINS, SANDY CALLIER, FRANCIS GERHARD, CONNIE CHAPMAN, DAVID PETERS, MARCELLE BASTIANELLO, ALOME STEIN, FREEMAN MARVIN, LARRY PETERSON, MICHAEL HERMANN, KIRK STROMBERG, ROBINS HOPKINS, HARRISON OWEN

DISCUSSION / RECOMMENDATIONS: Major exposure when small groups happen. Difficulty of treatment of support staff in such situations. The "President" has a strong presence and is sometimes in and out - which is not that easy. One case then explored this dynamic and started to address same.

Posting topics and introduction are the same as in larger groups.

The group will often stay together, though they will then become comfortable to break up, if there is enough time.

Facilitator is present in a different way, though they can leave and come back, as usual.

They sort out their own time slotting after a guide is in place.

There is often deference to the "the Manager", but it is important that he/she be part of the group as an equal participant.

Principles have to be clear beforehand with the Manager.

Loyalty to the boss" matters and can override the principles of Open Space.

Say "NO" to program possibility when that is the right thing to do. It is sometimes not right to say "YES".

How does Open Space differ from just a good dialogue? The principles seem to matter a lot, and setting the tone.

A group that's done it before can get going quicker.

A sense that "not less than a day" is a principle - otherwise there is not enough time to meld the process, and the review at the end is vital.

Dynamics of a small group are exactly the same as for a 500.

Members can't hide in a small group - which generates a certain vulnerability, and a sure responsibility/ownership for outcomes, too.

Briefing of the "contracting person" is critical in terms of both "whatever happens" and the notion of allowing follow-on action and implementation. Otherwise, no-go.

Expectations of "upper management" can impact substantially.

Setting the tone sometimes can't be done by a boss or an internal manager who is part of the group.

Most participants gained from the group - in the review - and benefitted from the interchange.

Issue# 22: Boomerang Effect: Trying to Give Open Space Away

Convener: Giles Hopkins

Participants: Good Folks

Discussion: What has been people's experience with "giving open space away?" By "giving it away" we meant some process by which the client receives the spirit of open space and some members of the client group receive the confidence and competence to "open the space" in the future.

Some individuals and groups seem to have the "whatever it is" to receive the subtle nature of open space and take it forward into their lives without any additional involvement of "us." This is wonderful.

There were several examples of experiences where "open space was taken, but not received." These seemed to be situations in which open space was mistaken for another "trainer trick" or where someone tried to "steal" open space despite the absurdity of such a notion. It was helpful to realize that someone who "apologizes" for "stealing our technique" probably doesn't get it, but open space is probably so resilient that they will get it one way or another.

Some of us are contracting up front to "work ourselves out of a job" by training people in the client system to carry open space forward as part of the overall organizational development contract.

"Formal" training programs (in addition to transferring knowledge and skills) may help staff from the client group with the increment of formal recognition that attendance at a training program confers on them and thus helps the organization perceive that these people can now take over from "us."

Even with experienced open space groups, there was general acknowledgment that there needs to be someone who opens and holds the space whether that person is external or internal. One organization uses "open-space-competent staff" from sister departments rather than from within their own department to ensure the independence and "disinterest" of the facilitator.

Sometimes the client wants one of "us" because they feel the stakes are high in a particular situation and want to ensure they have someone who is experienced and/or clearly independent of the organization's many agendas.

Can you give open space away to someone who has never been to an open space event? Apparently so, since some of us are living examples. Nonetheless it may be easier to build people's confidence in their own open space comfort level by having them assist with several first.

We need to flag that open space is not something you can give to an individual as such, but you can introduce them to it and to the organization and hope that they can receive it in the spirit intended. It may be easier to give open space away when working through a for more or to skip: language translator because your individual personality is already at a distance from the process and people receive the process itself. People who already operate in open space in their day to day lives and who aren't burdened by exposure to corporate meeting mentality and Robert's Rules tend to receive open space more easily (e.g. peasants, shift workers, and others without the mixed blessing of extensive formal education.) We can position ourselves as mentors and ongoing support to staff in organizations who occasionally need a

sounding board as they are preparing to open some space. As with the talking stick, there might be an opportunity to ritually "pass the baton" to the inside person. Left Wondering: Maybe the question is more about being attuned to how we can increase our awareness of those people and situations where others can receive open space experience in away that prepares them to be willing and able to open and hold space for others in the future.

Issue #23 Open Space as an Environment for Learning Communities

Lisa Kimball (convenor)

Chuck Baroo

Sandy Cullen

Judy Dool

Liz Ennis

Ethelyn Owen

Sheryl Schultz

Connie Chapman

Joan Engle

Duri Thomas

Karen Davis

Morgana Morgaine

Sue Blouch

Chris Yow

In what ways does Open Space "work" as an environment for learning? Are there things which come to mind when we think of Open Space in a learning context which are different from what happens when we think of it as meeting space?

We started by silently thinking about a wonderful, juicy, engaging learning experience we had had in the past. Then we told our stories about those learning experiences. There were wonderful stories about learning which was daring, and fun, and difficult, and challenging, and powerful.

We noticed things about the learning experiences in our stories ... They tended to involve;

- risk
- safe space
- availability of rich materials
- grounded in reality
- time
- play
- engaging "whole" person (multi-sensory)

We had a rich conversation which might be best captured by the questions we asked ourselves:

Do people know what they need to learn?

How can we let go of our need to control (or even guide) what is learned/experienced?

How can we provide experiences for participants which generate the key questions? (being in another culture, being in nature)

How could learning in Open Space be evaluated?

How could we enrich the space with materials to support experiences other than conversation?

Who is the structure in most learning environments for? (the learner or the teacher)

How does the principle "When it's over, it's over" support a process of ongoing learning?

We decided to adopt the view that

WHEN IT'S OVER, IT'S JUST BEGINNING

We talked about the role of singing and dancing in learning and how it is an integral part of learning and meetings in other cultures.

We learned a song and sang it!

We stretched to the ceiling and moved together which felt great!

We stood and held hands in a circle.

Karen shared with us that the primary elements of transformation are silence, storytelling, singing, and dancing and we had experienced all of that in this session which is probably why it felt really good!

Issue #24: Sharing spiritual resources for Open Space Facilitators Open Space and the Shaman

Co-conveners; Essie Silverman and Joan De New

Participants:

Nellie Stone	Sheila Isakson	Kirk Stromberg
Ann Thomas	Joelle Everett	Scott "Lars"~ Larsen
Karen Davis	Robbins Hopkins	Liz Ennis
Morgana Morgani	Chuck Baroo	Kush Khatri
Marlene Blum	Devorah Gilbert	Lorraine Waddell

The session opened with hands-on practice with beginner halos (pink, orange, and yellow leis borrowed from the fun supplies in the plenary room).

Essie

- facilitator can "clear" the meeting room(s) ahead of time privately

Nellie

- concern that people have the attitude that spiritual power should be shared "for free~"
- sometimes a problem that "shaman" is not distinguished from "spook"
- some feel that the spiritual is integrated in the work they do

Devorah

- sells "promises", based on God working through her

When asked WHAT is your process?"

- reply is usually "Most people are satisfied to take my results."
- Deborah "made up" some process description sheets which she is willing to share on request
- several felt there is a place for doing some expected things, like providing such sheets regardless of whether they are really useful or not

Joelle

often does a meditation process which precedes "visioning work"

- silly games
- guided imagery
- always gives some rationale for any exercises
- "right brain information on the issue before we plan"
- facilitator's own thinking determines the group response
- if you treat an exercise as "ordinary," so will the group
- Joelle has had no resistance to her directives on such exercises

Nellie

- promises results, and gets results

- when asked, "How did you do that?"(process) it's hard to answer
- suspicion may be raised
- focus on results more productive

- "I'm not here to give it to you; I'm here to help you get what you want." Sheila
- notes that there are assumptions about reality
- dosed view "tell us what to do"
- open view become Involved in unfolding
- challenge is to get client groups to the unfolding

Devorah

- personal mission clarified by a mentor as "to bring Spirit to corporations"
- Spirit is already there in a group
- speak to what's there, and the response comes
- have fun and be playful (nature of Spirit)
- don't try to be "significant"

Lars

- explains that if they wanted expected things, the group could do it themselves
- he is "here to do the uneKpeeted"
- he avoids discussion of Open Space as a technique
- he constructs a plausible reality to allay Tears
- "a skin to hold Spirit for the moment"
- when clients ask an OS facilitator, they have already "crossed the line"
- important to give some verbal dues that they may have some surprises (Joelle wears a business suit with dinosaur earrings)

Essie

- experience with training facilitators
- training those who are sent is frequently a waste of time
- the best ones ask for the training, rather than being sent
- she finds that each needs help from where they are at individually
- training is best individually tailored

Chuck

- gets around the serious stuff by announcing~ "We're going to learn soon, but right flow, we're going to play"
- suggests setting up a "play room" at a conference with a variety of interesting things to experiment with
- important that the Open Space area be different
- set up play stations in the gathering space
- use plenary for play space, not groups, so accessible always
- next year Invite participants in OSONOS to bring things to contribute~ to 8 play ewe

Robbins

- often has participants make their own name tags by making a collage from old

magazine cuttings to express the wholeness of who they are (many roles, many interests)

-great icebreaker for people who do not know one another well

Devorah

-the truth is that business is a game

-play helps business people lighten up

-Os facilitators help people learn how to play seriously

Essie

-quote from Essie: Creativity left unexpressed becomes toxic. Either play (creativity expressed) or create shit ! !

Devorah

-importance of facilitators taking care of themselves

-importance of being in community. loneliness is a real danger ~doesn't have to be local internet, conferences, etc.

Joelle

Concept of shaman in the workplace is becoming a frequently mentioned topic in the Seattle area

-there is some safety n numbers (critical mass for acceptance)

-safety by association with those who hire (upper managers with credibility)

-safety in good results

Devorah

-necessity today for intuitive management

-complexity of decisions at high levels requires intuition

-one problem about women breaking through the glass ceiling is that those who have risen through the ranks have been selected for their logic, not their intuition

-everything is so "not working" that people are ready to try practically anything. and this is our moment

Lars

-"picking through the entrails of ^{disaster} provides openness to OS re-engineering initiatives
promise Open Space facilitators work about a year down the road

Nellie

-asks, "What do you want? You can have it all."

-response is "We don't know." her next question is "Who should I ask?"

-states, "I'm not here to give it to you, but to help you get it."

-it's scary for people to start on a path when they don't know the destination

-find a context or story that can help them face the mystery of their future

Devorah

Often finds that asking "What do you want?" is not enough

- ask also "What can I want?"
- this helps people to identify limited thinking
- she announces that you have to be "out of control" to get the great results

Joan

- role of the facilitator to hold the space so people can be "out of control" safely
- there is a difference between control and "order" which is often not recognized

Devorah

- new definition of a plan
- like a foot pattern for learning a new dance step
- the pattern is not the dance
- plan is like a prayer
- Please God let -- happen. Not my will but Thine be done.

Kush

- The Spirit knows the plan
- in our culture, no one feels they can trust anything any more.
- how do we build trust?

Nellie

- I can predict the results you're going to get because you choose them
- Nellie works with individuals, but this might work with groups

Essie

- worked as a volunteer paramedic
- had to act "as if" in control in emergencies. When you take authority, people usually trust you.

Devorah

- there is a fundamental place to start: Wherever Spirit is, there's nothing wrong.
- mantra; "There's nothing wrong here. Let's play"

Morgana

- might be better to phrase it in the positive mode "Everything is right here."

Joan

- power is not a bad word
- power "for" or "to do" contrasts with power "over"
- we can celebrate and use positive power

Nellie

- help clients to trust the process
- keep focus on them by getting them to do something in the process
- puts their energy into the process rather than on the process
- tell the truth

Devorah

- her "process" is to fall in love with the people
- this brings up their love energy

Get planners involved in the infrastructure process

- how will they meet
- who will do what

Lars

- there is power of ritual
- Suggest this to take focus off the word "process"
- e.g. meeting agendas posted, name tags, etc Create a little ritual with the group for it to use
- their own breath work (Eg our company's future depends on us)

Nellie

- structure gives safety, source of satisfaction
- If nothing is planned, how can you get satisfaction. a sense of accomplishment?

Devorah

- might think of ourselves as convening "shamanic space"
- we are facilitators in "shamanic space~" or "shamanologists"
- there is an interplay between innovation and conservation

Sheila

- there is context, background and focus change co-exists with continuity
- we need stories about both

Lars

- trust is created when we pay attention to both
- "trust in movement"

Devorah

- people confuse faith and trust
- we have to trust things to be what they are
- faith is not an opportunity for people to absolve themselves from responsibility
- you can trust that your budget will be cut

Nellie

- faith is more personal, about what's available to me from the universe

Morgana

- we need to exercise discipline
- thoughts and words have enormous power
- we need to take personal responsibility for them
- don't give energy to negative thoughts
- pick up on all positive thought
- keep our personal focus on the positive
- don't give up energy to resistance

Nellie

- we are accountable for our responses
- we are not responsible for what shows up. Though later we may discover that we created the situation.

$$C = D \times R \text{ (Change = disappointment} \times \text{reaction)}$$

- for transformation
 - declare a breakdown
 - articulate a vision
 - add practical steps consistent with the vision
- how to access your power if you find yourself in a reaction
 - STOP whatever you're doing
 - LOOK to see what's there
 - LISTEN for what's missing
- when do you know you're in a reaction~ when THEY are doing something (blaming something on them)

Lars

Useful to find "billable language"

- "enhance conviviality" (have fun)
- "working multilaterally (coffee-break conversations)
- contributions of new Open Space definitions from others welcome

Issue #25: Can Open Space Assist women with economic empowerment?

Conveners: Devorah Gilbert and Nellie Stone

Participants:

Connie Chapman
Betsy Devlin-Foltz
Sheryl Schultz
Some others

Morgan Morgaine
Marlene Blum
Kay Voght

Ann Thomas
Sheila Isakson
Marilyn Hood

Devorah began by telling of small women's support groups, in which the membership requirement was stating "I am the source of life showing up as bliss" at each meeting. In the 11th year of Bliss Groups, talk about economics was stimulated during the presidential election campaign for years ago. At that time the Women's Economic Circle was formed. Devorah was looking for a new, smarter way to make sense of economy for women.

Devorah majored in Art, but then became interested in economics, and in 1969-70 took several courses. She has taught business strategy and management, and basic economics.

She does not agree with Samuelson's definition of economics as the management of scarcity. Economics the word derives from the Greek, and means household management. She sees it as a study of relationships and abundance.

Three years ago the Circle began monthly meetings where women could discuss economics from the viewpoint of abundance and relationship. They learned to "talk economics." The quality of listening gave Devorah more voice.

Devorah sees Open Space as a way of organization for women which can help them find their voice. Brian Urquhart in a book on what the UN needs to be more effective as a cause of peace stated that women must reclaim their power, or peace won't happen. Women need to mentor and support one another in everything in a feminine mode. They need to speak clearly, loudly, and rattle cages.

What goes through your mind when you pay your bills? You can have an attitude that there is "just enough." You can also have an attitude that there is plenty of money. Attitude makes a difference to life.

Saving for retirement does not benefit the community. Security is an illusion. Life is a daring adventure, or it's nothing at all. If you want a life of abundance, live life abundantly. Work has become jobs for survival, for making a living. Work has lost its vocational component, or spiritual dimension.

People fear becoming bag ladies, or having to go home as failures. Real security lies in living in a network of relationships where there is always a place for everyone.

Read *The End Of Work* by Jeremy Rifkin

Joan De New reported that one of the most interesting things to come out of the For the Love of Canada Open Space meetings in February 1996 was the phrase, "People are Canada's most important resource," this could become an appropriate criterion for all social and economic programs.

We need to look at economics as a spiritual discipline.

There are no design principles in economics to create something new: it is predictive, but based on after the fact analysis.

We need to explore bartering and microenterprises.

P-. need to understand how banks work. With money deposited loans can be

made. There is a leverage effect which most women don't understand. There is a Community Connection Bank Fund in Vermont which gives loans on a different basis which takes community value into account.

Joan De New mentioned the international Ecumenical Cooperative Development Society which has been running successfully for 21 years as an alternative bank for the poorest of the poor. She is willing to send information about it to anyone interested. One project was a loan to a Women's Bank in Zimbabwe. There is a possibility that Women's Credit Unions may be formed. Devorah said the single most difficult job banks have is to make enough loans. Distribution of money is the key to banking.

Morgana reported on the Salon Series where 5,000 women invested \$5 a week, which came to a total of \$1.3 million in a year. There is a risk factor, but the risk is worth it.

We need a paradigm leap of consciousness. There are possibilities to do virtual banking by computer.

Reference was made to the Council for Economic Priorities in New York, which publishes a number of titles including, *Shopping for a Better World*. They have developed a system for evaluating priorities, and stress consumer power.

Devorah defines voice as walking the talk.

Do women need to work exclusively? No. Devorah said that many men have helped the Women's Economic Circle in a number of different ways. What we need is support of women's energy, or the cooperative rather than the competitive approach.

We were reminded of "the other PMS" (Power, Money, Status). Women earn 59 cents for every dollar earned by men. Women have to do it themselves if they want to become economic equals.

Someone suggested serving on boards of governors, but it was pointed out that this does not challenge the system. Some people have formed Shadow Boards.

We need to examine our personal histories of abundance through storytelling. This takes time, but it is very rewarding. This is what the Circle has done.

Another resource is a series of 10 videos from PBS by Hazel Henderson of Florida on recasting the economy *New Paradigms In Business*. Marilyn Waring of New Zealand has written a book *If Women Counted* (in the GNP and GDP).

We need to take into account not only the GDP, but also the GD Waste Product. Mentoring could be defined as "generous listening."

We need a knowledge base. Things must be talked about in a new way. Economics is women's next spiritual frontier.

"Home" economics is not enough for our time.

Joan De New interrupted to share the story of Adelaide Hoodless of Hamilton, Canada, who was the founder of the Women's Institutes, now the Associated Country Women of the World. It was through her efforts that Home Economics was introduced as a part of the regular school curriculum in Canada. She taught the first classes at the Y, wrote the first teachers' text book, taught the first student teachers, and raised funding for the first university courses. Her reasons for doing so were to ensure that women's work received recognition, and that women were trained. (One of her children died as a result of drinking contaminated milk delivered on an unrefrigerated wagon.) We need more pioneers like her to tackle the issues of our times.

Economics is about relationships. Supply and Demand is an abstraction. It pushes people away, and doesn't invite them in. It takes decision-making into a totally mechanical mode.

Adam Smith was influential in developing economic laws comparable to Newton's laws of physics. In fairness it should be mentioned that he was a moral philosopher, and that the people had been dominated by the philosophy of the divine right of kings. Shifting to a more mechanical view appeared to be fairer. The difficulty is that economic transactions are not "clean."

At the Women's Conference In Beijing, there was concern about restructuring economics. They talked about "confluence" and keeping money within a bioregion.

Some people felt strongly that we should not push the male-female dichotomy. It might be more productive to talk about a cooperative mode rather than a competitive mode. The object is transforming the economy, not merely making the economy better for women. We need to be in partnership with men.

Nellie reminded us that women are 52% of the population, and we have the power to change what we want to. Two thirds of the working women in the US are supporting families.

Joan De New indicated that she had an important article by a leading social policy researcher in Canada, Dr. Ramesh Mishra, who believes that unless action is taken at the international level, social services at the local level will continue to be reduced. He looks to women's groups, peace groups, and

- environmental groups working together as having the power to confront multinationals who are responsible only to themselves and ignore social responsibility. She will send it on request.

Information was also provided on an Open Space event being held simultaneously in Kingston (Eleanor Belfry-Lyttle), Philadelphia (Ralph Copleman) and Tampa (Olivia Power) called Totally Fulfilling Business: Pursuing the Triple Bottom Line, January 9-12, 1996. The Triple bottom line is a way of thinking of business practice in an increasingly interdependent world. The suggestion is that business might hold itself accountable in profit, environmental sustainability and social concern.

We need power with, for and to do) not over.

How can we keep this conversation going? Devorah shared where the declaration for the Women's Economic Conversation came from. She spoke about a Women's Group where women speak the commitment "I am the source of life showing up as bliss."¹¹ After ten years membership in the Bliss Group, Devorah's commitment to have more women find their economic voice and impart the global economic conversation grew. Devorah and Nellie joined with a women's circle which has been meeting for over two years and generated this declaration for the Women's Economic Conversation; *We are a community committed to economic transformation through increasing the participation of women in the global economic conversation. Our purpose is to empower women from all walks of life to cause a shift in the existing economic paradigm from scarcity and conflict to relationship and abundance.*

Sharing stories is imperative in this process. Community can be defined as people who know each other's stories. In the *spirit of building community*~ Devorah requests that women forward their stories to her. She is also requesting that those who are interested in redistributing these stories to build a virtual community around the women's economic conversation stay in the conversation by being in touch with her 212-877-2129. You don't need hi-tech skills for this is a passion and a willingness to share responsibility for intentionally enlarging the network of women who actively participate in this conversation. Both she and Nellie Stone are resources for people who are interested in sourcing the conversation in their communities.

The women who participated in this discussion used Open Space at ACINOS to

share their views and were empowered to continue the conversation with their own circles of friends. They will be enabled to continue contact with one another by using the OSONOS report.