

# CONSENSUS ASSOCIATES

Beyond Conflict To Consensus

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January 13, 2007

Consensus Institute Workshop Participants:

Attached is the Report and Learning Manual for the “Beyond Conflict to Consensus” workshop you attended November 28-30, 2006. I encourage you to take the time to read through this. It includes the work you did as well as the process you experienced. You will find it will help you to recall immediately the experience you had. I promise it will not take long to read, and it will be helpful to you.

This report is written in the order of events, as they occurred. The report is a compilation of collective statements developed from the flip chart notes you developed during the workshop.

Consensus seeking and community building insights are inserted into the report at the time they were presented. The process is defined as the report progresses. Reading this report will allow you to re-experience the session, and to recall the beliefs, the process and the art for seeking consensus.

In reading this report, remember that these are real words, expressed and recorded by real people. This is not a professional report that replaces the personal statement with technical jargon. Very little filler information has been added to the individual statements. Each statement in this report is intentional. All the words have meanings, both individually and collectively. Read it closely, read it well. This report is significant.

The questions that served to create the information are stated at the beginning of each task. These can be used as a model for additional sessions. The process for developing collective statements is in the APPENDIX.

I hope you enjoyed the session and learned as much as I did. While the workshop was intended as training, you developed some good information, purposes and strategies related to collaboration. Using what you learned, you can make those purposes, best outcomes, happen. Read the report, then use what you learned and cause those best outcomes you described.

Sincerely,

Bob Chadwick

**CONSENSUS ASSOCIATES**

**Beyond Conflict To Consensus**

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**Terrebonne, OR 97760**

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**THE CONSENSUS INSTITUTE**

**BEYOND CONFLICT TO CONSENSUS WORKSHOP**

**THE BASIC PROCESS**

*Confronting Conflicts, Fostering Collaboration,  
Building Consensus and Community*

**REPORT AND LEARNING MANUAL**

**Sponsored by:**

The National Riparian Service Team, the  
Forest Service National Partnership Office, and  
the Crook County Natural Resource Planning Committee

November 28-30, 2006

Prineville, OR

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**THE CONSENSUS INSTITUTE**  
**BEYOND CONFLICT TO CONSENSUS WORKSHOP**  
**THE BASIC PROCESS**  
**REPORT AND LEARNING MANUAL**  
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**THE CONSENSUS INSTITUTE**  
**BEYOND CONFLICT TO CONSENSUS WORKSHOP**  
**THE BASIC PROCESS**  
**WORKSHOP REPORT AND LEARNING MANUAL**

This report is written in the order of events, as they occurred. The report is a compilation of collective statements developed from the flip chart notes taken during the workshop.

It must be emphasized that these are collective statements and not consensus statements. They represent the views of all the participants, but not all participants would agree with all the assertions in the statements. These can be, and many will be, developed into consensus statements.

The process is defined as the report progresses. Consensus seeking and community building insights are inserted into the report at the time they were presented. Reading this report will allow the participant to re-experience the session, and to recall the beliefs, the process and the art for seeking consensus.

In reading this report, remember that these are real words, expressed and recorded by real people. This is not a professional report that replaces the personal statement with technical jargon. Very little filler information has been added to the individual statements.

Each statement in this report is intentional. All the words have meanings, both individually and collectively. Read it closely, read it well. This report is significant.

The questions that served to create the information are stated at the beginning of each task. These can be used as a model for additional sessions.

The process for developing collective statements is in the APPENDIX.

## **MODULE 1. PROCESS INTRODUCTION**

An introduction to a basic process, the basic beliefs that motivate that process, and some of the art. This includes: introduction to the circle, a process for life-long learning, the worst and best outcomes, and an exploration of conflict. The participant will experience the application of the process on conflict, while learning how to develop a shared information base for wise decisions.

The participant will explore and experience the role of the facilitator and recorder in consensus building and in empowering others.

The participant will be introduced to the application of the process with value laden concepts like trust, openness and honesty, and leadership. The participant will learn how the exploration of these concepts can develop the necessary social agreements for consensus seeking.

Participants will leave with the ability to use the process on simple and everyday conflict issues. This basic introduction will be applicable to all the modules that follow.

The process experienced in this module is described in detail in the Introductory Learning Manual. Many of the basic beliefs, behaviors, strategies and actions are described in that manual.

**\* THE CIRCLE**

**IF YOU:**

**LISTEN WITH RESPECT...**

**UNDERSTANDING,**

**TRUST,**

**LEARNING,**

**A NEW TRUTH,**

**GROWING,**

**RESOLVING**

**ADAPTING**

**WILL RESULT.**

## **\* GROUNDING AND GREETING**

The session began, as it will each day, with a grounding. This activity is done to establish relationships, to gain initial information for the facilitator.

If the group is large, small groups are formed to do the grounding. The larger group is divided into smaller groups. The participants "count off". Since people tend to cluster together in like groups, or comfortable groups, this activity will separate them into "unlike" groupings. This is done purposefully to create new relationships.

The participants in the groups then experienced grounding and the greeting circle. This was followed by the closure on "feeling and learning".

## **\* INSIGHT ON GROUNDING**

### **The Questions:**

- \* **"Introduce Yourself And Your Relationship To Conflict."**
- \* **"What Are Your Expectations Of This Workshop?"**
- \* **"Tell Us How You Feel About Being Here"**

This is a simple grounding task that does the following:

- \*Establishes a model for listening with respect, a knowing that each person will be heard.
- \*Establishes a verbal territory for each participant, a sense of potential equity..
- \*Requires access to both the left and the right brain, engaging the "whole brain."
- \*Allows apprehensions and hopes for the meeting to be expressed.
- \*Allows participants to express hidden agendas (like leaving early, a flat tire, a sickness, etc.)
- \*Brings people into the "here and now."
- \*Provides initial information to the facilitator.

Grounding is an important activity to start any meeting with. We all come to meetings with some measure of apprehension or uncertainty about what will happen. Grounding allows this apprehension to be stated.

### **\* INSIGHT ON GROUNDING (Cont.)**

This activity introduces the circle and the notion of listening with respect to each other. It is important that the facilitator listen fully to each person so they may experience being listened to. Once listening with respect has been established in the room, it becomes a model thereafter.

Using the circle allows each person to occupy the room with the sound of their voice, establishing verbal territory. Once a person's voice is in a room, it becomes easier to speak, especially if they are listened to. The sound of an unchallenged voice is a rare event for people, and this helps to allay the fears of those who are apprehensive.

We also come to meetings with recent past events (like a flat tire) or time concerns (like another meeting that will occur later) on our minds. If stated, these can be responded to, or may just become less important in the telling.

When you introduced yourself to another person, you accessed the left brain – the file cabinet for your knowledge. You took information from the past and used it for the present or the future. Thinking brings you out of the present into the past or the future.

As an example, think of the last time your boss asked you into the office. You probably wondered, "What did I do?", and began to think in the past about what you could possibly have done to cause this request. Or, you may know what he or she wants and you begin to create a scenario in your mind about how you are going to deal with this situation.

On the other hand, when you talked about how you felt, you accessed your right brain – the intuitive sensor, which reports on the here and now. This moment of here and now is important to consensus because it allows you to tap your creativity – your wisdom.

Feeling brings us an awareness of how we are now, internally, with our emotions. Sensing makes us aware of what is going on externally. Each brings us in the here and now. Each "grounds" the person.

Thinking = Past or future.

Feeling = Present, here and now, internally.

Sensing = Present, here and now, externally.

**THINKING/FEELING/SENSING ARE ALL ATTRIBUTES THAT YOU WILL USE IN SEEKING CONSENSUS.**

## **\* THE GREETING CIRCLE**

**The facilitator is instructed to move inside the circle and greet the person to their left; then continue inside the circle, greeting each person in turn. Those who have been greeted follow the person who greeted them inside the circle. When the facilitator returns to his or her original location, those inside the circle will continue to greet them, a second time. This time, the person inside the circle is the greeter, not the greeted. This balances the circle.**

No ritual is older, and none more anxiety ridden, than that of greeting each other. The natural tendency of individuals in groups, is to seek out those who they are comfortable with, those who are like them. This is "group think" behavior, that limits the information base of the individuals.

The greeting circle establishes the opportunity for all participants to meet each other, friends and strangers.

It allows the anxiety and apprehension of the individuals to be confronted, encountered. It releases energy into the room, in the sound of high voices, laughter, slaps on the back, hugs.

It allows people to meet the person, in place of the role, or stereotype. As a result, it reduces the intimidation that people tend to perceive with each other.

It opens up communication, allowing each person to seek a common interest or topic. It provides a basis for knowing people. It establishes a sense of community.

By being both a "greeter" and a "greeted person", the concept of balance is introduced. This causes the individuals to go beyond the ritualistic first greeting, to finding a more real and common interest.

It is uncomfortable, apprehensive, uncertain and sometimes feels "fake". Yet, it is a necessary activity if the group is to open communications.

The activity has meaning only if the two questions are asked and answered after the greeting. These two questions allow the individuals to be grounded again, and to learn from the experience.

## **\* AN ADAPTIVE LEARNING PROCESS**

**\*What Is the Situation or the Experience?**

**\*How Do You Feel about It?**

**\*What Did You Learn from it That Will Make You Successful?**

These questions allow individuals to process any experience, to make sense out of any experience, to integrate the experience into their being.

The question "how do you feel" allows the person to react out of the situation with their emotional content. This allows expressions of anger, apprehension, doubt, as well as acceptance, excitement, support.

This reactive, or emotional material, must be expressed first to allow learning to take place. Otherwise, the experience is left external to the person. It grounds the person in the moment, allows people to be real. It is OK to be angry, or excited.

The next question, "what did you learn" allows the person to be pro-active, to use the intellect to make sense of the experience. The question can be linked to the situation:

What did you learn that will help you solve the problem?

What did you learn that will help you successfully perform the mission?

What did you learn that will create a sense of community?

This allows the person to relate the experience to the situation at hand. It integrates the experience into the knowledge base, internal to the person.

## **EXPLORING THE ROLE OF THE RECORDER AND FACILITATOR**

The participants were distributed into four small groups, each with the task of exploring the role of the recorder and the facilitator. The participants are distributed from "Group-Think" to "Community Think" by numbering off to four. This is just one way of creating diverse groups.

A member of the small group acts as facilitator and another as a recorder. **The facilitator is instructed to ask the question and see that each person has the opportunity to respond in turn. The recorder is instructed to record whatever is said.** This minimum instruction allows the group to establish the role of both these positions.

This activity distributes the participants into new relationships. It allows the group to focus on a common task and introduces them to facilitating and recording. They are behaving and experiencing these roles while they are exploring them.

This is a useful task to use with a group in conflict that has spent little time problem solving together. It allows the individuals to develop skills and relationships that will be helpful later. These skills are put to use in the following tasks.

Note that the adjective "successful" precedes facilitator. This is purposeful. In framing questions, words that describe the best possible conditions are used by the facilitator. This focuses the individual and the group on "excellent" behaviors, rather than average ones.

### **The Questions:**

**\*What Is the Role of a Successful Recorder in Building Consensus?**

**\*What Is the Role of a Successful Facilitator in Building Consensus?**

## THE ROLE OF THE SUCCESSFUL RECORDER

**I think a successful recorder has a constructive role, creating a dialogue, slowing down the group and making sure it is correctly written, so there is a degree of negotiation and concession, so it is easy for everyone to understand easily and remember.**

**The role of a successful recorder is to listen respectfully and accurately record what is said.** The successful recorder should listen closely and not be afraid to slow the person down when needed. The act of accurate recording builds trust that someone is listening to e. Make sure everyone is included.

**A successful recorder will make sure that the person has a chance to talk through what they want to say.** The recorder should feel comfortable enough to interject whatever they are trying to capture.

**The successful recorder job is to write down word for word what was said and not summarize.** I think the recorder needs to follow a verbatim format. When the recorder writes verbatim, then he/she is perceived as neutral because he/she is not adding their twist in the summary and has accurate quotes by each person.

**Whatever is written down is written verbatim to capture every word as it is spoken.** They can write down everything. If you are talking about agreements, record the entirety; record verbatim. A successful recorder should be able to take down all of the information and capture the questions.

**A successful recorder writes down exactly what the person says which reduces or eliminates misinterpretation.** The recorder needs to write everything down and not worry a lot about spelling. The recorder writes everything down because you have to come back to it. If it is not written down, it did not happen.

**There is a fine line of knowing when to quote and when to paraphrase.** I think that a successful recorder needs to record the key points because otherwise you are talking about transcription. You may have to paraphrase. To capture not only what was said but also what is meant. If only 7% of communication is verbal, find a way to capture the rest of it on the board. Check for understanding.

**I would think the successful recorder would not want to write down everything said.** The recorder is the note taker and if they are not going to write down the information word for word, then they should check with the person to see if that is what they mean. If you are paraphrasing make sure you are capturing the person's intent by asking "is that what you meant?" The idea is more important than the actual words.

## THE ROLE OF THE SUCCESSFUL RECORDER (cont.)

**The successful recorder makes sure that everyone ideas are recorded equally so that no ones opinions or ideas are invalidated.** Group the ideas together; and ask the person if that is the idea they are presenting. Be sure that they have recorded it correctly, clarifying that the answer has been recorded accurately. To review what the person said if there is time and it is appropriate.

**The role of the successful recorder is to ensure everyone is heard accurately.** The recorder makes sure you are using word for word and to explain that using word for word is okay. I agree with Martina, everyone needs to be heard and paraphrased accurately.

**The successful recorder should be able to critique the agreement or disagreement but they must be objective ~ not leading.** The recorder must be an objective scribe and represent versus interpret. The recorder needs to be neutral.

**The recorder should write clearly and large enough so that everyone can see, write a different color between the comments is visually it is clear where one person statement begins and another ends.** The successful recorder will use large enough print for everyone to see it. It needs to be readable. All responses should be numbered so you can see where one starts and another one ends. Use colors.

**The successful recorder creates the group memory.** They must be able to reconstruct where we were in the process. It a visual record accessible to everyone. It becomes the group memory and is a reflection of what everyone says. Make sure everyone gets a copy of the record.

**The recorder and facilitator need to be on the same page before the meeting.** There needs to be communication to free the facilitator to be able to play the role of facilitator.

## THE ROLE OF THE SUCCESSFUL FACILITATOR

**A successful facilitator should be tasked to set up and maintain an effective communication environment i.e. the circle ~ and clearly explain the objectives of the meeting and the outcomes.** They should also fully understand the questions asked and put a question at the top of a list or a title so that we know what the answers refer to. If a decision is to be made make sure it is made and recorded.

**The facilitator is the leader in achieving the meeting objective by working with the group in a manner that respects all participants.** They will keep the group on task and make sure each person in the group has adequate time to express their views. The facilitator needs to state the objectives for the meeting, which requires being organized. It really keeps the group focused and working towards meeting objectives.

**The successful facilitator will work for the whole group ~ not just who writes the check.** They listen in order to be able to ask the right question to move the group forward. They are non-judgmental and do not criticize to maintain a positive morale. They will draw everyone into the process and understands the silence is not acceptance. They are to protect the participants and the process, and hold people accountable for following the rules.

**A successful facilitator helps to set the norm for the group process.** They create and hold the space. They keep the group on track and focused in a gentle way. A successful facilitator makes sure the setting is comfortable, guides the process and makes sure all participants are included throughout the process. Also, make everybody as comfortable as possible.

**They establish and maintain the learning environment.** A successful facilitator helps to set the norm for the group process in order to establish and maintain the learning environment. They ensure that everyone has an opportunity to speak. The facilitator ensures that everyone has a chance to share, and that diverse representation is established.

**The facilitator ensures that the goals and grounding established by the group are accomplished.** A successful facilitator keeps the group on track. They keep the discussion focused, orderly and change the order in which people speak. A facilitator encourages an environment of respect; keeps the group focused, knows when to redirect and listens.

**A successful facilitator solicits and enforces ground rules (i.e. respectful listening) and encourages active participation by all individuals.** They make sure everyone voice is heard equally. Honor should be given to those who do not want to speak. They will get everyone opinions.

## **THE ROLE OF THE SUCCESSFUL FACILITATOR (cont.)**

**The successful facilitator will ensure that everyone has an opportunity to speak.** The facilitator ensures that everyone has a chance to share and that diverse representation is established. They will ensure that everyone is heard respectfully and completely.

**A successful facilitator listens, thinks, seeks commonality first, then moves to let the group work out its conflict through respectful communications.** Okay, to ensure that everyone feels they had the opportunity to be heard and that the objectives of the meeting are achieved within the time limit given. I think the persons tone and body language should convey interest in the questions they are asking.

**The successful facilitator has the ability to listen respectfully.** They ensure the group is kept on task to move toward change while respecting the past. This helps to set the stage for expectations on how the group is going to interact and keep them on course. A phrase that I heard and liked about the complexity of the role is to be the guide on the side and not the sage on the stage, and in this role fosters potential equity in the group.

**The successful facilitator is basically someone who keeps the whole group on task and keeps focus on what the goal is.** They help the group efficiently meet its goals. I don't know, being prepared and guiding the process. I will stick with that! They facilitate the evaluation of the group process and summarize the outcome of the meeting.

**The role of a successful facilitator is to fulfill the expectation that the recorder writes legibly, therefore I don't have to do that. I expect the recorder to type up the notes.**

**I think you need to remain neutral and be the last one to speak.**

## HAS EVERYONE SPOKEN AT LEAST ONCE? AN INCLUSIVE QUESTION

In our culture we normally will continue with an activity when half, or slightly more of the group has completed the task. This is based on a competitive belief system. We believe in the “survival of the fittest,” or the “Law of the Jungle.” This means that those who are faster should not be held back by those who are slower. "A chain is only as strong as it's weakest link", I have been told. Get rid of the weak links.

Somehow, those who can't keep up must be punished for this behavior. So, we move ahead without them. Or we say, "lets move ahead, you slow ones can catch up later." Later never happens. This separates the group into the "fast learners" and the "slow learners."

There is a tendency to foster this difference between individuals and groups. As a result the slower individuals do not get represented in the group situation. They become sensitive to this discrimination. They will begin to feel more apprehensive and drop out, or will become resentful and prolong their slow behavior. Either way, their information and ideas are lost to the group.

We have preconceived notions about this belief in the “survival of the fittest.” It you are taller, faster, more beautiful, slender, outgoing, with the best grades, then it is assumed you are the top of the evolutionary heap. Not so, says Aesop, in his story of the “Tortoise and the Hare.” As fast as the Hare was, his arrogance got him, as he slept while the more persistent and humble turtle walked over the finish line.

The fact is, we don't know who the fittest will be. The tallest person may be the right one for the basketball team, but the shortest will be the best for travelling through space to the stars.

If we truly believed in the survival of the fittest, then why do are we drawn to the smallest kitten in the litter? Why do we have a small business loan program? Why did we save Chrysler during it's down times? Why not let the others win?

The fact is, there is another survival and evolutionary mechanism. It is called “Survival of all.” How can we make sure all of us make it? This is the basis for consensus building. It is also the inherent concept behind Democracy.

I have learned that we all need to participate if we are going to resolve the conflict and reach a consensus. This requires that we allow all members to complete a task before moving ahead, even if it appears to take more time.

## AN INCLUSIVE QUESTION (cont.)

In all tasks, especially those that require writing, or recording, I wait until each individual, or group has completed the assignment. This means that the fast writer has time to just sit and think while the others are completing the task. This is a good time, a balance for that person. Who knows what serendipitous material may enter her mind?

If a group finishes the task before the other groups, then they have time to dialogue informally. This is an uncertain moment at first. Who will speak? What will we talk about? Self consciousness dominates the moment. This is their dilemma to resolve, their opportunity to seize the moment. Often, these discussions are more productive towards resolution of the issue than the assigned tasks.

Before moving ahead, the facilitator asks the question: **Has everyone spoken at least once?** If the group facilitators signal they haven't, then the facilitator turns and walks away from the working groups. The message is clear... you are in charge. When the groups signal they have all spoken, then the facilitator moves the group to the next question of task.

We must be concerned with the survival of all, when a conflict affects all of us. This requires that we allow all to participate fully. The process must be inclusive, rather than exclusive. The process must allow for spare time to be experienced by some, just for balance, for serendipity.

When the process is inclusive, I have observed that the "slowness behavior" moves around among individuals. The person who finishes fast this time, is the last one the next time. The person who is slow now, is faster later. This allows people to express a broader set of behaviors, to have a broader range of experiences.

## **THE WORST AND BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF THE WORKSHOP**

The participants were provided the opportunity to express their worst and best outcomes for the Institute. The facilitator asked the two questions listed below separately. The participants recorded their answers on 3 x 5 cards while in the small groups. This brings silence to the room.

**The facilitator is asked to select another facilitator from the group, and then become the recorder.** This allows the position to move to other members of the group. This instruction is given in all the later activities.

The participants then expressed their answers individually to the small group. The individual statements were recorded on flip charts as they were expressed. The worst outcomes are all recorded first, then the best outcomes. This leaves the image of the best outcome in the participants minds.

This task allows each person to express his/her worst and best outcomes. It also allows silence, or quiet, to be present while writing. This allows each person to go internal, to relax, to become balanced.

The individual statements were developed into collective statements to represent the collective view of the entire group. These collective statements follow. These represent the collective vision or mission of the participants for the workshop. They are not consensus statements, but can be developed into such statements.

The process for developing collective statements is in the Appendix.

### **The Questions:**

**What Are the Worst Possible Outcomes of the Workshop?  
What Are the Best Possible Outcomes of the Workshop?**

## THE WORST POSSIBLE OUTCOME OF THE WORKSHOP

**I have learned nothing new and wasted public funds in coming here.** It will be a waste of time ~ mine and the agency. The worst possible outcome is that I won't learn anything different. I will have learned nothing! I don't learn anything I think has value to me. The group is unable to accomplish any or all of its stated objectives.

**I spend three days and not come away with tools or ideas that will help me understand conflict and build consensus.** I won't have learned anything I can use when I facilitate or deal with group conflict. I leave the session without learning new skills necessary to be more effective at solving conflicts within my community.

**A worst outcome is that I don't change as a result of it.** I won't use what I learned. I don't put into practice what I learned, and do not participate fully. I would allow myself to go back into old patterns of thinking and behavior that are less conscious. Learning skills that I am excited about and not having an opportunity to use them at work.

**The techniques I learn cannot be realistically applied in my work as a public affairs specialist.** They are not being adaptable enough to adopt these techniques into my interpersonal and community relationships.

**I may find other people unreceptive to the techniques that we have learned here.** Staff will be fearful I will do something to them with this new learning i.e. try to fix them. It does not help me work with others effectively and makes me less effective.

**I will make a mistake and others and I will think I am inadequate.** I forget things said at the meeting so my review of the notes is not adequate. Some of my co workers discover I am not that good at what I do.

**I created acrimony and became a source of conflict.** At the end of three days, violence erupts or continues. Someone will leave here with the feeling that they are angry, alienated or that they have not been heard.

**Something bad happens to my kids and I am not right there to help or protect them.** My need to be in Prineville for these three days will place undue strain on my sons and husband. My girls won't be picked up on time due to schedules not being communicated between work and home and there will be babysitting conflicts. I miss the District Managers going away lunch. I will miss Kathy cookie banana bread.

## **THE WORST POSSIBLE OUTCOME OF THE WORKSHOP (cont.)**

**I failed to address a personal or professional emergency.** My dog might destroy the hotel room. Damon will have a blow out and no one is there to help him. Eric doesn't do his homework completely or gets in trouble at school and I not right there to deal with it. I am exhausted with the home front, presents are not completed on time, and stuff at home won't get done.

**Driving home in the dark on the ice and being scared witless** I get in an accident commuting. I become ill or have a car accident going back and forth in the foul weather. I will have an accident driving back and forth. I might not be home until the weekend due to the weather. Roads will get worse. Or getting stuck in the snow and being named Stolpa?

**I am not prepared for next weeks teaching.** My substitute will not relate well to my students causing student behavior to deteriorate. My students are not receiving the support needed from their teacher who knows their needs. IEP paperwork is not ready for the December 1 Census. I miss the opportunity to catch up with ongoing projects and issues.

**Important regular work is somehow neglected and opportunity for advancement of the public higher priority interest is missed.** I forget follow up tasks associated with John Day/Snake FAC. I will be three days behind and I get further behind and overloaded. I will get behind in my work and not leave with useful tools. Not being able to get back to messages, problems at work. Something will happen at work and I will need to spend X days trying to fix and redo.

**It will take me three days to catch up with what I missed.** I will miss something at work that should have gotten done. I don't get the prep work done for a Monday meeting and as a result the meeting goes badly. I must work late on Friday or on the weekend to prepare for the Monday meeting. If I had to come up with any it would be that I not getting other work done.

**There will be unintended apathy to this wonderful opportunity that is near and dear to my heart. What if I cannot find the fire within?**

**The question is worded too strongly for me to be able to answer and be that bad and undoable.** But there may be opportunities lost including no exercise, behind in work, miss knitting tonight, accident driving home. I gain 5 pounds from the lunch meals. My butt will be sore

**Really there is no downside as I truly believe that this in the most important thing I can do with my time right now.**

## \* WORST/BEST/POSSIBILITY

**Worst Outcomes:** These are feared future outcomes, often based on past experience, with a presently experienced emotion and physical reaction. When people believe them, they affect their perceptions, beliefs, values and strategies. They tend to be self-fulfilling prophecies when strongly held.

**Best Outcomes:** These are hoped for future outcomes, sometimes not previously experienced, but intensely imagined, with a presently experienced emotion and physical response. When people believe them, they affect their perceptions, beliefs, values and strategies. They tend to be self-fulfilling prophecies when strongly held.

**Possibility Thinking:** An acknowledgment that both worst and best outcomes are present and inherent in each moment, up to, and often after the event. This balanced view allows the movement toward desired outcomes.

## \* WORST/BEST OUTCOMES

\* **What Are the Worst Possible Outcome of this Workshop?**

\* **What Are the Best Possible Outcome of this Workshop?**

In this task, we explore the fears and the hopes of the participants. It is more important to explore the worst fears before the best hopes. Fears are uppermost in the minds of those who are apprehensive, uncertain, unwilling.

It is normal and right to fear the worst outcome of any situation. As an example, think of a time when you were sleeping and the phone rang early in the morning. What did you think? How did you feel?

How about the time your child ran toward the road? How did you react? Did you yell to him and demand he stay away from the street? Even though there are no cars there, you experience the worst possible outcome -- **THE CHILD BEING HIT BY THE CAR!** Not only that, you feel the potential emotion of that moment just as if it happened.

In such a way, people fear the worst outcome of any situation and operate emotionally out of that fear just as if it were really happening. This is a major motivator for most conflict.

Once your fears have been adequately expressed, then your hopes seem more possible, easier to express and believe. This also leaves the images and words of the best hopes in the minds of all the participants. This is the image that will guide their thoughts and behaviors during the workshop.

All events/issues have a potential worst or best outcome. Either is possible. Typically, some of us choose to focus on either the worst or the best outcome (Pessimists and Optimists). When these views become pitted against each other, we tend to see the worst outcome or the best outcome as the exclusive possibility. This results in polarization of views.

The best outcome is often not experienced by people in conflict because they get focused on talking about the worst possible outcome. Rarely does anyone acknowledge their worst outcome as they can move to the best outcome.

The best outcome is just as possible. It is a way of expressing the potential in any event or issue. It is a goal, a direction, that all can agree to seek. It focuses on the positive efforts of people who are seeking the best. Consensus recognizes the possibility of the worst and the best outcome.

## **THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF THE WORKSHOP A SUMMARY**

A summary can be created for any collective statement. This is done by taking the first sentence in each paragraph, normally in CAPS, in **bold**, underlined, or otherwise highlighted. This first sentence normally summarizes the intent of the paragraph. It is sometimes necessary to include other statements if they represent a different perception than the first sentence. The summary provides a more focused view of the collective statement.

- **I have an epiphany, I learn something new and my imagination soars. I meet someone who becomes a friend and or mentor later. The group accomplishes its goals and objectives as far as a consensus.**
- **I learn tools which will make dealing with (not avoiding) conflict easier and less scary. I learn ways to apply these skills in a practical manner that leads to productive decision making.**
- **I learn new skills that I can take back and use at home and work that they help me be a better parent, coworker and leader. I am using what I learn to resolve conflict more effectively at work and at home using these skills.**
- **I gain insights that would help make peoples lives better. I am building new relationships. We work to incorporate the process into everyday operations.**
- **I become an artful facilitator and recorder to be more helpful with groups reaching consensus.**
- **There is reduced conflict in the community and enhanced trust in local government. We make better decisions ~ community based ~ and supported. My kids grow up in small but important ways; more independent, use their head, appreciate me, are more responsible.**
- **Through my involvement in this I am empowered to make a positive difference with conflict resolution and consensus building in my job and my personal life.**
- **We end world hunger, with good Mexican food.**

## **THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF THE WORKSHOP OUR WORKSHOP PURPOSE**

**I have an epiphany, I learn something new and my imagination soars.** I return to work energized and ready to apply new skills to meet challenges and improve communication. My recall and validation of this valuable process is refreshed. I rekindle the fire within and provide the tools and faith in the process which will enable me to make effective change within the NV department of Wildlife.

**I meet someone who becomes a friend and or mentor later.** I meet new people. I meet nice folks. I get a fresh perspective. I become more inspired and creative. I gain increased awareness of self and perception of others.

**The group accomplishes its goals and objectives as far as a consensus.** I am learning how to build a better consensus. I have a successful understanding of consensus building and the tools to carry it out successfully. Additional practice with these strategies will improve my ability to relate with my family, students and colleagues.

**I learn tools which will make dealing with (not avoiding) conflict easier and less scary.** That my skill set for facilitating conflict would be greatly improved. I learn many new things and acquire the skills needed. I gain new tools, relationships, more experience. That those who have fears or doubt related to cooperative or collaborative decision making processes will change their mind and believe it will do what it claims. I stop being concerned about my worst possible outcomes.

**I learn ways to apply these skills in a practical manner that leads to productive decision making.** I would get to use the skills learned to facilitate groups in conflict over natural resource issues in Nevada where ranchers are involved. I help Douglas County reach consensus in growth planning.

**I learn new skills that I can take back and use at home and work that they help me be a better parent, coworker and leader.** I learn something about myself and ways to change to make me a better mom, wife, boss, employee, person. I learn a lot to help me be a better person, mother, facilitator and partner.

**I am using what I learn to resolve conflict more effectively at work and at home using these skills.** I participate fully and come away with and will be able to apply new strategies and tools for facilitating conflict and consensus building at work and home.

## **THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF THE WORKSHOP (cont.)**

**I gain insights that would help make peoples lives better.** I better understand conflict and know it can lead to positive change. I get encouragement to slow down and deal with what is really important to any issue, people and their hearts. This allows me to be more effective at what I do. My capacity to more effectively support those I work with NOW. I gain increased satisfaction both job and personal.

**I am building new relationships.** I develop better relationships and outcomes for interactive processes. I have better relationships with coworkers, family and stakeholders in the forest. I make new connections, learn from the experiences of others in the group and have new tools to help address conflict personally and professionally.

**We work to incorporate the process into everyday operations.** I am taking the tools I have learned and am being able to apply them to travel management to make meetings with the public and working groups run more smoothly. I am able to apply lessons learned here to make projects reach consensus on my district with Forest Service folks.

**I become an artful facilitator and recorder to be more helpful with groups reaching consensus.** I truly understand how to apply this process; make the suit fit better. I learn tools for facilitation. I am being able to teach other people these skills. I will be more confident to use the consensus process and be able to teach it to others and change the world

**There is reduced conflict in the community and enhanced trust in local government.** The workshop and tools provides me the skills to address and solve community resource conflicts. There is improved leadership with other folks taking responsibility because of the improved leadership. There will be less time on the road later.

**We make better decisions ~ community based ~ and supported.** We build networks that serve fostering sustaining communities well. We are litigation free with healthy land and healthy communities. There is less litigation. As a result, we foster a more unified consensus training the Deschutes Basin.

**My kids grow up in small but important ways; more independent, use their head, appreciate me, are more responsible.** The best outcome would be all is well in the world with Damon, and I will learn to facilitate this process with students and adults.

**We end world hunger, with good Mexican food.**

## **EXPLORING CONFLICT AND UNRESOLVED CONFLICT**

This activity begins with a panel of 5 participants. Two spoke about the definition of conflict, while the other three focused on the evidence of conflict in their environment. The purpose of the panel is to create an arena of discussion.

The participants returned to their small groups, each exploring the concept of conflict. The panel members acted as facilitators. Half the groups explored the definition of conflict and how they felt about it, and the other half exploring the evidence that unresolved conflict exists in their environment.

Exploring the definition of conflict allows the group to deal with this more as an abstract concept, with less personal attachment. Exploring "unresolved conflict in your environment" allows the group to explore the specific reality of conflict in a more emotional context.

**The Questions: (The facilitator selects a new facilitator and becomes the recorder.)**

- \* **Define Conflict and How You Feel about It.**
- \* **What Is the Evidence of Unresolved Conflict in Your Environment? How Do You Feel about It?**

## THE DEFINITION OF CONFLICT

**Conflict is opposing viewpoints and one person or several people have an unwillingness to come to consensus.** It is opposing viewpoints. It is two opposite sides that are steadfast in their beliefs

**When there is conflict it is usually people or groups failing to understand the others concerns.** There are differences in understanding of perceived needs. When people perceive each others needs as being unable to be met without taking away from the other.

**Conflict is the refusal to view opposing opinions.** This happens in all human discourse. There is passion about an issue that clouds your ability to recognize someone else passion about the same issue.

**Conflict often results from and reflects different values.** When a person takes a position and tries to get another who has an opposing view to give up that view and agree with them.

**Conflict is a process of learning about different ideas and deciding whether to change or not.** It is a consensus precursor.

**I would define the state of conflict as people in fear who are thinking about the future. Ditto.**

## HOW WE FEEL ABOUT CONFLICT

**Conflict is necessary although I may not always like it.** I think usually things can be resolved. It is a love hate thing. Conflict makes me uncomfortable but I recognize its importance. It sucks But I recognize its importance.

**I feel like they need to talk about it. Ahhhhh! Let's resolve it through communication.**

**I feel fine about conflict.** I think it offers opportunities. I think I ready for change for the better if conflict occurs and I am grateful for the passion. Conflict is scary and exciting because it is a window of opportunity for change. Ultimately leads to change in the status quo. It is absolutely necessary!

## CONFLICT IS MORE THAN DIFFERENCE

### A VISUAL EXPERIENCE

Most people initially define conflict as a difference of opinion, values, or beliefs. Or, they may state it is a disagreement between two or more people.

*“Conflict is a difference of opinion between two or more people.”*

I want them to understand that conflict is more than that, that something is added to that disagreement or difference to cause the conflict. To do this I use a visual activity that physically involves some members of the group, and mentally and emotionally involves all the group.

I ask two members of the group to help me do this, normally two males, although I have used female and male pairs. I have them join me in the center of the group. The others move their chairs so they can see this activity.

**A Demonstration of Difference or Disagreement:** I ask Joe and Jon to join me in the center of the group, facing each other. I have Joe tell Jim he wants to walk in the direction he is facing, and Jim to do the same.

Joe: *“I want to go that way (pointing ahead).”*

Jim: *“I want to go that way (pointing ahead and in the opposite direction).”*

They each walk in the direction indicated and turn facing each other again. **I point out to the group that this is difference, or disagreement.** They each want to do something different than the other. But, this is not conflict. In the room, difference in dress, in colors, in hairstyle, height, age, shoe type are all evident, yet there is no apparent conflict because of it. Each person has made an individual choice, and no-one is threatened by it. Difference, by itself, is not conflict.

**An Added Ingredient... Power:** I have the two men repeat their stats, but this time, Joe tells Jim that he wants him to go his way:

Joe: *“I want to go this way (pointing ahead).”*

Jim: *‘I want to go this other way (pointing ahead and in the opposite direction).’*

Joe: *“No, I want you to go this way with me.”*

Jim: *“I want to go this way, not your way (starting to walk ahead).”*

Joe: *‘Well, I want you to go my way (standing in front of Jim and blocking him).’*

Jim: *“You can’t tell me what to do, I want to go this way (trying to step around Joe).”*

Joe: *‘I want you to go this way (steps in front of Jim and pushes him back with his hands on Jims’ shoulders).’*

Jim: *“(Pushing back on Joes’ shoulders) I want to go my way, not yours.”*

Both men are now pushing against each other, straining to gain ground. I have them.. **Freeze!** They stop shoving each other, but lean heavily on each other, straining their muscles, at an impasse.

*“What has happened to their energy?”* I ask rhetorically. *“How much of this is available for the community focus? Conflict is difference, or disagreement, with power attached to it,”* I say, *“and it ties up your energy. The focus is now not on the work you will do, but on who will win.”*

**An Inter-personal Conflict Becomes an Inter-group Conflict:** These two have created an inter-personal conflict between them over which direction to go, over who should decide. Their struggle, and the loss of energy, is plain to see by everyone in the organization or community. This struggle concerns those who watch it, in the workshop, and in real life situations.

Jim looks back over his shoulder and cries for help. (With a suggestion from me.)

Jim: *“Sandy, come help me.’ (Sandy does this and pushes against Joe.)*

Joe responds in kind, looking over his shoulder:

Joe: *“Bill, come help me.” (Bill does this, pushing against Jim.)*

These people respond, pushing in the direction of their friend. As the two continue to ask for help, others join in the pushing and shoving, until there are two groups of pushing, struggling individuals. There is much fun and laughter in doing this.

Then I ask them all to... **Freeze!**

*“What has happened to all the energy of these people?” I ask rhetorically. Why did they join this conflict? How much of their energy is now available for their work?”*

People joined this fray out of loyalty to their friends. They may not even know what the argument is about. But they have chosen a side now, and in so doing have created an inter-group conflict. This refocuses the energy of the group on the conflict, instead of work.

The entire group stands and honors those who participated in this learning exercise. They have helped them see that conflict is more than difference, it includes power. When one person decides that the other must do what he wants, then energy must be exerted to make that happen. If the other resists, then there is conflict. This is inter-personal at this stage. But, if others are asked to join, and they do so out of loyalty, then an inter-group conflict results. It takes power to make that happen.

The groups now read off their evidence of unresolved conflict in their environment. This provides the a description of the reality of unresolved conflict in their environment.

## **THE EVIDENCE OF UNRESOLVED CONFLICT IN OUR ENVIRONMENT**

**Poor communication takes lots of energy away from doing what is important for our team.** There is distance and space. There is corporate bullying, power moves, hoarding, custom and culture equals grief. We see a lack of accomplishments of tasks, and we are not moving forward. There is an entrenching of position until we can move.

**The same issues just keep resurfacing and it keeps us from moving forward.** There is a lot of fear in the community and this continues at meeting after meeting. Having the school board continually asking for public input with no process for making a decision creates a never ending story.

**There is a lack of enforceable city or county ordinances to protect wetland and riparian resources.** The conflict is the city is expanding and we will be annexing our little farm into the city. In order to maintain our lifestyle we have to move. The conflict is preventing us from making a concise decision on what to do and feeling good about it.

**Polarization leads to an us versus them mentality which leads to further conflict.** Unresolved conflict gives citizens a sense that there is a lack of credibility and a disbelief in leadership in our country and local community which leads to a lack of interest in participation in activities like voting and citizen participation.

**There is evidence in the work environment.** Evidence of unresolved conflict most concerning is fractured teams. Morale is pretty low and there are disgruntled employees. There is low morale and back biting which leads to a lack of productivity. But they don't lack on the whining. They are good at that.

**I think the evidence of unresolved conflict at work for me is the people at work feel they are going to lose their jobs due to down sizing.** That they could be replaced by enterprise teams. I was not involved in this because it happened before I got there, yet it affects their day to day work and tension with the supervisor. There is an atmosphere of walking on eggshells and favoritism. The evidence of unresolved conflict is tension and hurt feelings and jealousy.

*Words used to describe conflict in the environment would include tension, stress, withdrawal, passive aggressive behavior and strained working relationships.* It would include red rover, red rover coalition building. It includes scapegoating with people blaming people. Physical ailments such as stomach ache, headache, and whiskey shots all lead to physical outcomes.

**We have to spend money and time to develop a feel good project that may not address the issue or problem.**

## **HOW WE FEEL ABOUT UNRESOLVED CONFLICT IN OUR ENVIRONMENT**

**It feels bad that it is out there and is affecting how we operate.** I feel discouraged. It draining and it stifles communication. There is a lot of anger and uncertainty. I feel like it is a waste of time and energy. Rather than discuss it among themselves, they should get it out on the table.

**People are not moving to resolution or solution which is very frustrating.** It creates feelings of disrespect, resentment and despair. Unresolved conflict also fosters prejudice and indecisiveness which is like an infectious disease that is spread by uneducated social relationships. It is a heavy weight, and I feel sad and angry.

**I feel like I am trying to soothe both sides.** Biologists and ranchers want different things. I am the one person in the agency that ranchers can come to and be a sounding point. The land that the ranchers have is the best habitat and they care greatly for the land just as deeply as the biologists ~ if not deeper.

**I feel frustrated, angry, disappointed and inadequate ~ mainly inadequate because I can fix it.** There is definitely an opinion that upper management could care less. People talk in the hall about feelings of insecurity. My feeling about unresolved conflict is sad and a question that comes to my mind is how unnecessary.

**I feel grief!** There is avoidance, apathy, anger, sabotage behavior, unproductive sarcasm, lack camaraderie and general distrust. The assumption of negative intent is making the worst possible outcomes happen.

**I feel like we use short term band aid solutions.** It seems like we accomplish something now but are not addressing the root cause of the problem. I always feel anxious that people won't want to address the conflict. I feel anxious about unresolved conflict. It like a giant energy / time pit that I get sucked into.

**I tend to be a problem solver, so I always feel I have to help them solve it.** I feel very uncomfortable and upset with myself when I let things get out of control and conflict develops in the first place. I get very parental (demanding) rather than letting the process flow. The longer it goes unresolved, the worse I feel. I don't feel good about it.

**Some days I feel sad but mostly I feel concerned.** How do I rally and what can I do to rally? Unresolved conflict snowballs within me until I am overwhelmed.

**I have feelings of opportunity. I feel challenged.** I think the band aide we put on the problem will explode at the next meeting. That is when change is going to occur.

## **THE WORST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF CONFRONTING/NOT CONFRONTING UNRESOLVED CONFLICT**

The small groups explored the worst possible outcomes of confronting and not confronting unresolved conflict. Those who tend to confront conflict approach it with the "FIGHT" response. Their response is based on a worst fear... that they will lose. The result is that they respond with exaggerated behaviors. Their response will be loud, conspicuous, and appear aggressive.

Those who avoid conflict use the "FLIGHT" response. Their worst fear is that confronting the conflict could endanger their life. They fear violence and vindictiveness.

Since each group has a different worst outcome focus, their communication is often incompatible and discordant. The aggressor will overstate the problem, the avoider will understate the response.

These worst outcomes affect the beliefs, strategies and behaviors of the groups. They affect relationships so that information exchange is severely hindered. Openness and honesty are inconceivable. Hidden agendas are paramount. This actually may foster the worst outcomes of an issue.

**Exploring the worst possible outcomes of confronting and not confronting unresolved conflict helps the participants to recognize that worst outcomes exist under either scenario, that the outcomes are essentially similar.**

These worst outcomes are possible. They are probably present, at some level, in the environment. They create the reactive force that develops the actions, strategies and behaviors of the participants.

Worst outcomes often describe the existing situation from the parties viewpoints. It indicates that they have created the self-fulfilling prophecies for what they want to avoid.

**The questions: (The facilitator selects a new facilitator and becomes the recorder.)**

- \* **What Are the Worst Possible Outcomes of Confronting Unresolved Conflict in Your Environment?**
- \* **What Are the Worst Possible Outcomes of Not Confronting Unresolved Conflict in Your Environment?**

## **THE WORST POSSIBLE OUTCOME OF CONFRONTING CONFLICT IN THE ENVIRONMENT**

**There is denial that there is a problem and an unwillingness to participate in the solution or seeing the possibility of solutions.** That nothing will be resolved. It is plain and simple: the conflicts remain unsolved. No decisions will be made and we will be right back to square one again. There will be no resolution.

**By confronting the conflict the conflict gets larger and more complex and ultimately we fail to resolve the conflict.** People will view me as confrontational and that I am always looking for a fight which will then further seclude me from everyone else. There are continued accusations of being a proponent of a slugfest.

**The first thing that comes to mind is broken relationships.** If the other party is unwilling to resolve the conflict there could be further entrenchment and undermining. Relationships will be destroyed. It will create separateness with splinters off into more groups. It will create an increase in disrespect towards citizens and leadership, and that creates a sense of hopelessness.

**There will be physical violence.** Disrespect leads to more violence. There will be more hatred and multi-generational dysfunctionality. People flee and won't engage in addressing the conflict. There will be retaliation, sabotage, pain and death. There will be an escalation of the problem.

**Confronting the conflict makes people sick.**

## **THE WORST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF NOT CONFRONTING CONFLICT IN YOUR ENVIRONMENT?**

**Nothing changes and we never get to move on to new conflicts and resolve them.**

There will be increasing polarization and the status quo deteriorates. Something like the distrust of establishment. You live in the same icky place. You don't change and nobody likes you and nobody likes to be with you.

**No progress is made, institutions become irrelevant and we never reach our potential.** There will be NO impact ~ we simply exist. There will be an inability to change and grow. There is failure by contributing to the problem (if not part of solution, then you are part of the problem.)

**The conflicts increase in number and intensity.** The conflict continues to grow and gather steam. There will be death and destruction and people kill each other. There will be violence of some sort. There will be destruction of careers or at the very least increased absenteeism and illness.

**There will be collective apathy with a loss of community and a sense of belonging.** Community energy is focused on worst case outcomes.

**People are so caught up in the conflict they forget the core purpose.** Relationships are irreversibly damaged. There is economy and ecology ruin, and social, economic and ecological destruction. We will see a complete collapse of the social and biological community.

**The land and the people take it in the shorts.** We have to live in the community where nothing is beautiful and that includes land and people. We don't even realize that worst possible outcome is environmental, ecological and social destruction. We are in our own little world. The challenge is to look at the cake from all sides.

**The whiskey shots are good, but not the next morning.**

## **\* A RELATIONSHIP PROCESS**

Of all the influences we have in our life, relationships with others are the most important. We cannot communicate without relationships, we cannot have conflicts without relationships, we cannot have power without relationships.

During the 60's and 70's many studies were done with groups, trying to understand the way in which groups are formed. A series of developmental stages were identified that apply equally well to one-on-one relationships. These have been described in many ways, using different terms, but I have found the following description the easiest to remember because it rhymes.

Remember, though, that this is a road map. It appears linear because it is described in stages, each following the other. In actual experience, we go about this in very different ways. Some stages are fast, others slow, some stages may be left out, some stages may be repeated. Be aware of this as you explain it to others.

### **STAGE 1. FORMING:**

We first meet as strangers, seeking something that will bind us. Our initial conversation is a search... where do you live, who do you know, what do you do? Each of these seeks some commonality that we can talk about, begin to develop a relationship around.

This is the time when similarities are important. We like to be with people who are the same as us. This is the most non-threatening stage of a relationship. We develop a relationship that is safe.

There are some who seek difference, who purposefully seek out that which is different than them. Those they find are also seeking difference. This is their similarity as a basis for the relationship.

### **STAGE 2. STORMING:**

This stage begins when we are confronted with our differences. That which brought us together is suddenly threatened. Because we are curious creatures, we are normally unwilling to be satisfied with the boredom of sameness. We begin to test the boundaries of our relationship. We begin to mold the other person to meet our needs. This is a movement to the use of power in the relationship.

We are all different in some way, from each other. We differ in our ages, our cultures, our experiences when we grew up. In the forming stage we may agree on the value of family traditions at Holiday times. We like having the tree with Christmas bulbs and

tinsel. This is our similarity. But, when it comes time to share Christmas together, we find that there are differences in approach we had not discussed before.

So, I may want to buy a white fir for Christmas, because this is the way it has always been in my family. But, my wife wants a cedar tree, because this is the way it has always been in her family. I want my soft light bulbs that I have used for years, she wants her bulbs, the kind that blink on and off all the time. They make me nervous after being in the room for a while.

I like to just toss the package of tinsel at the tree and watch it naturally arrange itself as it floats to the ground. Pat likes to place each individual strand on the individual branchlets of the tree. Who decides?

Well, in my culture, the English, the male is the final authority. I will get to decide. I expect my wife to "conform," to "comply." This is the approach I was taught to use in my culture. I learned to conform to authority, to what was expected. In fact, my generation was known as the "age of conformity." We wore the same clothes, worked an 8-5 shift, had "standard" job descriptions, worked to "keep up with the Joneses."

My wife, however, is younger, a feminist, coming from the age of rebellion, the 60's. She is also American Indian, where there is a matriarchy, and decisions such as this are left up to the woman. She decides she will not conform, she has every right to have a say in this issue.

Now we are entering the stage of storming. We have different approaches that have to be resolved. Normally they are resolved by you conforming to my needs, so that you continue to "look like me." That is the safest, most stable relationship to have. It is also the most boring, uninteresting relationship to have.

But, what if you don't conform? What if you stand up for your views? Then I must "force" you, and that is the beginning of the "power struggle", the beginning of real conflict. If I am a flight person, I will appear to comply, and move the storming to the non-verbal arena, by resisting quietly, with passive aggression.

If I am a fight person, I will pit my power against yours. We are in a power struggle, a real storming is occurring. We are now reactive, emotional, motivated by worst outcomes.

There must be a solution to this storming. An impasse is not desired. We rely on the common approaches to conflict resolution. I may deny the problem exists. Or, I may distance myself from the issue, by not talking to you about it, by not speaking to you, or by placing myself where you are not seen.

I may seek a divorce, a termination of the relationship. Then I can do what I want without having to be in a power struggle with you. Or, if the unresolved conflict is too much to bear, death becomes an alternative.

This is the motivation behind the violent shootings of postal workers by a former co-worker, recently. Because he lost his grievance, and could not accept the decision, he felt compelled to visit death upon those who participated, including himself. The inability to somehow resolve the storming phase of conflict is probably behind much of the violence we see in society today.

**STAGE 2A: THE PAUSE THAT REFRESHES:** This stage is not referred to in the behavioral literature, but I have observed it is necessary. Once the confrontation occurs, a pause is instrumental in facilitating the norming. The pause is similar to "distancing," in that it allows some time to consider, to adapt.

In a consensus session, I provide a break after a group has described the situation, and explored their worst possible outcomes of the situation. This leads them through the storming, and prepares them for the norming. A break allows the mind to re-consider the situation, to re-appraise the severity of the worst outcomes.

I normally provide a break after the parties have confronted each other. I pose a question before the break; "How are we going to resolve this to meet all the parties needs?"

After the break, exploring the best possible outcomes develops the basis for the norming. The beliefs and behaviors that foster the best outcome are the norming.

After confronting each other, often in a reactive way, on an issue like the Christmas Holidays, Pat and I will separate, go to different rooms, or I may go for a walk. This allows us to think of what was said, to re-assess our emotional reaction, to become more proactive. We can decide how much we overstated our case. We can decide how much of our connection to the way we do it is "loyalty" to the past. We can consider the points of the other party. Now we are ready for "norming."

**STAGE 3: NORMING:** In this stage the participants recognize that these differences must somehow be dealt with in a mature and growing way. A decision must be made that the relationship is too important to end. The participants must first affirm that the differences exist. They seek to understand why they are present. This means learning to understand the other person better. Then the question is asked:

How can we have these differences and still remain in the relationship?

For Pat and I the answer was obvious. The relationship was too important to be the cause of dissension. So, I agreed to buy a cedar tree if I could put my bulbs on it. She put the

tinsel on it, a piece at a time. I stayed away from this process, unable to understand the patience it took to do this. The Holidays were somewhat strained, because it was different, but enjoyable.

The next year, it was easy to agree I would get my fir tree, use her blanket bulbs, and I would get to decorate the tree with the tinsel, my way. Well, Pat actually helped a bit on that.

We have begun to seriously norm, adapting slowly so that we are able to accept and appreciate each others differences. We are proactive, thinking our relationship through, fostering best outcomes.

The following year, we bought the prettiest tree we had ever seen. We both liked it, a noble fir. We also bought some new bulbs. And, believe it or not, I found the patience to decorate the tree a strand of tinsel at a time. We enjoyed the experience together. Now, we are entering the next stage, Performing.

**STAGE 4: PERFORMING:** From this point on, once the norming is established, the relationship can perform at peak levels. There is still difference, but it adds to the richness of the relationship experience, because it is understood, accepted, appreciated. The relationship flows in a natural way, saving time because there is a common focus and an understood approach.

**STAGE 5: STORMING - REFORMING:** Rarely will a relationship remain for long in the performing stage. The journey through the storming to the norming will cause movement and growth in each person. This changes the nature of their perceptions, and their information base. This in turn affects their beliefs and behaviors. They will become different people.

In time, a new issue will arise between the parties. One party will want to do something new and different, as a result of personal growth. The result is a movement to storming, and as resistance builds, a desire for re-forming. The other party resists, wanting to keep things in the new and accepted way, wanting the other to conform to this new way.

This will require the relationship to repeat the process for storming, norming in order to return to performing.

The cycle is continuous, to be repeated as each person continues to grow and seek to reach his and her potential. Yet, the desire will continue to be to seek stability, to have conformity. It is easier, on the surface, and the reactive and emotional storming stage can be avoided.

**A RELATIONSHIP PROCESS**

CON - FORMING - RE

**Resolution  
Approach**

Deny  
Distance  
Divorce  
Death

**Response**

**Reactive  
Worst Outcomes  
Power Struggle**

**STORMING**

**PAUSE**

**NORMING**

**Proactive  
Best Outcomes  
Empowerment**

**PERFORMING**

## **THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF CONFRONTING AND RESOLVING CONFLICT**

How will we know when we have achieved our goal? Before describing how to make something happen, we need to know what outcomes we want to create. These outcomes are the "ends", while the strategies and actions are the "means" to get to the ends. **A structure , governance, or decision making system is not an end, it is a means, a way of getting to a desired end.**

The participants described the best possible outcomes that would result from confronting and resolving conflicts in their environments, recording their answers on a 3 x 5 card.

### **The Questions:**

**\* What Will Be the Best Possible Outcomes of Confronting and Resolving Conflicts in Your Environment?**

Recording on the 3 x 5 card allows the individuals to go internal and deliberately consider the best possible outcomes they want to foster. Since they often do not think of best outcomes, this activity allows them to be more pro-active and deliberative. The worst outcomes are recorded in a more reactive way, directly to the easel. This is because the worst possible outcomes are immediately and emotionally available in your memories.

This task establishes what the participants want, a vision that will create new strategies, actions and behaviors that will tend to foster the desired outcome. These outcomes affect relationships so that information exchange is facilitated, and this may foster the best outcomes of an issue.

These best outcomes are possible. They are probably present, at some level, in the environment. They create the reactive force that develops the new beliefs, behaviors, strategies and actions of the participants. They consists of statements which are made in the present tense, as if the mission is already happening. This is an "active" way to express the mission.

**THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF CONFRONTING  
AND RESOLVING CONFLICTS IN THE ENVIRONMENT  
A SUMMARY**

- **This is a participative democracy and that is our fortune! We have the ability to move on towards solutions. Resolution will take place. All of us together are so much better more than any of us alone.**
- **Communication is open. We have self respect and a respect for others. People will feel empowered and successful because they have used and learned a process that worked well.**
- **All parties get their needs met. There is a feeling of accomplishment thru improved self esteem. There is increased trust and understanding among diverse groups in a community.**
- **There is more sense of community, working together and belonging. There are less appeals and litigation and more community support for decisions that are appealed and litigated..**
- **We have more energy to do more performing of positive things. Relationship building through improved communication will enable everyone voice to be heard.**
- **We are a productive valued workforce helping each other to get the job done. My team will take the time to norm and perform and we will be more effective in our work.**
- **We foster an improved quality of life for all. We will have an improved ecological, economic and social situation. There will be clean air and water ~ an environment free of social and environmental toxins. The irrigators get enough water, the ranchers get enough water and the Indians get enough water for fish.**
- **The opportunity to grow and charge decreased stress equals better health. We feel more relaxed, happy and respectful. We can focus our energy and incredible talent on our core purpose.**

## **THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF CONFRONTING AND RESOLVING CONFLICTS IN THE ENVIRONMENT OUR PURPOSE**

**This is a participative democracy and that is our fortune! We have the ability to move on towards solutions.** We see forward progress for promoting the ideals that we have formed. We are tested and tried, enhanced by others, then reformed into doable real actions. We see innovative actions that are sustained by a willingness to integrate natural resource programs for the public good and this will come about through working with people from all walks of life.

**Resolution will take place.** We have not given up what is unequally dear to get resolution so we can refocus energies elsewhere.

**We are open to opportunities.** We are open to new opportunities and networking and come up with creative surprises for solutions. We find new insights and wisdom and more learning. We have a willingness to face new conflicts.

**With more collaboration we see more acceptance and participation in collaborative processes by the public and agencies.** There are amazing results based on the collective creativity of the group. All of us together are so much better more than any of us alone.

**Communication is open.** There is increased productivity, improved morale, increased involvement in decision making, and ownership for solutions. We are feeling a sense of satisfaction from moving through storming to norming. There is harmony in relationships. There is well being and being well. Other entities and individuals numbers are saved to cell phones. We see good relationships and good editorials in the Bend Bulletin.

**We have self respect and a respect for others.** We respect opposing views and the right of someone to have them. We have fostered successful programs towards sustainable communities with a high level of respect. We all feel respected validated, cared for and cherished.

**People will feel empowered and successful because they have used and learned a process that worked well.** We will be able to be real with the people we live and work with instead of walking on egg shells. There is sustainability, harmony, prosperity humor ~ we can laugh at ones self.

**All parties get their needs met.** Conflicts are resolved with mutually agreeable decisions and opposing groups become friends who work together to address future issues. A successful resolution of conflicts will bring about effective change in all instances for all parties concerned.

## **THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF CONFRONTING AND RESOLVING CONFLICTS IN THE ENVIRONMENT (cont.)**

**There is a feeling of accomplishment thru improved self esteem.** We see bonding and greater friendships. There is more fun and the anticipation of good things (future.) we are energized and joyful. We are more selfless and seek achievement and peace. People feel emotionally and professionally safe. We feel peace.

**There is increased trust and understanding among diverse groups in a community.** There is increased trust. We are feeling more confident and trust ourselves more. We have an understanding of each other so that we can direct our energy toward the best possible outcome. There is openness and understanding as well as improved relationships.

**There is more sense of community, working together and belonging.** Community based, locally lead solutions are implemented that lead to de-listing of groups and resolves water related issues while providing a stable community.

**There are less appeals and litigation and more community support for decisions that are appealed and litigated.** After addressing a significant conflict, the community is energized to address and resolve other potentially complex conflicts within the community. There are no appeals. There is no litigation.

**We have more energy to do more performing of positive things.** Constructive energy is focused towards common goals. Thoughts and energy can be used to help others resolve conflict. We spend time and energy on being rather than on fighting each other. We see more diverse views and more positive attitude towards the Forest Service and the government in general. People congratulate the FS upon successful completion of projects.

**Relationship building through improved communication will enable everyone voice to be heard.** This will help us to discover the common ground which will in turn, help us all to improve the resource upon which we all depend. We build better interpersonal relationships. We are creating, building and maintaining new relationships.

**We are a productive valued workforce helping each other to get the job done.** It is a fun place to work and be. There is a more productive work environment. There is greater productivity. We are being more effective and productive. Tasks will be accomplished, productivity will increase and my stomach ache will go away. I won't be afraid to tackle the next conflict.

**THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF CONFRONTING  
AND RESOLVING CONFLICTS IN THE ENVIRONMENT (cont.)**

**My team will take the time to norm and perform and we will be more effective in our work.** I will feel good at the end of the work day. There are no more meetings and we can all get on with our lives. We hear less lame excuses for poor performance. **We foster an improved quality of life for all.** Student test scores are improved due to our renewed common focus. *We support the Bend 2030 project.*

**We will have an improved ecological, economic and social situation.** The city of Prineville will have done the FEMA recommendations to reduce flood damage. The county and city will work with CRWC and CCNRC to study in a water conference the effects of geology on water storage.

**There will be clean air and water ~ an environment free of social and environmental toxins.** Mitigation with the tribes can create more water in the Crooked River, better riparian along stream, healthy fish stocks and cattle grazing effectively as a part of the mix.

**The irrigators get enough water, the ranchers get enough water and the Indians get enough water for fish.** The environmentalists see that the best people to care for the land are doing so. The right work for the ground is getting done. It is win-win and we implement actions that address the function of ecosystems.

**The opportunity to grow and charge decreased stress equals better health.** We will lose weight and feel healthier. My health will improve, especially my digestion. We have a healthier, happier environment with less tension and as a result we get more accomplished. There is lower stress.

**We feel more relaxed, happy and respectful.** We will be really happy and calm on a daily basis and will give more joy through our words and actions to those around us; family, friends and co-workers. We spend less time planning and more time doing. We have inner peace, wholeness and a sense of well being.

**We can focus our energy and incredible talent on our core purpose.** Individuals can and will share themselves, their expertise, and energy with the larger group. There are feelings of improved morale and authenticity, feelings of joy, empowerment and unity.

## \* THE TIES THAT BIND

"What is a relationship?" That is the question I ask as I lead the group into an exploration of relationships, loss and change. Their answer is diverse, as diverse as they are.

The question is asked to get their definition, and to bring their thought pattern into the arena of discussing relationships. The definition provides an opportunity for the collective view before the activity begins.

**1. TWO PEOPLE, TWO RELATIONSHIPS:** I ask two people, a male and female, to help me in the center of the circle. I have pieces of yarn in my hands, each about 40 inches long. I refer to them as relationship strings, the "Tie That Binds." I hand each a piece of the yarn. I ask them to connect the relationship strings with each other. They look like this: (*NOTE: Draw two lines between A and B.*)

A                      B

Person A has a relationship with person B. Person B also has a relationship with Person A. Each of these relationships are associated with a differing perception.

I give an example. Person A is Sally. She tells her friends, "Ted is the man for me. He takes me everywhere; to the movies, the ball game, to picnics with his friends. He tells me his dreams and his hopes. I know he is going to ask me to marry him some day." That describes her relationship perception.

Person B is Ted. Ted tells his friends, "Sally is a wonderful friend. She is just like one of the guys. She goes to the ball game, and is always available when I want to see a movie. I sure like to tell her these crazy ideas I have about life. I hope that when I meet the right woman, she will let me keep Sally for a friend." That is his perception of the relationship.

Obviously, these people have different perceptions of their relationship. Yet, they believe and behave as if their perception is the same.

It is only when Sally wants Ted to go to the opera with her on Monday night, and she finds that Ted has a date with the guys to watch football that he won't change, that their differing needs and wants become obvious. Her disappointment, and his confusion, are a measure of their differing perceptions.

**2. THE MULTIPLIER EFFECT:** Let's suppose, though, that Sally is right. They do get married. They decide to have a family. Soon, in the appropriate amount of time, they have a bouncing baby boy born to them.

Cute little Roger arrives with a relationship string for Mom and a relationship string for his Dad. They each also have a relationship string for him. I ask another volunteer to come out into the center of the circle to be the baby, and give each the appropriate number of strings. They connect them, a clumsy and uncertain process, just as the establishment of relationships is. This is how the relationship strings look now.

*(NOTE: draw two lines between each of the people. Continue this in later graphics.)*

ROGER

SALLY

TED

Be aware of the number of relationships strings. While they have introduced one new member the family, they have increased their relationship strings to 6, a threefold increase. Each person added has a multiplier effect.

Baby Roger thinks; "If I cry, Mom do drop everything to feed me." Mom's response is; "I can't leave this stove while the food is cooking, so he will have to wait."

Dad buys his son a baseball mitt for Christmas. He wants him to play ball professionally. Roger is sad because he wanted a guitar. He wants to make music, to sing. Each is disappointed by this mis-perception.

Suppose they have a second child, a beautiful, intelligent girl, Ann. Ann has 3 relationship strings, for her Mom, for Dad, for Roger. They each have one for her.

ROGER

SALLY

TED

ANN

There are now 12 relationships to be managed in this family. This is 6 times the original 2 relationship perceptions! Those who are married with children know how much additional energy it takes to manage this situation.

Sally loves her brother and wants to be anywhere he is. Roger is embarrassed by his younger sister tagging along. He teases her and sends her home crying. Each person has a different perception of the relationship.

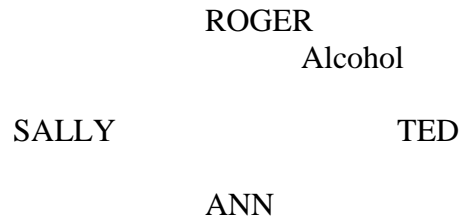
(The number increases as more people are added to the relationship circle. The formula is: Number of persons times the Number of persons minus one ( $N \times N - 1$ ). Ten people have 90 relationships ( $10 \times 9$ ). Twenty people have 380 relationships to manage ( $20 \times 19$ .)

A manager making a change presentation to an audience of 100 doubting publics is managing 9900 relationships ( $100 \times 99$ ). This is why it is important in these situations to use small group process. Each group of ten is then managing only 90 relationships.

**3. RELATIONSHIPS WITH THINGS:** We also have relationships with things. You have a relationship with your car, and it has one with you. You depend on the car to start, until one morning it decides to let you down. It is not as dependable as you perceived.

Or, you may have a relationship with alcohol. You believe that you can stop drinking any time you want. The alcohol knows you can't, and is able to tempt you to continue.

This relationship with a thing may affect the entire family. I can tell if it does by listening to the family members. If Mom complains to her husband about drinking all the time, she is connected to the alcohol. If the daughter is embarrassed by her Dad's drunken behavior at a ball game, she has a relationship with the alcohol. If our family above has an alcoholic father, and this affects their relationship, the diagram looks like this:



When Ted comes home drunk, he affects all the members of the family. Sally argues with Ted over the drinking. Roger and Ann may choose sides, one of them defending their father. This affects their relationship with their mother. They are now managing 20 relationship strings ( $5 \times 4$ ). This increases the energy it takes to manage their family by 67% ( $8/12$ ).

#### **4. RELATIONSHIPS WITH ORGANIZATIONS:**

We can have a relationship with an impersonal thing, like an organization. Ted believes that the Computer Business he works for is like a family. He has no concerns about his job, because they will take care of him. Then the organization sells out to a larger firm

that replaces. Ted feels betrayed, because he thought the organization had the same belief that he has.

If Ted just works normal hours, and doesn't take his work home with him, then the organization relationship is only with Ted. But, if Ted works late at nights, and is unavailable for his family because he is always in deep thought about his work, then the organization relationship is connected with the family.

Sally will complain to him about his always being at work. Roger is mad because Dad can't attend his soccer game. Ann is miffed because he missed her birthday party.

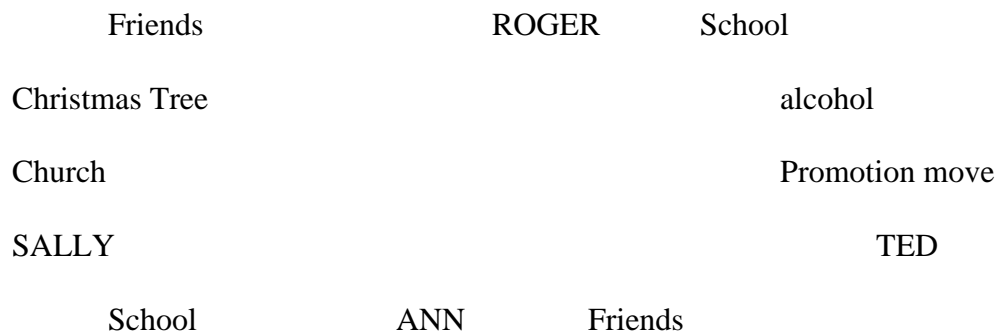
They now have 30 relationships to manage (6 x 5), an increase of 50%)

If Sally has a relationship with the church that keeps her away from the family, this too affects them all. If increases Ted's reliance on alcohol. The children act out to get their mothers attention. They now have 42 relationships to manage (7 X 6).

**5. RELATIONSHIP WITH CONFLICTS:** Unresolved conflicts have a way of becoming part of the relationships in a family. If Dad and Mom have an argument over where to spend their holidays, this eventually affects them all. The children roll up their eyes and go to their friends home. Again, they may take sides. Ted just drinks more, using the Holiday as an excuse. Mom spends more time with the church.

Each unresolved conflict impacts other unresolved conflicts. Sally tells Ted he would not be so stubborn about the tree if he wasn't always drunk. He tells her he wouldn't drink if she would agree to move to a new location. They are now managing 56 relationship perceptions (8 X 7).

**6. RELATIONSHIP WITH CHANGE:** Ted wants to move to a new location where he can get a promotion. He can't understand why Sally won't move. Maybe they could start over in their relationship and leave the old one behind. Sally doesn't want to leave the security of her work with the church. The children don't want to leave their school and friends.



This family is trying to manage 132 relationship strings (12 X 11). No wonder they feel stressed out when they get together. No wonder they don't get together very often. Sally is at Church, Ted at the bar, the children at their friends.

These relationships take energy to manage. Each unresolved conflict and change event "piggybacks" energy on the other. When Ted and Sally argue about alcohol, the church, the tree, the promotion, the school and friends become instruments of war.

**7. RELATIONSHIP WITH LOSS:** If Sally gives in and agrees with a move, this creates more stress. For each member of the family there is a process of "letting go" and "taking hold" that must happen.

Ted must let go of the old position, and take hold of the new one. Sally has to do the same with the church, the children with their friends and school. The change doubles the number of relationships to manage from 12 to 24. This increases the number of relationship bonds to 552 (24 X 23).

In order to reduce the stress with change, this family must confront the changes they are going through. This begins with reaching closure with the present and the past. The family members explore two questions:

"How do you feel about leaving this location (friends, school job, etc.)?"

"What did you learn here that you want to take to the new experience with you?"

This allows the family to acknowledge the change, to express their feelings, and grieve about it, to move on to acceptance. Answering these questions allows the past to be integrated into their memory, into their being. This reduces the number of relationship they manage by half, and the number of relationship strings from 552 to 132.

Acceptance continues by reaching out to make sense of the future experience. Similar questions are answered to take hold of the new location:

"How do you feel about going to the new location (friends, school job, etc.)?"

"What do you want to learn from this new experience?"

## **FOSTERING THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES**

Once the best outcomes have been established, then is the time to develop the movement to make them happen. Fostering the best outcomes will often require looking at beliefs, behaviors, strategies and actions. Each of these is a different focus:

- o **BELIEF:** A conviction or opinion. These create the behaviors of the person.
- o **BEHAVIOR:** Deportment or demeanor (a persons manner towards others). These are manners and attitudes that are created by the basic beliefs of a person.
- o **STRATEGY:** A plan of action. A strategy is intended to carry out a vision or mission. It is also a way of actualizing a belief. Strategies are often developed that are incongruent with the persons beliefs. The behaviors will then override the intent of the strategy.
- o **ACTION:** The act, process or fact of doing something. These are specific deeds that carry out the intent of the strategy. If they are not congruent with the person's beliefs, they sill be nullified by the persons attitudes and demeanor.

We are used to focusing only on action plans, or strategies. This is appropriate if the change is one of modification, where the beliefs are congruent with the plan.

If the beliefs are not consistent with the plans, they will not be carried out. The behavior will tend to be incongruent with the action. In this instance, the new and adaptive beliefs must be agreed to.

### **The Question:**

- \* **What Beliefs/behaviors and Strategies/actions Will Foster the Best Possible Outcomes?**

**BELIEFS AND BEHAVIORS WE AGREE WITH  
TO FOSTER THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES**

- **Release the past. Being self aware in a safe environment can be a power tool in solving conflict. Use pauses to move from adrenalin to endorphin and storming to norming. Trust the inner voice.**
- **Bring in all people even if they may be interruptive to the process. Enter a situation with a best possible outcome in mind. Focusing on best possible outcomes and creating a process to get there.**
- **I am part of the community and part of the key to creating the best possible outcome. Even if negative feelings occur we still can have best outcomes.**
- **Relationships are everything and taking time to develop them to solve problems is powerful. Resist group think and encourage diverse viewpoints.**
- **Make sure that all people have the chance to speak their piece completely and to their satisfaction. Creating a safe environment where everyone is secure enough to speak up. Respectful listening. Listen carefully and don't let your brain run off to the answer.**
- **That people can change Record verbatim with respect and resolution. Provide incentives like a meal. Lunch meals, snacks and food.**
- **The impossible is possible.**

**BELIEFS AND BEHAVIORS WE AGREE WITH TO FOSTER  
THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOME (cont.)**

- **Release the past.** Having memory of a bad experience does not mean it will always recur in similar circumstances. You can overcome fear by returning to the place of original fright and flight and creating a new safe experience. Have hope, optimism and courage. Have empathy to others courage. Foster self awareness.
- **Being self aware in a safe environment can be a power tool in solving conflict.** Act in a way that encompasses and honors your concerns. Do not avoid being uncomfortable or self conscious. Its okay to recognize self conscious behavior; it is productive. Neither you nor I have a monopoly on the truth. Be comfortable with myself. Be comfortable with self and others.
- **Use pauses to move from adrenalin to endorphin and storming to norming.** Pausing is important to change direction. Don't triangulate ace conflict directly. Help other people to lead, facilitate and solve. Slow down discussions via recording as well help lower volume and stridency. Slow down. Pace it and slow it down. Go slow to go fast. Use some of the things in the groups I am in now.
- **Trust the inner voice.** Trust the process and know that the right people are there. Be hopeful. Believe that this process can work! If you agree to follow the process, then you do it. We always have options and we can integrate this process with our intention to integrate our programs.
- **Bring in all people even if they may be interruptive to the process.** They are needed to get desired end results. Share knowledge about adrenaline and how it affects people and the process. Allow for a slowing down of the process.
- **Enter a situation with a best possible outcome in mind.** Go into new situations seeking best outcomes. You need to expect your best outcomes as you enter a meeting. Most people go to their worst possible outcome and then to their best; focus on the best. Acknowledge the worst and focus on the best.
- **Focusing on best possible outcomes and creating a process to get there.** Present best outcome scenarios to all participants. Work worst fears to best outcomes. Use the process of worst possible/best possible outcomes to get quickly to root causes of problems. To not always go to worst possible outcomes.

**BELIEFS AND BEHAVIORS WE AGREE WITH TO FOSTER  
THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOME (cont.)**

- **I am part of the community and part of the key to creating the best possible outcome.** Approach the conflict with the best outcome in mind. You have nothing to lose. Being positive about best possible outcomes. We can facilitate positive change.
- **Even if negative feelings occur we still can have best outcomes.** Embrace the negative feelings in the learning environment. Let go of old tucked feelings and beliefs. Embrace uncomfortable feelings and monitor their context. Feelings are not debatable; they can hurt you unless you let them. Face your fears. Feelings are never wrong; they are just feelings. Feelings are not debatable.
- **Relationships are everything and taking time to develop them to solve problems is powerful.** A relationship building process is more effective for best outcomes. Resolve conflict with more time and energy to manage relationships. If you agree to operate in a certain way, then you do that.
- **Resist group think and encourage diverse viewpoints.** Have an openness to viewpoints. Record accurately everyone feelings, views and opinions. Be open to change and new ideas. Let go of the past and what has been and be open to new behaviors and ideas. Be self aware and open. Show respect and let the group share and have responsibility. Use civility and let the people solve it.
- **Make sure that all people have the chance to speak their piece completely and to their satisfaction.** Include all voices; no exclusions in dialogs and conversation. Give everyone a chance to speak once. Allow people to contribute input within their comfort level. Give every time to finish what they need to say.
- **Creating a safe environment where everyone is secure enough to speak up.** Making sure everyone is heard and their opinions are valued. Give everyone time to speak. Provide the time for everyone to be heard. Go around in a circle to speak. Have no time limit; ask if everyone has had a chance to speak. Make sure all opinions are heard in one way or another.

**BELIEFS AND BEHAVIORS WE AGREE WITH TO FOSTER  
THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOME (cont.)**

- **Respectful listening.** Slow down and create a listening environment. Listen with respect. Listen, listen, listen. Listen to all opinions without judgment. Listen in circles and with respect. Listen to all opinions and let the people talk! Listen. LISTEN! Work in a circle and listen.
- **Listen carefully and don't let your brain run off to the answer.** Listen and seek to really understand the history and ideas of others diversity. You don't have to agree or own to listen. Listen with respect. Listen with respect and really listen. Don't adrenalize.
- **That people can change** Belief that I don't need to fix for them ~ allow and support them to do their work. The person isn't the problem so don't personalize it. Don't personalize issues to people.
- **Record verbatim with respect and resolution.** Go slow to go fast by showing total respect for people and their words by writing down verbatim what was said.
- **Provide incentives like a meal. Lunch meals, snacks and food.**
- **The impossible is possible.** Believe that the best possible outcome could actually happen. The impossible is possible. Believe the impossible is possible. The impossible is possible. The impossible is possible.

## **\* CONSENSUS IS A BEHAVIOR, NOT WORDS**

"Don't do as I do,  
Do as I say."

Consensus is often expected to be an agreement in words. There is the expectation that the parties will not only agree to, but will automatically carry out the intent of the accord, even at the risk of their lives. This includes taking actions contrary to the needs of their constituencies, community, families. It is an indestructible contract, signed with a "blood oath".

But, consensus is rarely expressed in words. Laws and contracts are written with words to control the beliefs and behaviors of the parties, yet they are hardly followed. The "true" consensus can be determined by observing the parties' actual behaviors. These behaviors express the unwritten agreement in the culture. People are rarely punished if they are within the bounds of the unwritten agreements about behaviors.

Laws and contracts are written to document our "best intentions." They assume that the situation is static and precise. We, however, operate out of the "convenience of the given moment", reflecting the moving target that actually reveals the reality of the present situation. The more diverse the situation, the more diffuse, the greater the opportunity for situational exceptions for the rule.

The speed limit is an example. In Portland, Oregon some 5 years ago, the speed limit on the Interstate Freeway I-84 was 55 miles per hour. I lived in Boring, Oregon, a 45 minute drive from Portland.

As I drove to Portland, I observed that the actual speed was 65 mph, 10 miles over the limit. This behavior was accepted by the State Trooper who parked at the junction of I-84 and I-205. The traffic drove by his location each morning at 65 mph or less, and he condoned it.

One morning I was in a hurry. I drove by his location at a speed he said was 67.5 mph. He stopped me and gave me a ticket for speeding.

Now, the law, in words, said the speed was 55 mph. The sign on the freeway at his location was 55 mph. The Motor Vehicle Driver Training booklet stated that the highest legal freeway speed was 55 mph. The correct answer on the State Drivers Test was 55 mph. These words are backed by the full legal power of the State.

The actual behavior was 65 mph. It was condoned by the State Trooper. This is the accepted consensus in that location for that Law Enforcement Officer. A speed of 67.5 mph mobilized him into action. The ticket cost \$85.00.

**\* CONSENSUS IS A BEHAVIOR, NOT WORDS (Cont.)**

I have learned that the "true" consensus is actualized through behavior. The behavior is different than the words that people speak. If I ask the conflicting parties to attend a session and they say they would not be seen in the same room together, that is their verbal response. When invited, and they all show up, even if complaining, that is their behavior. I pay attention to the behavior.

A man who insists he is supportive of affirmative action and women's rights, yet tells sexist jokes, whether women are present or not, is expressing his true beliefs through this behavior.

This is powerful information to know, because by observing the behaviors of people in any organization, it is possible to identify the "unwritten rules." These are the "consensus rules" of the organization, and they determine its true effectiveness.

An organization, group, or individual who behave in a different way than they speak ("they don't walk their talk") are in a state of "disharmony." Harmony in personal terms does not just mean being at "peace." The word refers to a state of being in accord, in unity, with the one's person. If I am angry, I show it. If I am peaceful, I show it. I "walk my talk."

Observing "disharmony", a behavioral consensus that differs from the written organizational consensus, allows the facilitator to focus on revealing the true agreements. The individuals can then determine what their desired consensus is, either by changing their words, or their walk.

## \* DEVELOPING CONSENSUS WITH WORDS

There are circumstances where people insist on reaching consensus with words. This may be in contract negotiations, or with mission statements. It may just be an expectation that must be met to feel the conflict is resolved.

In these circumstances, there is a process that is appropriate. It is a time consuming one, but will develop the emotional commitment that matches words with deeds. Reaching total accord and harmony with groups takes time, but it saves time in the long run. The reason? Because that which is agreed to, is committed to, is carried out.

It begins with some basic understandings.

**FACILITATOR/RECORDER:** The manager, or some other person becomes a facilitator. A recorder is selected. The facilitator role is to read the statement, and seek consensus. The recorder writes any comments, or changes, immediately when they are expressed, underlining, or otherwise highlighting the change. The facilitator then seeks consensus again.

The recorder role is important in this process. As soon as the new word or phrase is written, this will galvanize the individuals in the group to respond with agreement, or disagreement. Until the word or phrase is written, the group will be at a state of impasse.

**SEEK DISAGREEMENT AND RESOLVE IT:** In working with words, read a statement, then see if anyone DISAGREES with it. If no-one disagrees, then go on to the next statement. Majority decisions rely on seeking agreement. Consensus seeks to find the disagreement so that agreement can be fostered.

If there is disagreement with the statement, or the word, then underline it, or put it in (parentheses). Write the recommended word, or wording above it. Then ask if there is disagreement.

If there isn't, move on. If there is, then the words are highlighted, and the new words put in. Continue this until an agreement is reached.

**THE IMPASSE:** If there is an impasse between two people, ask the group to listen to the different needs or perceptions. The members of the group then give advice on a consensus solution to come up with a statement that meets both of their needs. Or, ask the parties to agree on wording that will meet their needs, based on feedback from the group.

**WORDS WORDS WORDS!** People have emotional attachment to their words and the grammatical use of them. "Accept my word and you are accepting me", appears to be the basis of much "word-smithing. An attack on my word is felt as an attack on me. Often the issue is one of misunderstanding what is meant by the word, but we never get to that.

Have people define what they mean by the words they have used. Let the group identify words that will create the consensus between the parties. Or, reach agreement on what the word will mean to all the parties.

As an example, if people are arguing over the word "discipline", ask them to define when they don't have it, and when they do have it. This will create the information base needed to resolve the impasse.

**MARKING THE TERRITORY:** People like to leave their mark on a document, just as animals mark out their territory. This is part of the "word-smithing process". You will find that this activity will occur to great lengths in the beginning of a word-smithing process, and slack off as each person feels satisfied their mark has been made on the document.

Even those who complain about the slowness of the process, the endless "word-smithing", will eventually take their turn at "wasting time." This is normal.

**LET'S MOVE ON!** People get frustrated and impatient with the slowness of working with words. They will begin to shift, appear to lose interest, complain loudly, get up and walk around. These are all acceptable behaviors. It normally means the issue being discussed is worthy of the discussion.

Acknowledge the impatience, the frustration. Then affirm the need to take the time to see that everyone agrees, the importance of seeking consensus. I remind those who are impatient that impatience often means; "I wish they would hurry up and decide.... my way!"

**WE ARE ALL SAYING THE SAME THING:** This statement is often made in an attempt to move on, or to avoid a conflict. Be aware... this normally signals that there is an issue of concern to be resolved. I normally point that out and restate the difference that is being represented by the parties. I then encourage them to confront the difference.

**BREAKS:** These are needed at times. A break helps when the frustration level is getting in the way of moving ahead. Or, if there is an impasse, a break is helpful. Provide a break after reaching a key agreement. Honor the group, or individuals, then take the break.

**TIME:** This takes time. It is normal to spend up to an hour on the first sentence. As the group progresses, becomes more familiar, is successful in resolving their differences, they become more effective, more productive. Now it may be necessary to slow them down so they don't give short shrift to the rest of the statement.

You will also find that everything is connected to everything else. The parties make agreements early in the process that will apply to issues later in the day. This saves time.

## THE ROLE OF THE SUCCESSFUL FACILITATOR

(Those words that were deleted are shown with a ~~strikeout~~, and those words added are shown with **redline**. This consensus statement is finalized in the form shown in the previous section on best possible outcomes of confronting and resolving conflicts)

A good facilitator ~~needs to be~~ **is** inviting, ~~attends to~~ **focuses on** what others are each **participant is saying**, and ~~encourages~~ **accepts unconditionally** all ideas and concepts. When a participant says, "I need a little time to think," the facilitator ~~allows~~ **honors** the persons **request** to pass. The ~~wise~~ facilitator ~~keeps~~ **makes sure** everyone ~~on task by making sure everyone has a turn~~ **chance to be heard to make sure speak to the task given ensuring that** everyone's voice is heard ~~and makes sure everyone has spoken.~~

A good facilitator ~~is aware of~~ **gives** the recorder's needs ~~and to give the recorder time or the rest of us can talk real slow or talk in short words.~~ to record the information, ensuring everyone has had a chance to speak.

The experienced facilitator says, "I think it's important that the facilitator doesn't give positive or negative cues and remains neutral and should not give any non-verbal positive or negative clues. It's helpful if she/he doesn't. A good facilitator is to only facilitate and not be part of the process.

In order to facilitate, one needs to keep the process going and to keep the activity moving. It's important to give clarity, assist with clarification, and if facilitator senses the need for clarification, to act on it.

**A good facilitator should be** ~~Impartiality is important,~~ **and** ~~be non-judgmental of in~~ **comments or and body language.** ~~ideas presented, be careful with body language, it can be manipulative.~~ A facilitator ~~doesn't want to~~ **should not** influence the discussion. ~~Diffuse a monopolizer without being rude and give permission to speak, acknowledge with a "thank you", and signal to the next person they have permission to speak.~~

~~You~~ **The facilitator needs** to ~~maintain~~ **establish** a ~~comfort~~ **trust** level ~~in the room~~ **within the group.** ~~by setting clear~~ **He/she maintains established** rules and ~~promoting~~ **enges** a relaxed setting.

The successful facilitator will keep the group focused, free from "bird~walks (on task), moving along at a steady pace, but be patient and allow wait time. They see that everyone has a chance to speak by providing an equal opportunity for input.

Get the group going by asking the right questions, clarifying or giving examples as needed.

A successful facilitator involved everyone. He/she asks questions and keeps inviting participation until there are no more comments. She/he has to allow everyone to give one point and come back to find out if there are others. To be a good facilitator make sure everyone gets a chance to speak.

The role of a successful facilitator is to keep the group on task, while verifying what's being written. and moving forward to make sure agenda takes care of business and to see what's being written. She/he needs to know the groups purpose to check that everyone has focus. Facilitator is neutral and takes care to be positive and creates a risk free environment, expecting members to be respective for give and take.

A good facilitator asks probing questions for clarity if she/he sees misunderstandings, for clarity when speakers are stumbling. By asking clarifying questions when someone makes a broad statement to clear it up.

The facilitator has to know enough about the topic but you don't have to know details. It's the group's product. When the group is done, the product is theirs and not must mine, and that's hard to do.

## THE ROLE OF THE SUCCESSFUL FACILITATOR

(These are partially developed consensus statements. The words in *italics* were added during the consensus building process.)

***The successful facilitator needs to establish a trust level within the group.*** *He/she maintains established rules and promotes a relaxed setting. They get the group going by asking the right questions, seeking clarification or giving examples as needed.*

***A good facilitator is inviting, and focuses on what each participant is saying.*** They *accept unconditionally* all ideas and concepts. When a participant says “I need a little time to think,” the facilitator *honors* the persons *request* to pass.

***The successful facilitator makes sure everyone has a chance to speak to the task given, ensuring that everyone’s voice is heard.*** A good facilitator *gives* the recorder’s time to record the information, ensuring that everyone has had a chance to speak.

***A successful facilitator involves everyone.*** *He/she asks questions and keeps inviting participation* until there are no more comments. They see that everyone has a chance to speak by providing an equal opportunity for input.

***The role of a successful facilitator is to keep the group on task, while verifying what’s being written.*** The facilitator is neutral and takes care to be positive, to create a risk free environment, and expects members to be respectful for give and take.

***In order to be a successful facilitator, one needs to keep the process going and to keep the activity moving.*** It’s important to give clarity, assist with clarification, and if the facilitator senses the need for clarification, to act on it.

***The successful facilitator will keep the group focused, free from “bird~walks (on task).*** They keep the group moving along at a steady pace, but are also patient and allow wait time. They ask probing questions for clarity if there are misunderstandings, speakers are stumbling or someone makes a broad statement, to clear it up.

***A good facilitator is to only facilitate and not be part of the process.*** *A good facilitator should be impartial and non-judgmental in comments and body language.*

***The experienced facilitator knows it is important that they don’t give positive or negative cues.*** They remain neutral and should not give any non-verbal positive or negative clues. It’s helpful if she/he doesn’t.

## **EXPERIENCE THE PROCESS - A PERSONAL CONFLICT** **a learning activity**

The best way to learn the process is to experience it in a situation that is personal to you. This section will help you do that. I am assuming, since you attended this session that you have an interest in, or a difficulty with, confronting and resolving conflicts. They probably cause you some continuing pain. You would like that pain to go away, without much effort, if possible. As you experienced this session you will get some idea of how to do that. But, it is best if you confront, with some awareness of your own life situation, and explore how you can address a personal situation successfully.

Begin by finding a place you can be alone for a while. It can be in the den, in your work space (this will help you be more effective at work, so it is a good investment of time) or out in the park.

It helps to write this activity down, so bring a pad of paper and a pencil with you (I use 3 x 5 cards). This will help you to capture your thoughts and feelings. You will bring your unresolved conflicts out into the open where you can see them. You will be amazed how much that will help you. It is a way of acknowledging to yourself that these conflicts really exist, to get over denying them. You are also creating a sense of realness about them by making them visible.

The most important way to develop or build consensus is to ask the "RIGHT" questions. The consensus process has been designed to provide you with these "right" questions. We are going to focus on conflict and the ramification it has on your life, just as we will with the group you will read about in coming chapters.

So, begin by answering this question.

**1. What are the unresolved conflicts that confront you in your life, and, how do you feel about them?** List all the conflicts that are unresolved in your life. If you desire, you can break this into four areas: personal, family, work and community. The personal conflicts are those you have with yourself, that go on in your own mind.

Write the feelings you have as a result of these conflicts, again using complete sentences. Read through this when you finish.

**2. What is conflict, and how do you feel about it?** In your own words, define what conflict is. Write as many definitions as you want. The more definitions, the richer your collective statement will be.

Then write down how conflict makes you feel. Be thorough with this part of the question. Your feelings will generally disclose your old beliefs about conflict. You may want to refer to the situations you described in question 1.

**3. What are the worst possible outcomes of confronting these conflicts?** Refer to the situations you described earlier. You can answer this in a general way, because the statements will probably apply to more than one category. List as many worst outcomes as you can think of.

Do not hesitate to write the worst of the worst. Don't hide anything from yourself. Nobody else will see this. The more you disclose to yourself, the more likely you will learn how to resolve the situation.

**4. What are the worst possible outcomes of NOT confronting these conflicts?** You will not confront conflict because of the fears listed under question 3. This question lets you explore the worst possible outcomes if you *don't* confront the conflict. This is the opposite of the previous question. You know that at some level there is a cost for avoiding the confrontation.

Write down as many as you can think of. Don't be surprised if you have similar statements to question 3. That is part of your learning.

**5. Pause:** This is a good time to pause and rest. Read what you have written, and then reflect for a while. When you read the book, you will understand why you were asked to explore your worst possible outcomes. For now, just reflect. After 5 minutes or so, answer the next series of questions.

**6. What are the best possible outcomes of confronting and resolving these conflicts? How would you feel if you did that?** This question helps you decide what you want to have happen from confronting these conflicts that are causing you pain.

This is the question that you probably never ask yourself. You are trying to determine *how* to resolve them, instead of identifying your outcomes. This is defined as "Ready... Fire." You haven't aimed, and so you won't get what you want.

This question helps you determine the outcomes you want and the feelings that would be associated with those outcomes.. This is known as "Ready.... Aim..." We will do "Fire" in the next question. Write down all the best possible outcomes you desire. Again, refer back to your question 1 list. Answer generally, because best outcomes will also apply to more than one issue.

Read the best possible outcomes. Become aware that these are just as possible as the worst outcomes. Since you have not confronted the conflicts yet, your worst fears are

future imagined events. The fears that you have are merely possibilities. They haven't happened yet, there is NO assurance they will happen. Since it is a future event, it is just as possible that you can foster a best possible outcome.

By writing the best possible outcomes you have at least balanced yourself and added "Hope" in the equation. Read how you would feel if you were to be successful. Best Possible outcomes have entirely different feelings than worst possible outcomes.

Now lets explore how to make the best outcomes happen.

**7. What new beliefs and behaviors will foster these best possible outcomes?** If you have been avoiding conflicts in the past there are reasons for it. Avoidance is probably based on some old belief systems. If you want to be successful with conflict resolution, you may need some new beliefs and behaviors. What would these be? Give careful thought to this question, because your answers will help you move ahead.

Beliefs and behaviors are different than strategies and actions. You will learn in this book when to use each.

**8. What resulting strategies and actions will foster these best outcomes?** This question allows you to move beyond your new beliefs to putting them into action. You can establish specific strategies or actions for any of the unresolved conflicts you described under question.

**9. How do you feel about this activity? What did you learn that will help you confront and resolve your conflicts?** This last question will help you to learn from the experience. It is a closure for what you have done.

This is the basic process that you will read about in more detail in the following chapters. Applying it, however is more complex and rich than this simple activity. There are reasons for each of the questions. As you gain this insight, you will become more willing to create the conditions to confront your conflicts. As you read ahead, keep this pad of paper with you. It will allow you to connect what you read to what you learned. It will add richness to your experience of reading.

## **MODULE 1 - THE PROCESS**

### **the Questions:**

#### **1. The Grounding:**

- \* **"Introduce Yourself and Your Relationship to Education."**
- \* **"What Are Your Expectations of this Institute?"**
- \* **"Tell Us How You Feel about Being Here"**

#### **2. The Greeting Circle:**

#### **3. An Adaptive Learning Process**

- \* **What Is the Situation or the Experience?**
- \* **How Do You Feel about It?**
- \* **What Did You Learn from it That Will Make You Successful?**

#### **4. The Roles of the Facilitator and Recorder**

- \* **What Is the Role of a Successful Facilitator?**
- \* **What Is the Role of a Successful Recorder?**

#### **5. Worst/best/possibility**

- \* **What Are the Worst Possible Outcomes of the Institute?**
- \* **What Are the Best Possible Outcomes of the Institute?**

#### **6. A Process for Coping with Conflict**

- \* **What Is the Situation? (Define Conflict; What Is the Evidence of Conflict in Your Environment?) How Do I Feel about It?**
- \* **What Are My Worst Outcomes of Confronting/not Confronting Unresolved Conflict?**
- \* **What Are My Best Outcomes of Confronting and Resolving Conflict?**
- \* **What Behaviors/actions/strategies Will Foster the Best Outcomes?**

## \* **MANAGING AND RECORDING EMOTIONAL DISCUSSIONS**

When the situation being confronted, or discussed, is emotional, it is difficult to record directly to the easel. The recorder can't write fast enough, and is continuously interrupting the speaker. The speaker begins to resent being interrupted. The attention of the group tends to focus on the easel instead of the speaker. This process is intended to change all that.

The intent is to let the speaker be the focus of attention, to allow the speaker to be emotional, to express his or her feelings directly to the other members of the group. The information is then summarized by the members of the group for recording to the easel and reporting to the larger group.

**STEP 1:** A panel is formed which includes representatives from the different groups represented. The purpose of the panel presentation is to create the arena, or focus, of discussion. Normally, the panel members are advised of their task shortly before their presentation.

**STEP 2:** Small groups are formed, with the panel members as the facilitators. The members of the groups answer the same questions as the panel members did. The focus is on the center of the group, the tones of voice are often emotional, the group is often seen to be leaning their heads inward to the center, nodding in agreement, or disagreement. Sometimes voices will be raised. The facilitator must work hard to foster people speaking in turn.

**STEP 3:** The 3 x 5 cards are passed around by the facilitator. The members record what they heard others say on one side of the card, and what they said on the other. This requires that people listen to others with respect. It fosters a communal feeling as others recognize they were heard.

This activity brings silence into the room, a counterpoint to the sound and emotion of the previous step. The center of focus is internal, rather than external. The process is deliberative rather than emotional.

**STEP 4:** The facilitator picks another facilitator and becomes the recorder. The information on the cards is recorded to the easel. Participants hear their issues expressed by others, and feel acknowledged. This positively changes the relationships among the members of the group, increasing trust, fostering open communications. The focus is on the easel, and is deliberative and logical.

**\* MANAGING AND RECORDING EMOTIONAL DISCUSSIONS (cont.)**

- STEP 5:** The individual group reports are read off to the larger group by the recorder, so the information for the entire community can become common knowledge.
- STEP 6:** The information from the entire community is developed into collective statements and reported to the larger group the next day.
- STEP 7:** If needed, the collective statement is then developed into a consensus statement.

## EXPLORING COLLABORATION - A GROUP ACTIVITY

The original purpose of the workshop was to foster collaboration between agencies and the public on resource issues related to water. This is expressed in the best possible outcomes on page 38.

*“With more collaboration we see more acceptance and participation in collaborative processes by the public and agencies. There are amazing results based on the collective creativity of the group.”*

Four pairs of participants representing different agencies and public’s confronted each other over the need for more collaboration, using the approach described in “Managing and Recording Emotional Discussions.” These pairs then co-facilitated a small group through the entire process. This task allowed the participants to fully facilitate a process on their own, to demonstrate their skills and abilities to foster consensus.

Each group was facilitated through the following process:

1. What is the evidence of a lack or collaboration between the agencies and the publics?
2. What are the Worst Possible Outcomes that people or organizations have about collaboration?
3. What are the **best possible outcomes** that people or organizations will have about collaboration?
4. What are all the reasons the Best Possible Outcomes are impossible?
5. What are the new beliefs and behaviors to foster the Best Possible Outcomes?
6. What are the strategies and actions we can support?

## GROUP ONE

### THE EVIDENCE OF A LACK OF COLLABORATION

**Nothing and nobody moves.** There is an absence of real communication and listening with respect, lack of leadership and accountability. This is probably due to a lack of genuine thought in the environment. We have a stressed out ecosystem, employees and public.

**Hoarding knowledge and thus, power.** 911 decision making. The boss makes decisions without the input of anyone. I guess I probably wield too much power in making major decisions, so others feel a lack of being honored and listened to.

**There is a lack of trust between everyone.** Community mistrust generates coalitions to protect individual interests. There is a lack of respect and leadership, closed doors, favoritism, and people being left out intentionally.

**There are processes that don't work due to sabotage or because they just don't make any sense.** Too much technical and esoteric data introduced at meetings confuses public input like acronyms.

**We see attitudes and behaviors of arrogance, false pride, apathy, and disrespect.** There are superficial relationships leading to disrespect.

**The landscape is regressing; lots of weeds, the water is too hot; people and plants aren't prospering.**

**Desertification is a state of mind.**

### THE WORST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES THAT PEOPLE OR ORGANIZATIONS HAVE ABOUT COLLABORATION

**We will not be able to arrive to a conclusion.** Decisions are never made. They are so worried about everyone feelings that no decisions get made. Everyone gets stuck in collaboration and nothing gets done.

**Deep held belief: the planet dies.**

**There is a loss of power.** I won't get mine ~ what I want. It becomes a polarized train wreck and the forest supervisor picks what they want anyway. Both the Forest Service and the community withdraw from each other.

## THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES THAT PEOPLE OR ORGANIZATIONS HAVE ABOUT COLLABORATION

**We reach a workable solution in which both parties feel heard, validated and connected to each other.** Every voice will be heard and people will feel respected, therefore decisions will be effectively made and we will continue to shift.

**An acceptable resolution of multiple problems can be resolved into an acceptable solution agreeable to all concerned parties.** There is less stress, arguing and litigation. We have a united energy and drive to achieve what really needs to be done.

**We foster respectful relationships and a knowing that we can solve problems.** People trust each other. Decisions are made easily. Actions are coherent and productive. **Communities feel empowered and part of the solution.** We will develop sustainable, strong and productive social, ecological and economic system that will benefit individuals and organizations locally, regionally and nationally.

**Healthy communities equal healthy forests.** With increased productivity we have high morale and sense of community. People feel valued. Plants, animals and people prosper. Mutual self interest governs.

## ALL THE REASONS COLLABORATION IS IMPOSSIBLE

- **It takes too much time and energy is limited.** Collaboration costs too much money and it won't work. People are tired of fighting the government.
- **There is too much community polarization.** It is too hard to get agreement. People just won't stay with it. We can get and won't get the right people to the table.
- **They are going to make me do something I don't want to do.** It is too huggy and I don't want to deal with people I don't like. There are stereotypes and people are pigeon holed.
- **There is a lack of belief and commitment.** It is the 80/20 rule. You can only get 80% agreement so why worry about the other 20%? There is distrust that it will make a difference, so people won't show up.

## **IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!**

Once people have developed a "best possible outcome," they normally respond in disbelief. "It's impossible!" they say, either verbally, or through their behaviors. This is especially true of people who fear worst possible outcomes, and are successful in making them happen.

This is a normal response. It can occur in the form of laughter as the outcomes are read; or in snide remarks about "motherhood statements;" or in questions that express doubt about the wisdom of the mission. These are all worst possible outcomes statements and behaviors. They express the fear that the best possible outcome is not possible.

This occurs anytime people's "bubbles of belief" are stretched. I visualize people's belief system as being in a large bubble, held in by an invisible membrane, a surface tension created to hold the beliefs inside. Anything that attempts to stretch the bubble, to cause it to expand, will be resisted for fear that the bubble will burst, the contents released, and the person will disappear.

If the mission is outside their normal beliefs or experience, how can it be possible? The participants, in small groups are assigned what would be considered to be "impossible tasks:" In this instance they will need to overcome all their obstacles in their situation and make their best possible outcomes happen.

In order to do these tasks, we need to allow the individuals to express their disbelief, their worst possible outcome. It allows them to bring these fears to the surface, to expose them on the flip-chart, to release the tension and the disbelief. Note that each of the reasons the tasks are impossible is a belief statement.

Once this is done, then the person will be willing to explore the possibility of doing it. This allows them to explore another possibility, to expend their "bubble of belief."

### **The Question:**

- \* **What Are All the Reasons it Is Impossible to Make the Best Possible Outcomes Happen?**

When the statements are read off to the large group, I make the comment that all of these are **belief statements** that will get in the way of fostering their outcomes.

## **NEW BELIEFS AND BEHAVIORS TO MAKE THE IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE**

If we believe it is impossible, then there will be no effort to foster the desired outcomes. These belief statements, if continually expressed, “brainwash” those making them, and those hearing them. It will feel hopeless, not worth the time. Why waste time if we will just fail?

Doing the impossible requires that these negative, resistant beliefs become visible and conscious. Then we can look at them and ask if they are really true. It also allows us to consider and explore new and adaptive beliefs and behaviors that would make it possible.

Sound paradoxical? It is. If you believe it is impossible, then it will be. And you deny yourself a choice. But, if I can help you to consider what new beliefs and behaviors would make it possible, then you have a choice.

Human beings are constituted especially to do the impossible. To do what is possible is mediocre. To do the impossible requires excellence. We all have this capacity.

But, only if we give ourselves the choice. The participants are asked to record the answer to the following question on a 3 x 5 card:

### **The Question:**

- \* **What New Adaptive Beliefs and Behaviors Will Make it Possible to Do this Task?**

The answers are then recorded to the flip charts.

**NEW BELIEFS AND BEHAVIORS  
TO FOSTER THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOME**

- **Respectful listening.** Active listening. To hold a positive Pygmalion respect for all opinions. Respect for all opinions and feelings.
- **Trust in others and strive to understand diverse points of view.** Value all viewpoints. Seeking and understanding.
- **Believe in new possibilities by collaborating and believe it is already working.** That the impossible is possible and that taking time to collaborate now will save time, problems and money later. Believe the impossible is possible!
- **Lots of real laughing.**
- **Meeting mutual interest is possible without falling on your own sword.** Replace hate and acrimony with forgiveness and understanding.
- **Providing a safe place for community to be nurtured will help fulfill our responsibility to the land.** A gift for our youth to enable humanity to thrive with each other and the environment peacefully.

## **GROUP TWO**

### **THE EVIDENCE OF A LACK OF COLLABORATION**

**There are a high number of appeals and litigation.** In addition there are back room deals for negotiation which creates a lack of trust.

**We see compartmentalized communications.** People within and outside the agency are saying the same thing over and over again and people still working on the same problems. Each time they say it, they say it a little louder.

**There is the loss of a common goal.** There is closed mindedness. Letters to the editor and local paper reveal hurt feelings. We have the results of Measure 37.

### **THE WORST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES THAT PEOPLE OR ORGANIZATIONS HAVE ABOUT COLLABORATION**

**They say they do it but they don't ~ so they can justify when it done work.**  
Nothing much comes out of that collaboration anyway.

**The project will still be litigated and it will waste time.** It will not be rewarded. It will lead to the lowest common denominator approach to resource management. My tires will get slashed.

**There will be gridlock and decisions will be influenced by small but powerful entities.** The power group will get their way and I will be made to give up what I think is important. I will be found wrong and lose face and power within the organization.

## THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOME OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN PEOPLE OR ORGANIZATIONS

**The ground is taken care of and all stakeholders have a share in the outcome.**

Relationships thrive and people passionately participate in their democracy for the good of these public lands. More money goes on the ground.

**People develop a sense of community that helps them tackle future issues.** The community solves my problems and challenges because they care.

**All parties get their needs met as decisions are made in a fair and equitable manner.**

We have a true democracy where by diverse interests work together to find and implement sustainable solutions that advance long term and landscape level, social, economic and ecological well being.

**New conflicts will be resolved and a new understanding of how to resolve them may be used when future conflicts arise and may foster new methods of communication.**

As more energy is released there is renewed mutual focus and productivity increases. No single individual sacrifices his or her individuality.

I go home on time.

## ALL THE REASONS COLLABORATION IS IMPOSSIBLE

- **Not enough time.** I don't have time to listen to the public. It is not my job. We are the experts, we are the professionals. We know best.
- **Not everyone will participate.**
- **People won't agree and it takes too much time.** It doesn't matter because we won't do what we agreed to do anyway. We will never get the timber industry and earth first to agree to anything.
- **It out of my hands.**
- Because people don't change.

## **NEW BELIEFS AND BEHAVIORS TO FOSTER THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOME**

- **Have the courage to take risks, enter the unknown and make coyote your ally.** I can do this effectively. I can be aware of my non verbal behavior and I can have good expectations of my community.
- **Listen and believe the impossible is possible.** Everyone opinion matters, and we address their concerns.
- **Gain trust by being visible, transparent, authentic and honest.**
- **Believe that everyone is basically good, as opposed to a bonehead.**

### **GROUP THREE**

## **THE EVIDENCE OF A LACK OF COLLABORATION**

**There are long term poor working relations among employees and between employees and the public.** Widely present signs include withheld decoupled information. There is evidence in the great separation of employee morale. Some are ecstatic and most are not.

**There is distrust among team members to accomplish assigned duties.** There is wasted time, energy and money. There is a blame game resulting from and creating low self esteem, sickness, health issues, and fear. There is also an unwillingness to acknowledge this and invest in the necessary time and resources required for a collaborative working environment.

**The perception is a lack of understanding of practices and principles of what collaboration is and how you really do need to go slow to go fast later.** One glaring example is the unwillingness by all interested parties to participate. We have a scattered shot gun type approach to doing our work.

**There is a decline of the status quo, further disrespect, ignorance, apathy, inefficiency, disenfranchisement, unfounded rumors and stereotypes.**

**There is Litigation.**

## **THE WORST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES THAT PEOPLE OR ORGANIZATIONS HAVE ABOUT COLLABORATION**

**An extended time investment will yield no results.** It could take considerably more time than we have and it may disrupt the original purpose. I am not sure if true or just a worst possible outcome. This is just what I hear people say.

**I will give away my power to the group.** Depending on the intent of organization the outcome could be destructive. I won't get what I want if they get what they want. I think a lot of people think that once it starts it will never stop.

**It is smoke and mirrors.** The agency will do nothing or the agency will do something bad. What I believe to be fact and truth will be proven wrong or worse yet I will change my belief.

## **THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOME OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN PEOPLE OR ORGANIZATIONS**

**We develop an adaptive management plan that is doable and is not only accepted by everyone but is fully supported ~ leading to success and a safe environment for plan implementation and ultimately, achievement of desired goals.**

**The process will foster trust that lasts for longer than this project.** There is trust, respect, new ideas, self empowerment and open minds. There is personal responsibility, improved resource conditions and sustainable communities and ecosystems.

**A greater understanding of our differences and values will help us treat each other with greater respect.** In turn, the trust we build will generate a permeating sense of collaboration in all that we do.

**We are achieving our mission.** At the community level we have a healthy environment, economy, and social setting. At the world level, countries do not war with each other. We don't need to start from ground zero.

**There is better thinking and better feelings because of the shared decision making authority.** Everybody is satisfied that she/he has what she/he needs to be happy. We see greater productivity by all, progress toward all goals, positive healthy relationships and morale and more confidence in resolving conflicts.

I won't come again if I have to do this process again.

## ALL THE REASONS COLLABORATION IS IMPOSSIBLE

- ***There is no time to do it.*** It takes too long and is too expensive and we can get everyone in one place.
- ***The other group doesn't like our group.*** There is also an unwillingness to collaborate by certain parties. They won't cooperate and aren't interested in our side. Differences are too great; people and organizations forget, neglect or renege on their commitments.
- ***There needs to be one person who makes a decision.*** Too many points of view make it too complex when considering the alternatives. It just sets the decision up for failure.
- ***There is a lack of regulatory support and no progress reporting mechanism.*** There are no social skills, fears and hatred.

## NEW BELIEFS AND BEHAVIORS TO FOSTER THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOME

- ***Have empathy for other people working to solve other people issues, translating though into action, acceptance of what and whom I may not like.*** Show humility valuing other humans basic human rights.
- ***Willingness and patience while building relationships.*** Don't take things personally. Be very forgiving when others do things when they are self conscious.
- ***Respectful listening.*** Recognize the validity of others views, recognize and resolve internal conflict and recognize other beliefs do not threaten my own.
- ***Believe there is enough time to go slow.*** Being willing to make the investment valuing a collaborative environment knowing this can make a difference in our quality of life.
- ***Respect and have faith in the leadership and the process.*** Believe in the power of positive thinking. Work on improving myself and walk the talk. Set the example of how I want others to be.
- ***Believe that people can and will change.*** Showing open mindedness and be willing to make a paradigm shift.

## **GROUP 4**

### **THE EVIDENCE OF A LACK OF COLLABORATION**

**There is a lack of communication and duplicated effort.** There is a heavy reliance on words like requirement, policy, standards, have to, and a lack of words like: what do you think? Based on what? And describe it to me.

**The Resource Specialist is not involved.**

**There is a lack of desire to understand each other.** We have litigation, hurt feelings, disrespected children, land and others.

**There are misunderstandings and conflicts.** Projects are not implemented as planned. This makes it a waste of time and money.

### **THE WORST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES THAT PEOPLE OR ORGANIZATIONS HAVE ABOUT COLLABORATION**

**Collaboration will take time away from our everyday jobs.** It will be a waste of time. We won't get anywhere because we have been there and done that.

**There will be a lack of effective communication ~ real, honest, filled with integrity.** Everything will change due to the most assertive people winning.

**Nothing will change.**

**We must give up or share our power to make decisions.** We might have to do something outside of our comfort zone, which will increase the conflict. There will be turf battles.

## **THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES THAT PEOPLE OR ORGANIZATIONS HAVE ABOUT COLLABORATION**

**What was believed possible was exceeded and the resources benefited the most.** Beliefs and values will be represented in project goals. Synergy outcomes go beyond anyone imagination.

**Good listening will increase respect and efficiency in completion of collaborative efforts.** We will hear more stories of humans achieving the impossible and sustained behavior from changed beliefs. There is adaptability and flexibility leading to healthy children, land and others.

**Decisions and actions have broad based community support.** Completion of projects will expand community cohesiveness. Rather than having less time to do your job, you may end up having a whole new group of people to help.

**There will be integration between disciplines and improved productivity and communication.** We will see a greater sharing of responsibility and a stronger foundation for decisions because its not one person ~ such as a ranger or a principal. It is everyone.

**There will be increased achievement and an increased sense of value for further collaboration.** We release endorphins. There will be less redundancy. We have increased understanding, productivity, respect and well being and a decrease in conflict.

**And then we all go heaven.**

## **ALL THE REASONS COLLABORATION IS IMPOSSIBLE**

- **There is not enough time.** The people you e working with don't have any power or authority within the organization, so you just wasted your time. There is not enough time.
- **Well, you l never get everyone to agree.** Because so and so is stubborn, stupid and selfish.
- **The community doesn't really know what right for the land.**
- **The bureaucracy is too big and too complicated. I don't know how.** The problem is impossible, or unsolvable.
- **Competition is destructive.**

**NEW BELIEFS AND BEHAVIORS  
TO FOSTER THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOME**

- **Belief in others supportive network offering resources such as time, materials and funding.**
- **Laughter. Humility. Humor. Honor. It is hopeful.**
- **Believing that new approaches repeated tenaciously will accomplish new results.**
- **Belief that you can trust individuals to agree upon decisions to be implemented and the outcomes.**
- **Respectful listening.** Belief that everyone should have a voice. Listen for understanding.
- Belief that the impossible is possible.

## **DEVELOPING CONSENSUS ON STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS FOR CHANGE A CONTINUUM OF APPROACHES**

Strategies and actions can be developed in a number of different ways, depending on the amount of change, the level of change, the amount of information available and the risks involved. If the change is minor, a modification, with low risk and available information, then the participants can immediately respond with ideas.

If the change is transformational, with many changes involved, with high risk, and where the amount of information available is low, or not even known yet, then the participants need more time to develop and foster new beliefs, and create an adaptive information base with common understanding and support. Each of the approaches below can be appropriate across a range of circumstances:

- 1. RECORDING DIRECTLY:** If the situation is a simple one, where the participants know the information and have ready strategies, they can record the answer to the question directly to the flip charts. This is similar to brainstorming, except that the participants take turns. This is important especially if members of the public participate. It creates a safer environment in which to offer ideas.

### **The Question:**

- \* **What Strategies or Actions Will Foster the Best Possible Outcomes?**

- 2. RECORDING DELIBERATIVELY:** If the participants are uncertain about what to do, have them record to a 3 x 5 card first.

### **The Question:**

- \* **What Strategies or Actions Will Foster the Best Possible Outcomes?**

This allows them to think deliberately and deeply about what they would like to do to foster the best possible outcomes. They have information, but need time to develop the ideas in their own internal system. After recording to the cards, they then report and have their ideas recorded to the flip charts.

- 3. EXPLORING, THEN RECORDING DELIBERATIVELY:**

If the change is transformational, but the situation is not complex, or seem impossible, the participants can explore possible strategies and actions

before developing them. This starts with each person answering the question without recording:

**The Question:**

\* **What Strategies or Actions Will Foster the Best Possible Outcomes?**

The participants each express and explore strategies and actions, with the others listening. This allows the brain to respond to the question in the safest possible environment. Each expression allows others to think of new ideas.

It is normal for the participants to forget to speak in turn. When a person speaks, they will disagree, or raise impossible questions. They may want to add an idea to another persons. Or, they may want to brainstorm. This actually slows down the process. It focuses on one or two people, allowing others the opportunity to avoid the pain of thinking deeply, creatively, a somewhat frustrating and painful process. I will normally stop the groups, and remind them to speak in turn, to listen with respect, to suspend judgement.

This activity will allow for the needed deliberative discussion. The participants are now asked to record the ideas they heard and would support on 3 x 5 cards. They are encouraged to use their ideas as well as others, to integrate them.

**The Question:**

\* **What Ideas Have You Heard (Yours and Others) That Would Successfully Foster the Best Possible Outcomes?**

These are recorded to the flip charts.

**4. EXPLORING, EXPANDING AND REACHING CONSENSUS:** This process is appropriate if there is time, the situation is one of transformational change, a complex situation, where there are no set answers. It uses the deliberative exploration approach, seeking to foster new information and ideas, while seeking consensus. It is done in 4 stages:

1. The participants are first asked to respond to the question without recording. The participants each express and explore strategies and actions, with the others

listening. This allows the brain to respond to the "vacant space" in the safest possible environment. Each expression allows others to think of new ideas. The process builds on itself, creating a sense of consensus.

**The Question:**

\* **What Are the Strategies and Actions That Will Foster the Best Possible Outcomes?**

It is normal for the participants to forget to speak in turn. When a person speaks, they will disagree, or raise impossible questions. They may want to add an idea to another persons'. Or, they may want to brainstorm. This actually slows down the process. It focuses on one or two people, allowing others the opportunity to avoid the pain of thinking deeply, creatively, a somewhat frustrating and painful process. I will normally stop the groups, and remind them to speak in turn, to listen with respect, to suspend judgement.

2. When all have spoken, the participants are then asked to answer the question:

**The Question:**

\* **What Did You Hear from Others That You Liked, and What Additional Ideas Did You Think Of?**

This requires that the participants listen, and be able to describe the ideas they liked from others. This begins to build the needed consensus. It also recognizes that, as we listen, we get additional ideas. This is especially true if we have already spoken and been listened to.

3. These two activities allow for the needed intense and deliberative discussion. The participants are now asked to record the ideas they heard and would support on 3 x 5 cards, and record them to the easel. They are encouraged to use their ideas as well as others, to integrate them.

**The Question:**

\* **What Ideas Have You Heard (Yours and Others) That Would Successfully Foster the Best Possible Outcomes? Integrate Ideas, Record Them Fully.**

Normally, the ideas recorded to the easel will be similar, within groups and between groups, so that two or three major strategies will emerge that are supported by all groups and participants.

## **APPENDIX**

## \* A RELATIONSHIP CONFRONTATION/RESOLUTION PROCESS

The participants have explored the nature of their relationships, and developed the beliefs and behaviors that would foster their desired outcomes. In doing so, they have experienced listening with respect, creating a new and shared knowledge base. They have experienced being trusting, open and honest.

The educators are now asked to experience confronting the conflicts that are unresolved in their relationships. They experience a process for resolving relationship conflicts by actually confronting the conflicts between them.

This is the process that was demonstrated and experienced:

- STEP 1: The individuals in conflict are asked if they would be willing to confront their issue with the larger group. The process was first explained to them. At this point, the participants readily agree to the experience.
- STEP 2. The conflict persons select 1-2 individuals to listen for them, normally someone of the opposite gender. These people play the role of allowing the persons in conflict to be natural and reactive when speaking to the other about the conflict. They hear the left brain material that is hidden in the right brain and reactive tones of voice.
- STEP 3. The first person having the issue with the other begins by expressing the nature of the relationship conflict as she sees it, and describes how she feels about it.  
*What is the situation as you see it, how did it get to be this way?  
How do you feel about it?*
- STEP 4. The listener for the other person repeats what she heard the first person say.  
*This is what I heard (the speaker) say.*
- STEP 5. The other person responds by providing his reaction to the situation as expressed by the first person, providing his view of the situation, and how it makes him feel.  
*What is the situation as you see it, how did it get to be this way?  
How do you feel about it?*
- STEP 6. The listener for the first person expresses what he heard the other say.  
*This is what I heard (the speaker) say.*
- STEP 7. There are a number of options here, some, or all, of which can apply:

**\* A RELATIONSHIP CONFRONTATION/RESOLUTION PROCESS (Cont.)**

- o The first person reacts and responds to what was said. The listener again repeats what she heard to the other. The other person responds and reacts to the new information. This is repeated by the other listener. This allows each person to clarify information, to get other feelings out, to maybe even be more confrontive now that it feels safe.
- o The listeners are asked to state what they feel are the key issues between the parties. This provides pro-active information to the protagonists, and helps them process the conflict.
- o Other members of the group are asked to state what they heard, how they feel about it, and what some resolution of the problem would be.
- o If others were mentioned by either of the two protagonists, they are given an opportunity to provide their view of the situation and how they feel about it.

STEP 8. The first person is asked to express the needs of the other that she heard need to be met. This is an expression of the other's best outcomes in the relationship. She then expresses the needs she has that the other person can meet to help the relationship.

STEP 9. The other person states the needs he heard the first person has, and states what his needs are. He then states what he is willing to do to meet the needs.

STEP 10. The first person repeats the needs she hears the other has, and states her willingness to meet those needs.

STEP 11. (OPTIONAL) Each person describes the relationship they will have with the other in a set period of time. This description may be recorded. This provides a best outcome or mission of the parties.

STEP 12. Each person who participated states how they feel about the confrontation and resolution, and what they learned from the experience. Each of the listeners speaks first, then the parties in the conflict close the discussion.

**\* A RELATIONSHIP CONFRONTATION/RESOLUTION PROCESS (Cont.)**

- o How do you feel about this experience?
- o What did you learn that will make the group successful?

STEP 13. The parties are honored by having them go to the center of the room. This allows them to make some physical gesture of resolution.

The facilitator manages this process. It is important that the individuals agree to the process in the beginning. Once the individuals start to speak, they are allowed to continue without interruption. It is not unusual for the other person to want to immediately set the record straight as the first person talks. The facilitator must encourage this person to listen until the first person is done.

Sometimes another member of the group wants to interrupt and set the record straight. Again, the facilitator must ask the person to wait until the protagonists themselves have spoken before letting others be involved. Each person is allowed to speak, but in turn, when the individuals in conflict have had their say.

Sometimes one of the parties wants to go back over old ground. It is best to move the parties on, cautioning against the natural desire to remain in the conflict. The individual may be allowed to add information, even if repetitive, provided the solution is given at the end of the statement. It is the responsibility of the facilitator to encourage the participants to move ahead, while still being respectful of the need to confront.

## **\* COLLECTIVE STATEMENTS**

Collective statements are based on the belief that each of us sees the world from a different viewpoint. Our individual views are like pieces of a puzzle -- when we fit them all together we get the full picture.

In most meetings our views tend to be seen as competitive. When someone speaks, another person responds with a counter-statement, and the meeting progresses with each trying to convince the other of his or her rightness. This behavior is based on a belief in the "one right answer" to all questions. Only one of us can be right, so our intelligence is used to establish that rightness firmly. It becomes a competition in which each person's ego and intelligence are at stake.

This is either/or thinking -- either you are right or I am! Often, two or three people will capture all the time in a meeting with this either/or conflict, while others listen, get bored, and drop out. It is a time-consuming, ineffective process. The meeting ends with some vaguely worded compromise that relieves the participants. They leave with little commitment to it.

Collective thinking assumes we can all learn something from each other. We have different views of a situation, and all views are right.

This is done with many of the workshop tasks. The collective statements are the result of adding individual statements together, keeping each person's words to the best extent possible, creating a statement of the total group.

## **DEVELOPING A COLLECTIVE STATEMENT (CONT.)**

The statements are segregated to become like groups of statements:

### **SENIOR CITIZENS WORST OUTCOMES OF THE SITUATION:**

2. Will regress, if no progress
8. If not forward, then backwards.
  
3. Things fine, no higher taxes
9. Become retirement community, kids leave, no industry
  
5. My needs as senior will not be considered and taxes rise--skyrocket
4. Our senior programs will be cut--lack of funds
  
1. Unsafe community to live in.
6. More leave town, higher crime, higher taxes, less facilities
7. Leads to collapse of government
10. Uncertain, unhappy future

These statements are now linked together to form the final collective statement. Words that are added in the process are shown in parentheses:

### **THE SENIOR CITIZENS WORST OUTCOMES:**

(The community) will regress, if (there is) no progress. If (we do) not (move) forward, then (we slide) backwards.

(We all think that) things (are) fine, (as long as there are) no higher taxes. (We) become (a) retirement community, (the) kids leave, (there is) no industry.

My needs as (a) senior will not be considered and taxes will rise, skyrocketing. Our senior programs will be cut (because) of (a) lack of funds.

(This will be an) unsafe community to live in. (More business and people) leave town, (because of) higher crime, higher taxes, less facilities. (This) leads to a collapse of government. (We face) an uncertain, unhappy future.

## **DEVELOPING A COLLECTIVE STATEMENT (CONT.)**

This is another example of the process. Begin with the original recorded statements:

### **PARENTS WORST OUTCOMES OF THE SITUATION:**

1. Extremely large classrooms (40/50 room)
2. Children won't have educational background to get into college
3. If parenting skills not improved, what will it do to child's education?
4. If we can't solve drug problem, what is future of our children?
5. The children will never leave home.
6. My kids will waste their talents and be average like everybody else.
7. Dropping out!
8. The children won't be happy and won't be prepared for the next step after high school
9. Parents lack of concern will hinder ability of the child
10. Drugs and gangs will come into community
11. The lack of the best education and know-how to deal with life on their own.

Segregate them into the like statements:

### **PARENTS WORST OUTCOMES OF THE SITUATION:**

11. The lack of the best education and know-how to deal with life on their own.
8. The children won't be happy and won't be prepared for the next step after high school
2. Children won't have educational background to get into college
6. My kids will waste their talents and be average like everybody else.
  
1. Extremely large classrooms (40/50 room)
7. Dropping out!
5. The children will never leave home.
  
9. Parents lack of concern will hinder ability of the child
3. If parenting skills not improved, what will it do to child's education?
  
10. Drugs and gangs will come into community
4. If we can't solve drug problem, what is future of our children?

### **PARENTS WORST OUTCOMES OF THE SITUATION:**

Then put the statements together, adding words where absolutely necessary, keeping the original intent as much as possible.

### **THE PARENTS WORST OUTCOMES:**

(The children will have a) lack of the best education and (the) know-how to deal with life on their own. (They) won't be happy and won't be prepared for the next step after high school. (Our) children won't have educational background to get into college. (Our) kids will waste their talents and be average like everybody else.

(We will have) extremely large classrooms (40/50 room). (The students are) dropping out (of school)! The children will never leave home!

(The) parents lack of concern will hinder ability of the child. If parenting skills (are) not improved, what will it do to the child's education?

Drugs and gangs will come into community. If we can't solve the drug problem, what is (the) future of our children?

## THE COMMUNITY IS TELLING A STORY

For years I sought for a way to help people understand at an integrative, or organic level, the value of the collective statements, and all of the activities that lead up to it. It was the story telling approach of an Indian elder that helped me to see how to do this.

**Everyone Is Telling a Story:** I ask 6 to 8 people who are seated together in the circle to stand and move one step into the circle. I walk out into the center of the circle and act as the director of this story.

*“I have learned, over time, that every conflict has a community of interest, that it brings together those who are influenced or impacted by the decision. I am asking these people to represent a community of interest.*

*Another thing I learned is that each community that is brought together around a conflict has a community story to tell, but the individual members do not understand that. They each come to the gathering believing that **they have the entire story in themselves**, and they are there to convince the others of the “truth” of what they know.*

*To demonstrate this, I am going to ask this group to tell a story. They are going to do this like we did when we were in kindergarten, and the teacher asked us to each tell a part of the story. We begin with Rob, who will repeat the first sentence that I give him. This is the beginning of the story. Then, Kathy will add her sentence to the story, followed by Laura adding a sentence, and so on, until Crista, the last person in the line, will create an ending for the story.*

I state for Rob the first sentence for the story: **“A porcupine walked into the meadow.”**

Rob: *A porcupine walked into the meadow.”*

Kathy: *(Thinking first) It was a warm and sunny day.”*

Laura: *“He saw another animal in the meadow.”*

Jon: *“It was a bear, an angry bear just waking up from a winter nap.”*

Debbie: *The bear growled at the porcupine when he approached.”*

Dawn: *“This frightened the porcupine, so he climbed a tree to get away from the bear.*

Crista: *There he met a female porcupine who became his mate for life.”*

With the ending of this story the large group will normally laugh and applaud. The members of the story group are often nervous about speaking and really think, trying to come up with the “right” sentence that makes sense.

I repeat the learning I have had about communities of interest.

*“I have learned that every conflict has a community of interest, and that community which is drawn together has a community story to tell. But, they don’t know that. They each think they have the full story.”*

**Everyone thinks they have the whole story:** I have Rob and Crista step out in front of the story tellers, turning to face each other. I encourage them to repeat their sentence to each other, to let the other know what the “true” story is.

Rob: *“The porcupine walked into the meadow.”*

Crista: *There he met a female porcupine who became his mate for life.”*

They both look at me, and I encourage them..... *“The other person has not got it yet.”* Keep repeating it until he gets it.

Rob repeats to Crista: *“The porcupine walked into the meadow.”*

Crista repeats: *“There he met a female porcupine who became his mate for life.”* with a tone of voice that is impatient.

Rob repeats with more vigor: *“The porcupine walked into the meadow.”*

Crista, her hands on her hips leans forward and repeats firmly: *“There he met a female porcupine who became his mate for life!”*

Rob: *“NO!!! The porcupine walked into the meadow!!”* He speaks with steely confidence.... this is the truth!

Crista, before he is done, loudly with emphasis and pointing her finger into his chest: *“There he met a female porcupine who became his mate for life.”*

Rob, leaning forward now, with more emphasis and a loud voice: *“The porcupine walked into the meadow.... and that is all there is to it!!”*

Crista, now leaning nose to nose with him, and just as loudly: *“There he met a female porcupine who became his mate for life.”*

The group laughs, often applauds, they recognize themselves, they have seen this in many meetings. I ask them, rhetorically, “Have you ever experienced this kind of argument before? They all nod their heads.

**Everyone wants the group to repeat their story line:** I have Rob and Crista return to the story teller group. I turn to the others:

*“What Rob and Crista both want is to win this argument, and have everybody else repeat their sentence as the entire story line.”*

I ask Rob to repeat his sentence, and for the others to repeat it exactly as he said it.

Rob: *A porcupine walked into the meadow.”*

Kathy: *A porcupine walked into the meadow.”*

Laura: *A porcupine walked into the meadow.”*

Jon: *A porcupine walked into the meadow.”*

Debbie: *A porcupine walked into the meadow.”*

Dawn: *A porcupine walked into the meadow.”*

Crista (resisting): *NO WAY! There he met a female porcupine who became his mate for life.”*

Again, the community laughs. They understand the implications of this activity. Now, they know, Crista wants everyone to repeat her sentence, because **she** has the truth.

**The story is all mixed up:** In addition to everyone wanting to be right with their “story line,” when the group meets, they are seated out of order. I move the standing participants around, mixing their order. Then I ask them to repeat their sentence:

Debbie: *The bear growled at the porcupine when he approached.”*

Laura: *“He saw another animal in the meadow.”*

Rob: *A porcupine walked into the meadow.”*

Dawn: *“This frightened the porcupine, so he climbed a tree to get away from the bear.*

Kathy: *“It was a warm and sunny day.”*

*Crista: There he met a female porcupine who became his mate for life.*”

*Jon: “It was a bear, an angry bear just waking up from a winter nap.”*

Now, this discussion doesn’t seem to make any sense, especially if you are the manager who needs to make the decision. These people all appear to be in conflict with what they are saying. There is no similarity. Who should you believe? What can you base your decision on?

In the consensus process, we encourage each person to express their view, and, we record as it is being expressed. These are the different perceptions of the entire community. Then we take that information from this group, and any other group, and write a collective statement. When we do that it sounds like this:

(I move the story tellers to their original position and have them repeat their sentences)

*Rob: A porcupine walked into the meadow.”*

*Kathy: “It was a warm and sunny day.”*

*Laura: “He saw another animal in the meadow.”*

*Jon: “It was a bear, an angry bear just waking up from a winter nap.”*

*Debbie: The bear growled at the porcupine when he approached.”*

*Dawn: “This frightened the porcupine, so he climbed a tree to get away from the bear.*

*Crista: There he met a female porcupine who became his mate for life.”*

This collective statements tells the “whole story” and is inclusive of everyone views. Now that you know the whole story as a manager, you can begin to take action to do something about what is happening. *“It sounds to me like we have an angry bear up in the meadow. We better tell other humans about this to keep them away. Or, better yet, have the bear removed to a safer place, so the porcupines can climb down the tree and return to their home.”*

**If We Exclude Others, We Don’t Get the Whole Story:** I then remove 4 members of the group. Rob is removed because he looks like a hippie, and we certainly don’t want to give him any recognition. Jon is always looking for the negative in things, so leave him out. Then, Deb is a member of the public, what does she know about these things? Finally, don’t include Dawn, she is part of that rabid environmentalist group. So, we are left with this story:

*Kathy: "It was a warm and sunny day."*

*Laura: "He saw another animal in the meadow."*

*Crista: There he met a female porcupine who became his mate for life."*

Now,... is that the same story? It is certainly a warm and positive story, but it is incomplete, and leaves out important information. If you made a decision to send a group of people up to this meadow, would they have all the information they need?

**Coalitions Form and a Battle Begins:** The four people who were excluded find they have a common purpose. They were not included, acknowledged, or their information listened to. They form a coalition to get the attention of those who make the decision. They form a line facing the "included group" and begin shouting their sentences at the same time to the others, wanting attention and acknowledgment of their views.

**All** Rob: *A porcupine walked into the meadow."*

**Spoken** Jon: *"It was a bear, an angry bear just waking up from a winter nap."*

**At the** Dawn: *"This frightened the porcupine, so he climbed a tree to get away from the bear."*

**Same time** Debbie: *The bear growled at the porcupine when he approached."*

This causes the "included group to come together as a block, expressing their point of view just as loudly, and at the same time. No one listens, if they did it would just sound garbled.

**All spoken** Kathy: *"It was a warm and sunny day."*

**At the** Laura: *"He saw another animal in the meadow."*

**Same time** Crista: *There he met a female porcupine who became his mate for life."*

Again, the message is visually and intellectually clear to the larger group. If you exclude people, do not hear or acknowledge their information, they will form coalitions and oppose you. In doing so, while all the needed information is expressed, little of it is actually heard.

**Including everyone, hearing the whole story, results in community.** I bring back the excluded members and they are integrated into the whole story. I remind them that the collective statement includes all words expressed by the individuals in the group. The purpose of the collective statement writer is to write the story.

*A porcupine walked into the meadow. It was a warm and sunny day. He saw another animal in the meadow. It was a bear, an angry bear just waking up from a winter nap.*

*The bear growled at the porcupine when he approached. This frightened the porcupine, so he climbed a tree to get away from the bear. There he met a female porcupine who became his mate for life.*

When this is done, Kathy sees her statement is in the story. It is between Rob and Laura's statements (I have Kathy hold Rob's hand and Laura's hand). She is part of the story connected with them. In like manner, Laura is connected by the story to Jon, and Jon to Debbie, etc. Soon, all the storytellers are connected with their hands.

*"This," I emphasize, "is community." Everyone has had their say, been listened too and acknowledged. And, what they have said has been put into a collective statement, linking them together. Now, they can decide what to do about this story they have created."*

I ask those standing to take a bow, still holding their hands, and then ask the members of the group to honor these people for helping them learn. They all stand and applaud.

## I MATTER

*“I didn’t think I mattered..... until today.”*

Those words were spoken by a junior in high school, a young blond haired teenager. She spoke them at the end of the day, as the group of students were doing the closure. All eyes, and all attention were immediately upon her.

She spoke these words carefully and deliberately. Her head was up and her eyes focused on the group. She was looking at 55 other students from her high school, a multi-colored, multi-ethnic group. These would have been considered the at-risk children in the school, children with learning problems that were physical, emotional, intellectual. They would be considered problem children by most of us.

To their teachers who were present, and their Principal, who sponsored this day, they were an opportunity. The group of almost 60 adults and high school students was brought together to explore the learning environment they had created in their school, educators and students. Their purpose was to explore and establish a movement to create the kind of learning environment that would motivate them to learn, to grow into capable, growing human beings.

They had engaged themselves in this exploration, with great focus and intensity, surprising all the adults with their interest in creating a learning environment that was healthy and functional. They knew what the situation was, why it was, and they knew what they wanted, and how to get there.

At the end of the day, the whole group sat in a circle, and each adult and student answered the closure questions:

*How do you feel about this session today?*

*What did you learn that will help us create that learning environment that you want?*

When it was her turn to speak, the young woman thought for a moment before speaking, her head down slightly. A pause. Then, speaking softly, but purposefully;

*“Before today, I didn’t really think that I mattered. I didn’t think I mattered to my family, to my classmates or teachers, or to anyone else. I often thought that it would make no difference to anyone or anything if I was even here.”* She paused.

*“I knew I didn’t matter. I often thought of not being here (sic alive), and if that happened, that nobody would even notice that I was gone.”*

The shocking nature of her statement was felt by the entire group. At this moment the entire attention of the group was focused on this young woman, expressing herself truthfully, authentically. At this moment, she mattered to them, and it was obvious.

*“Today has changed all that,” she said as she continued. Her eyes were misted with tears now, as were the eyes of many of the group. “I realized today that I did make a difference, that what I had to say was important, because it was different than what others had to say. And..... I was listened to when I said it. Then I heard the statements (collective statements) that we read at the end of the day, and I could see what I said was in there. And, it made a difference..... I made a difference.”*

*“That is what I learned,” she said softly, but clearly, her voice catching somewhat, “ that I make a difference, that I matter. After today I will never forget that. That is what I learned.*

There was a pause, silence for a moment, then a few sounds of applause, then more, until all were applauding and standing. As they did this I sensed they were not only applauding this young person and what she said, what she learned. They were applauding the impact of the statement on them, adult and student, .... they realized they mattered, they made a difference, and she had expressed this for all of them.

**\* FROM THE OLD TO THE NEW**  
**a MOVEMENT TO EMPOWERMENT AND EQUITY**

Often, a facilitator must manage a large group. This will occur with town hall meetings, or meetings intended to gain awareness, understanding and support from the entire community.

The room is arranged normally in the traditional auditorium style, with rows of chairs facing the speakers podium or table in the front.

The process for moving from this traditional arrangement to the new is as follows:

1. The Chairman of the Board expresses a welcome, introducing herself, expressing the expectations of the meeting and her feeling about the meeting. The Superintendent may also make an introductory statement, a grounding. (8 minutes)
2. a member of the Board, or of the audience leads the group in a community grounding; normally a song, or the pledge of allegiance. Everyone stands during this activity. (8 minutes)
3. a pause is provided after the song, 15-30 seconds of silence, with all standing. (3 minutes)
4. The facilitator introduces the brief insight on the grounding and the pause. Then the process for the day is summarized (using a visual), with a focus on the movement to the new groups: (8 minutes)
  - \* We will be forming small diverse groups of people. (8-12 per group)
  - \* Each small group will have a facilitator who will see that the questions are asked, that each person is allowed to speak in their turn.
  - \* For some tasks a recorder will be assigned to record the statements of the members of the group.
  - \* Each person will be provided the opportunity to speak and be listened to with respect. Each person is responsible to listen and learn when others are speaking.

**\* FROM THE OLD TO THE NEW (Cont.)**

5. The facilitator asks the facilitators to stand, repeats their role, and honors them for it. They are then moved to their assigned easel. (3 minutes)
  
6. The facilitators asks the different groups to stand, honoring each of them in turn with a brief statement, and with applause from the audience. Each group is distributed to the small groups, taking their chairs with them as they go. (10 minutes)
  - \* Board of Education (elected)
  - \* Senior Citizens (respected elders)
  - \* Students (our purpose)
  - \* Parents (our partners)
  - \* Support Staff (our support, the powerless ones)
  - \* Business (the clients)
  - \* Teachers (the front line)
  - \* Principals (the manager, mentor)
  - \* Administrators(service)
  - \* Etc.....
  
7. The facilitator checks to see that the groups are fairly equal and representative. Be comfortable with the way the "universe" distributes people. (3-5 minutes)
  
8. The facilitator instructs the group facilitator to lead the grounding. They do. (15-20 minutes)
  
9. When all individuals have completed the grounding (has everyone spoken yet?) the facilitator provides insight on the grounding. (7-10 minutes)
  
10. The facilitator talks about the greeting circle process and instructs the group facilitator to lead the greeting. (15-20 minutes)
  
11. Normally a break is needed here. (15 minutes)
  
12. The groups reconvene and answer the life-long learning questions. (8-12 minutes)
  
13. The facilitator provides insight on the greeting circle and the life-long learning process.
  
14. A panel of participants is moved to the front of the room. Each speaks on the assigned topic for 2-5 minutes. (12-20 minutes)

## The Interview Process

As taught by Bob Chadwick, the interview process is intended to do several things. It allows the interviewed person to acknowledge their own awareness of the situation, their fears, identify expectations for outcomes and to begin to think about strategies for resolving the issues/outcomes. A successful interview will begin moving people toward resolution, as well as providing key information to the facilitator.

The interviewer gets a sense of what the “real” problem is, of where the tension points are, and helps formulation of a possible meeting design that will move the parties in conflict towards resolution. The interviewer should listen closely for indications that the real conflict involves change, power, civility, diversity, scarcity, etc., for which modules exist. This helps formulate some of the initial questions for the meeting.

- **The Process** (actually, “A” process, there are many variations and approaches)

**1. Interviewer Introduction** – I introduce myself; discuss my work, my interest and relationship to the community with which I am working. I explain how I became involved, express my expectations for the interview and my feelings about the assignment. This is done briefly, five minutes or less.

If the person begins talking about him/herself or the issue during this time, I move on to interviewing the person. Time is available at the end for the person to gain any other information needed about me.

**2. Interviewee Introduction** – I ask the person to introduce themselves, their relationship to the community or issue, and how they feel about being interviewed. This allows them to be grounded and prepared for the interview.

**3.The Situation** – The first question allows the person to begin to relate to the issue from a personal basis. “What is the situation as you see it, and how do you feel about it?” Note that the question is general, not focused. This allows the person to create the arena of discussion. Often this will be different than the issue that brought you to the community. More focused questions can be asked later in the interview, once you have a better sense of the persons perceptions. It is not at all unusual for you to interview people who have very different ideas about what is going on, and the general question allows you to explore this.

**4. What are the Worst Possible outcomes of the situation if it is not resolved (confronted)?** – This may be stated as their concerns about the situation, or their fears about what might happen. The purpose is to allow the person to express their fears of the situation. This allows insight into the persons needs, and allows the reactive emotions to be expressed. Additional questions may arise as a result of this answer, for example, “what do you mean it could be dangerous?” Or, “what is meant by lack of leadership?”

Also, listen carefully to gain insight in where the people are emotionally. People who fear death or serious harm are in a very different place than folks who are concerned about self-esteem being lost. The problem cannot be resolved usually until people are brought together and able to be listened to and acknowledged.

**5. Feedback and Insight** – At this point it is helpful to tell the person what I am hearing or learning from them. This is not a statement that I see this as the only truth, but rather a sense of what I am hearing, and how it relates to what I know. Insight on worst fears may also be appropriate, and an affirmation of their worst fears.

**6. What are the best outcomes that you want to result from this activity?** – This will often require real listening skills and patience. People are normally focused on worst outcomes, and have not given thought to potential best outcomes. Give them time to mull it over and formulate an answer. Be patient and silent, they will give you an answer. If they say, “I don’t know what I want!” then honor them for that. It is ok not to know. This just means they have not thought about it.

**7. “If you did know, what would be the answer?”** – Then ask them, “if you did know, what would be the answer, or what would you say?” This often surprises them, especially when they find they do have a response. Bob calls this “pushing their envelope of belief.” I want them to think outside their present knowledge base. This allows them to move to the “self-actualization” stage. I am tapping their potential, as opposed to simply their history.

“I don’t know” just means that their present knowledge base in their left brain has no ready answer. When I ask them to answer “If you did know”, I am engaging their whole brain to answer the unfinished question (remember the brain hates the empty space “B\_D). They must create new information, and normally do. They are normally surprised both by the question and also their answer. After they answer, I normally tell them about the concept of “pushing the envelope of knowledge and belief.”

**8. What could be done to meet the needs of all parties?** This will again push the envelope of knowledge of the person. You are looking for a response, any response will do. If they have an answer, even if tentative, it indicates their willingness to seek a consensus solution. You will also get some idea of what is possible, but remember, the people will/would change in a full meeting.

**9. What is your advice on who should attend? (optional)** This allows the person to have some say in the development of a group, as well as affirming that the others you are interviewing are the right ones. You may adapt your interview list as a result of this question. I especially seek to find people who are accepted by all parties as being neutral, or of high esteem in the community.

**10. What conditions would facilitate you, or others, participation in this session? (optional)** Some people will assert they will not attend the session, sometimes for personal reasons that are real, normally because they fear the outcomes. I seek to find

ways to help them create their own conditions for acceptance. This question helps to get the person emotionally engaged in attending the session, or in helping to get others to attend.

**11. Do you have any questions of me, or about the workshop?** This allows the interviewee to balance the power with me in the interview session. It also allows them to ask questions about the meeting, the process, the participation. Since these questions often are actually statements, they will provide you with information they might otherwise not disclose.

**12. Closure** – I share with them how I felt about the interview, and some of what I learned that might be helpful. It also allows the person being interviewed to reach closure, and to make additional statements that may be helpful to you.

Bob recommends that normally you do not take notes during the interview, but listen carefully and remember. If you want to jot down notes, do it after the interview. One exception might be when you are trying to get names to interview/invite, because you want to get them accurately, and perhaps contact information. Many people also are concerned that you might write a report. While he advises against it under most circumstances, your client might want something. Be general, don't quote or attribute things that might be harmful to the future meeting or people who trusted you to interview them.