# Designing for Integrity

**A Process Guide for Organizational Strategic Visioning & Planning**

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***(in teg′ ri tē) n.***

1. The state of being whole or entire.
2. A sound, complete or unimpaired condition.
3. Uncompromising adherence to one's principles; soundness of character; honesty.

SHERRYL & PATRICK STALINSKI

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Based on: *Creating Futures: A Systems View of Transformation for our Organizations, Communities & World* by Sherryl Stalinski,
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AURORA NOW

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It's not a question of making a living **or** making a difference.

It's question of making a living ***and*** making a difference.

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## *About Aurora Now*

The Aurora Now Foundation is a non profit 501c3 research and education foundation focusing on integration of diverse skills, knowledge and perspectives using principles of systems research to design and create effective, healthy organizations and communities. All of our fees support our ongoing research, enable us to develop our physical location as a gathering place for education, and help us share our work with youth and other community groups who couldn't otherwise afford to participate in our programs.

## *About the Authors*

Sherryl Stalinski. M.A. is the executive director of Aurora Now. She holds a B.A. in management, an M.A. in Organizational Development, and is a research fellow of the International Systems Institute where she chairs research efforts within ISI and for Aurora Now. She is also a member of the International Society for Systems Sciences and her work has been published by research and education organizations in the U.S. and internationally. She has nearly 20 years leadership experience in managing start-up, growth and revitalization efforts both in the private and nonprofit sectors. Through Aurora Now, Sherryl recently worked as a strategic consultant to the executive leadership team of an organizational consulting and personal development seminar company based in Denver CO.

A "natural systems thinker," Patrick Stalinski has 30+ years experience as an organizational leader and advisor to various industry and community groups, and serves as the chair of Aurora Now's advisory board. He has participated in both the Asilomar and Desert Conversations of the ISI with Aurora Now. Patrick is also an accomplished vocalist and recording artist, and is currently working on his third album and performing.

Sherryl & Pat live in the beautiful Sonoran Desert outside Tucson, AZ.

# Introduction

## *An Invitation to Go Forward with Life Unusual*

Welcome to the new millennium. If you're like most of the entrepreneurs, managers and organizational leaders we know, you instinctively sense that we're entering a new era that calls for different solutions and organizational methods in a volatile and unpredictable economy and a very different world.

More importantly, something has happened to us all recently. If you're one of the many who reluctantly heeded pleas to "go back to life as usual" after the September 11 terrorist attacks in 2001, you may have quickly found yourself forced out of "life as usual" again with the economic recession. You may have found yourself asking how the deceit and lies of a few greedy individuals at the Enron Corporation had such a profound impact on the total economy; and you may have asked if this was the 'life as usual' you really wanted to participate in. If you asked those questions, you're not alone. After decades of hearing and watching the media promote consumerism, and a 'good life' that is defined by financial success and new, bigger, better toys, most people are questioning the very values and beliefs about themselves, their organizations, and the world.

Zig Ziglar, one of the most famous and followed sales gurus, who has built a career motivating people and teaching them how to sell more and succeed more, is at the top of personal & professional development charts again. Only this time, his message is new: it's about creating balance and synergy, of seeking fulfillment in addition to success; it's about creating a legacy that will last longer your stock portfolio.

The key phrase here being "in addition to." Perhaps in the past you've considered the options as exclusive of each other: Financial success or personal fulfillment: work or family, building business or being ethical, profits or environmental responsibility, making a living or making a difference.

In this guidebook we invite you to create a way to go on with life *unusual*. And to be unusual, we're going to tell you our biggest secret to creating an effective, viable organization right at the beginning: Quit thinking in terms of "either/or." That's it. It's that simple. As our friend, author and consultant Robert White would say, "It's simple. It's not easy." That's what this guidebook is about: simple principles that aren't easy. The reason it isn't easy is because most of the principles introduced here are new and different. They may cause you to completely reconsider the way you see yourself, others and the world around you. Even though this book is about creating organizations and businesses with integrity, it's mostly about beliefs and perspectives that define your values and choices. The principles may speak to your intellect, but their meaning will touch your heart.

Our lens on the world—what we believe about ourselves, about others, about how things work—is what defines our personal, organizational and cultural values. All of our choices and behaviors, conscious or subconscious, are value-driven. When we expand our perspective and understanding, we change our beliefs and our values, and the results are changed behavior, new choices and new outcomes.

The perspective we offer here is the systems view. Systems thinking is a worldview based on the perspective of the systems sciences, which seek to understand complexity, growth and evolution, and the relationships that connect diverse components into a unified and synergetic whole. The systems view doesn't attempt to create a new way of thinking, the systems view enables thinking in new ways. Instead of asking you to give up your views, beliefs and perspectives, systems thinking enables you to evaluate and create

congruency and alignment with all of your understanding, whether intellectual, emotional, spiritual or professional. Our colleague at the International Systems Institute, Kathia Laszlo, Ph.D., explains the systems view beautifully:

> Systems thinking implies the understanding of the complementarity and unity of 'apparent opposites' and of the interactions that join them, instead of focusing on the competitive characteristics that exist between them. Therefore, apparent opposites — such as men and women, East and West, self and other, mind and body, reason and emotion, science and spirituality, society and ecosystem — are interdependent complements that can coexist in harmonious balance and diversified unity under the systems paradigm.[1]

We'd add to Kathia's complements ideas such as ethics and success, business and purpose, work and fulfillment, individuality and service to others.

Management expert and systems theorist Russell Ackoff offers further understanding of what systems thinking is about:

> Systems science and technology constitute one aspect of systems thinking, but the humanities and arts make up the other. The fact that design plays such a large part in the systemic treatment of problems makes it apparent that art has a major role in it as well. Ethics and aesthetics are integral aspects of evaluating systems. [...] The systems approach involves the pursuit of truth (science) and its effective use (technology), plenty (economics), the good (ethics and morality), and beauty and fun (aesthetics). To compare systems methodology with that of any of the so-called 'hard' disciplines—for example, physics—is to misunderstand the nature of systems. The worry is not that the systems approach is not scientific in the sense which physics or chemistry or biology is, but that some try to make it scientific in that sense. To the extent they succeed, they destroy it.[2]

## *Organizational Leadership in the New Millennium*

If you've read any of the popular business or leadership magazines lately, you've noticed a big difference in their focus over the past several years. Phrases like 'community building' and 'team building' are the new buzzwords. Emphasis these days is on healthy communication, social responsibility and 'leading without power.' The mechanistic paradigm of the industrial age is almost completely gone in our contemporary organizations: instead of re-engineering so that our enterprise can run like a 'well oiled machine,' we're learning how humanistic values and empowerment can create loyal and effective organizational cultures. A more organic, flexible and creative workplace is emerging, or at least is trying to emerge.

The problem with this latest evolution of a more socially conscious and humane organizational environment is that it is such a radical change from what we've become accustomed to. Even the more linear, systematic approaches such as Total Quality Management (TQM) and the rise of rigidly controlled "turn-key" processes found in many franchise operations are methods and practices still fresh in the memories of most organizational leaders. For good reason: these practices have contributed huge benefits to production and growth. But there is a shift away from measuring 'growth' by production volume and business size toward emphasis on sustainability and growth through deepening the *quality* of work, relationships and products. In our opinion, it's a change long overdue in the private sector, and change that is still struggling to emerge as the 'norm' rather than the exception.

In the non-profit and social service sectors of our contemporary economy, leadership is also struggling to re-define their practices. While they've known all along the value in creating meaningful work for their employees and volunteers, membership organizations are showing steadily declining numbers. At the same time, nonprofit managers and directors are struggling to break

free of the "martyr mentality" and expectations of long hours in exchange for poverty-level pay.

Despite the often-heard choruses telling leadership in both traditional and nonprofit environments to give up the 'old school' in favor of the new, instinctively, you probably want to cling to what works. And you should! Unlike many popular management gurus, we'll be the first to tell you to stick with processes that work. Integrate them whenever you can into your workplace. But don't dismiss the value that can be added by discovering and integrating the powerful and effective knowledge available to today's leadership, regardless of the size or purpose of your organization.

Entrepreneurs and leaders of small to mid-size organizations—if they have the time to catch up on their reading of the latest management strategies—can't keep up with all the latest jargon being used in the corporate world. Although nearly 80% of all companies are considered small businesses, changes in management style and organizational effectiveness seem to happen slower here. We suspect part of the reason is because owners and managers of small to mid-size organizations don't believe they're capable of providing the kind of 'perks' and flexibility now being offered by large corporations to boost morale and improve employee retention. Most small organizations outside of the nonprofit arena can't see how they can possibly afford the luxury of social and environmental responsibility. Sole entrepreneurs often don't realize they still need to 'lead' their organizations.

*When people are highly motivated, it's easy to accomplish the impossible. And when they're not, it's impossible to accomplish the easy. So how do we motivate them? Discard the mushroom theory of management—the one that says, keep your employees in the dark and throw a lot of manure on them. If you're going to manage a growing company, you have to concentrate on managing people, not ignoring them.*

— BOB COLLINGS

## *The New Leadership Practice: Leadership with Integrity*

Read the definition of 'Integrity' on the cover again and ask yourself: What gets in the way of you or your organization from creating your "entire" ideal? Are you "unimpaired" to create the future you really want? Are the principles that define your character whole, sound and complete? Are those principles reflected in your organizational values and visible in your organizational culture?

As individuals, we often forget that integrity means "entirety" as well as "honesty." When we work on improving our own "state of being whole," we become more "sound and unimpaired" and are more effective at leading or contributing to our families, workplace and communities. As organizations—whether a traditional business or a nonprofit, we often feel incapable of "integrating" – knowing how to bring together all of the people, skills, functions and tasks and incorporate them into a unified, harmonious, interrelated whole or system.

This book focuses on all the principles that create real integrity within individuals and organizations, empowering them to integrate all the dimensions and components in the most effective way. The results are an understanding of the importance of 'growing' yourself and your organization in ***quality*** as well as size, and a stronger ability to remain viable and grow, even in changing economic and societal environments.

New groups and organizations, or those that are looking to re-design and re-create themselves often fail to achieve sustainable results because they leave critical parts of the design process out. No one would think about building a house from scratch without first hiring an architect to design and plan what it will look like. Architects are trained to include everything needed to make the house functional, structurally sound and aesthetically pleasing. In organizations, the core leadership must design the organization to be successful. With-

out such a design, building often commences with an incomplete "blueprint" to follow and rendering to envision. The difference of course, is that when you're building a house, a brick will stay put and be a permanent part of the whole. Organizations are built with people who have physical and psychological needs, and who often come and go on a regular basis. Organizations need to be designed to carry out 'functions' even if a few bricks are missing or fall apart.

## *Why Integrity?*

When the impact of human perspective is integrated into the organizational setting, you'll become keenly aware of how the behavior of people is driven by their view of the world**.** You'll become keenly aware of the same truth in yourself. Action—that undeniable prerequisite to creating anything of value—is always driven by our understanding of how the world works and our place in it, including within our organizations. Since the introduction of new discoveries in physics, our understanding of how the world works has transformed dramatically. Have you ever known a "Sunday-morning-Christian" who leaves his or her belief in The Golden Rule on the pew after leaving church, and returns to work on Monday morning as a tyrant and cynic? They don't think their spirituality has any place for expression through behavior at the office. For most people, it's even harder to understand what quantum physics or systems theory has to do with leadership, management or strategic planning. We purposely chose *integrity* as the theme for this process as a reminder it is our values that guide our actions. Our hope is to introduce new principles in science that can be reflected by our behavior in order to create more value in our organizations as well as our lives.

*Wisdom is knowing what to do next, skill is knowing how to do it, and virtue is doing it.*

— DAVID STARR JORDAN

## *Designing with Integrity*

Synergy is the effect of a "whole" that is more than the sum of its parts. Every day, organizations create 'synergy' simply because the products and services they provide can't be created and delivered by people working alone or independently. We can synergistically create good results—results that are sound and effective, results with real integrity, or we can create a synergetic mess that's next to impossible to unravel. To create synergetic results with integrity, we need to learn how to design systems and processes that lead to integrity.

The principles are simple. You probably know some of them already. Most seminars and training programs simply teach principles then leave you to figure out how to apply them. You wouldn't sit in a classroom to learn how to ride a bike, and designing and creating your future is a lot like riding a bike… the more you practice, the easier it gets.

We believe that no "outside expert" can tell you how to run your business, organization or your life. This process is designed to ask the questions only you can answer. We simply guide the process and provide information that can enable you to design and create your own vision. We don't want you to learn how to ride *our* bike; we want to help you ride your own. Here we will introduce you to some of the most progressive current organizational development, leadership and management methods and practices being used by consultants, trainers and management schools, and more importantly, the research that supports the value of focusing on integrity, communication and culture in the workplace. It's up to you to evaluate to include and integrate these new ideas in a way that best serves your needs.

This book is designed to engage your leadership team or small organizations in a creative dialogue that generates a shared vision, defines the values

that guide behavior within your group culture, and creates a clarified mission and purpose. Then we engage you in a more disciplined, purposeful dialogue, which creates the systems, strategies, functions and tasks to make your vision come to reality. Leadership can then:

- Create an organization where everyone is committed, takes responsibility and ownership in the vision, purpose and mission of the organization.
- Design an organizational structure and processes capable of remaining sustainable and growing in changing economic and societal climates
- Discover strategies that utilize the most influential leverage points for results and ongoing improvement.

## *About Dialogue & Conversation*

We know that all this "science stuff" can sound awfully complicated. Life is complex – so are our organizations, but it doesn't have to be complicated. It's actually quite a bit of fun.

When a group shares, talks, listens and laughs together, they generate far more learning than reading the concepts in a book or passively listening to information given at a seminar or conference. This simple understanding is what inspired the International Systems Institute to develop the "Design Conversation" for their own conferences. A Design Conversation integrates both "generative" and strategic dialogue so that a group can design and create the most comprehensive vision and strategy for their group or organization. (See Appendix A, Part 2)

Unfortunately, few books are available that address these principles in a language and style that most people are willing to tackle outside of research

and academic environments. Management consultants will tell their readership and clients that new priorities and strategies are important, but even they don't really understand the science behind these new values. Our highest aspiration is that this book can introduce these important new understandings in a way that is useful, understandable, and meaningful.

The Design Conversation outlined here will engage your team in a structured process that has three parts:

Parts 1 & 2: Generative Dialogue: Generative Dialogue guides you through the process of envisioning your ideals and highest aspirations for your organization. In this portion of the design conversation, a group generates together a shared vision of *what* they are designing.

1. Values, Mission & Purpose
2. Envisioning the Ideal: Generative Dialogue

Part 3: Strategic Dialogue: Strategic Dialogue focuses on evaluating *how* to create your organization in a way that reflects the ideals generated during the first two sections. Our experience shows that meaningful dialogue often degrades to "discussion" and even conflict and disagreement during this phase. You'll begin this process by exploring "The Dialogue Game" developed by Alexander Christakis at CWA Ltd. The game enables you and your team to internalize and begin to practice effective dialogue and healthy communication with each other as you design the structure, functions, tasks and priorities of actually "building" your design. The strategic dialogue is comprised of questions that help you explore and define your current situation, your overall strategy and your short-term strategy. Most importantly, ongoing evaluation is built in to the strategic dialogue to ensure continual improvement of the design itself.

# Facilitating the Process

## *The Facilitator's Role*

We believe that while all stakeholders (those who serve and are served by a system) should be involved with the design of any system, design is ultimately the responsibility of an organization's core leadership: those who are accountable for the success and effectiveness of a group or organization.

This book can be used as a process guide for facilitating a design conversation within an organizational setting (business, community group, nonprofit). To use this book to guide the Design Conversation among your core leadership team or within a group, you'll select a facilitator who will moderate your conversations and make sure that your dialogue stays focused and purposeful. The role of the facilitator in this process is to provide an environment for disciplined and purposeful dialogue among core stakeholders of an organization. We feel it is important for the facilitator to guide the process in a way that enables everyone involved to create ownership in their own process and learning. In the spirit of the conversation community, the stakeholders of any social system are the "experts" – not the facilitator. The facilitator creates an environment and provides information that empowers core stakeholders to become "design experts" of their own organization.

## *Facilitator Guidelines & Agreement for Use of This Process Guide*

Our reason for offering this book is to introduce organizations to the possibilities of the design conversation. We suspect most readers won't go beyond just reading this guide, but even if you don't use this guide to facilitate your own dialogue, you'll still gain the knowledge and insight of our research and experience, which we think is worth the price of the book.

We suspect it will be difficult for most organizations to create the time and space necessary to conduct a disciplined, structured dialogue as presented here without retaining an outside facilitator, which gives additional value to the commitment of time needed. For organizations and groups who do engage fully in the process, we believe the value they will receive in knowledge and insight they will create for themselves, will far exceed the time and resources used to conduct and engage in the process.

The role of the facilitator within new designing communities without a background in systems research, conversation and dialogue method is critical in our opinion. For this reason, we have developed a set of criteria for facilitators in order to ensure the integrity of the design conversation as well as the integrity of the evaluation and outcomes of design conversations for ongoing research and improvement of this process by the Aurora Now Foundation.

Only facilitators recommended and approved by, or trained by the Aurora Now Foundation may present or facilitate this program to groups in which they are not direct stakeholders. Our belief is that a non-stakeholder facilitator will be able to provide the most unbiased feedback and facilitation for a group, enabling them to create the best possible results for themselves. A trained facilitator provides the environment, the discipline of committing appropriate and adequate time to the process, and manages the space for effective dialogue to take place. More importantly, a trained facilitator will have the necessary background in systems research (at the 'Level A' of systems research and social sciences) and the theoretical basis of dialogue, conversation and community building in order to provide useful information to the design community. Their value in this process should not be underestimated.

That said, we understand that small businesses and community groups may not be able to afford to have a specially trained facilitator for their conversation. Such groups may opt to try this process using an internally selected

facilitator whom they feel will be fair, relatively unbiased and who has the ability to facilitate without control or a personal agenda for the outcomes of the conversation. This chosen facilitator is encouraged to read and become familiar with the conversation and design process, as well as have a more clarified and comprehensive understanding of the principles of system research as presented in *Creating Futures*: *A Systems View of Transformation for our Organizations, Communities and World* (Stalinski, 2001), which is available through the Aurora Now Foundation. Additional resources can be found in the bibliography and in the web resource directory at the end of this guide.

All facilitators to agree to provide the Aurora Now Foundation with completed evaluation reports in the timeframe outlined at the end of the process guide.

## *Process Structure & Timing*

The process guide is presented in three parts and is structured as a script for the facilitator to use, with notes to the facilitator presented in italics. The information resources presented are excerpts (sometimes paraphrased) from *Creating Futures*. It is not necessary for the facilitator to read the citation references when presenting the information, but they are left in for the facilitator's reference. All bibliographical references can be found at the end of the process guide.

The presentation of information should be timed so that the information, ideas and concepts can be applied and tested right away within a group, creating learning that is more meaningful and useful. Information presented at any time should be limited in scope and addressed as briefly as possible in order to avoid 'cognitive overload' of the many systems principles, which will be new to most people in the design conversation.

Throughout the process, trigger questions for starting focused dialogue are read, and time should be allowed for fair and equitable participation by all

members of the group. ***(The trigger questions are presented in bold italics.)*** The trigger questions given by the facilitator enable the ideas and information presented as part of a dialogue topic to "sink in" and be implemented more effectively by enabling a group to generate meaning by relating the concepts to their own lives and experience.

Suggested time allotment is noted at the beginning of major portions of the process, so the facilitator will need to determine available time beforehand and should break down available time for each set of trigger questions, including the time it will take to present the information portion leading to the trigger questions. It is not important that every conversation participant be given exact "equal time" to respond to the trigger questions; some people have a lot to say, others can say everything they need to in one sentence. What is important here is ensuring "equity," not necessarily "equality." The facilitator should encourage the quieter, more reflective members to share even brief observations or reflections, and longer-winded members should be encouraged to practice listening as well.

> ***Efforts and courage are not enough without purpose and direction.***
>
> — JOHN F. KENNEDY

At the beginning and ending of each day, a brief roundtable session will prove valuable. This session will give every member of a group equal time to share ideas, observations and personal reflections of what has been explored so far. The facilitator should plan ahead how much time to allow for this, and even with a group of ten it should not take more than 30 minutes (3 minutes each). Smaller groups can use more time for each person, or shorten the roundtable time.

A design conversation community might consist of anywhere from two to 15 people, so the time allotment suggested is just a guideline. Larger groups will require more time, smaller groups may require less.

# Part One: Dialogue, Values, Mission & Purpose

[Allow one full day minimum]

*Display the following quote on a wall where everyone can read it. This quote, and others are provided in Appendix B of the process guide:*

"You cannot restructure a horse and buggy into a spacecraft no matter how much time and resources are put into the effort." —Bela H. Banathy

### *Opening Roundtable*

*Explain the roundtable process to the group and have them begin their first roundtable by sharing what they hope to learn and accomplish during the conversation process.*

In order for your design conversation to be the most effective, some core definitions and principles will help guide the process:

## The Design Conversation: Generative & Strategic Dialogue.

[Allow 1 hour]

### *Why Design?*

The design conversation integrates both generative and strategic dialogue. You'll not only talk about *how* to create your organization, you'll also define those strategies based on a clear, comprehensive vision of the purpose and values of your organization. In other words, the dialogue first generates a

vision of *what* your team or organization *could become*.

Design is a process by which something new is created… something novel and emergent.[1] For instance, you wouldn't try to figure out how to build a new house without first hiring an architect to design what it will look like and all the components that it will include. Design always comes before planning. When it doesn't, 'planning' is usually applied to a specific department, process or task and may not consider how the 'whole system' is affected. Planning's focus is 'how to' create a current design. Of course, the 'current design' of your organization may or may not be the best design, so by focusing on design first, you'll be able to decide whether your current vision and strategy is outdated, whether it's as effective as it could be, and whether it really reflects the full potential of your organization.

Normally, groups approach planning in a very rigid, linear, way. They focus on getting us from here to there, with most of the attention and energy focusing on what "here" is, and why they want to get away from it. Also in planning, "there" is almost always defined by the limits of "here." In design, you start by creatively designing the best *there* you can think of. You'll spend attention and energy focusing on where you want to end up, which can get you past 'here' in a much easier and more productive way.

Here, you are the architect, you design the best future you can think of and then create a strategy for building it. Then you can evaluate and test your strategy against the design.

Starting where you want to end up is a much more effective process than setting goals based on your current circumstances. By envisioning your ideal future you'll be able to transcend your current situation unencumbered by any perceived limits.[2] In other words, when you can let go of any preconceived limits, you'll be able to imagine all sorts of possibilities and creative ideas you wouldn't have otherwise considered. Most organizations focus on

fixing problems, and quickly find out that they may have patched a few holes, but the bucket is still leaking. Worse, without looking at the entire system, solutions to immediate problems often create other problems. By clarifying and creating a vision of what it is you want to ultimately become as an organization, you'll be more able to look at where you are now and decide whether something needs to be fixed or re-created altogether.

## *Who should design your organization?*

If you relegate the design of your future to others, to 'outside experts,' you give up your ability to truly take control of and guide your own future. As a matter of fact, the International Systems Institute holds that it is downright unethical to design a system for someone else. *(See Appendix A)*. The ISI believes the ethics of design call for shared responsibility, ownership and participation in the creation of the design by all stakeholders—those who serve and are served by any social system—and organizations and teams such as yours are of course, social systems first and foremost.

We understand it is unrealistic to try to include *every* stakeholder in this conversation unless the whole organization is fairly small. An organization's success is ultimately the responsibility of its leadership. But organizations can be designed that include the input and feedback of a variety of stakeholders which accomplishes some important things: First, it enables more new, creative ideas to be considered; and second, it creates a way for everyone in the organization, regardless of their role or position, to care about, be committed to, and take personal responsibility for its success.

## *Dialogue*

The process of envisioning an idealized image of your future, designing your future and then implementing that design is carried out in what we call a 'design community.' Community and communication both come from the Latin "communis" which means "to make common." The goal of the design

conversation is to create your group into a 'community' bound by a shared vision that everyone wants to be committed to creating.

Most of you have probably had your share of conversations that didn't achieve anything even remotely resembling "common" vision and understanding. So before we start, it will be really helpful to understand more about what conversation and dialogue are… and what they're not.

First, there is a big difference between dialogue and discussion.[3] In discussion, the objective is to present one's view in order to convince the other. With some luck, this process may result in some sort of compromise, "but it does not give rise to anything creative".[4] At worst, this sort of back-and-forth discourse leads to conflict or even avoidance of the issue. Dialogue, in contrast, is rooted in the Greek word *dialogos*, literally meaning "through *(dia)* the meaning of the word *(logos)*."[5]

Where communicate comes from the Latin "communis" which means to "make common," dialogue is more interested in the shared creation of ***new*** meaning and ideas. This happens by including common understanding and combining it in such a way that new, richer, deeper meaning and more creative ideas are generated through synergy.

## *Conversation*

By now, you have a pretty clear understanding of the idea of the design conversation. The root meaning of conversation is "to turn to one another."[6] In addition, the Greek word for conversation is *syzitisis,* which means "searching together." (All together now… sizz-IT-iss-iss!)

Through such conversation, a *demosophia* emerges within a group, which is experienced as the "wisdom of the people". *Logos* can also carry a spiritual implication. It can connote "a manifestation of spirit or soul" giving the concept of dialogue a much more meaningful and significant definition. This

deeper understanding can be conceptualized then as "the spirit of the group" or an *esprit de corps.*

## *Conversation Beyond Words*

For two years, our work at ISI was spent in collaboration with another research team exploring possibilities for design conversation beyond just sitting and talking and listening. Understanding the importance of experience to bring meaning to conceptual, often abstract ideas, our combined teams engaged in various activities in addition to traditional, verbal communication. The teams integrated a variety of supportive experiential conversation "tools" such as co-created art, music, a trip to an equine sanctuary in the exploration of stewardship, and discussed other ways cultures expressed and experienced themselves, including food and meals, dance, and its relationship with the natural world. The contribution suggests that groups can engage in a conversation-guided process while communicating a group's evolving *demosophia* through creative expression in many forms.[7]

*It is the province of knowledge to speak, and it is the privilege of wisdom to listen.*

— OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, JR.

Such definitions of the nature of conversation as an integration of generative and strategic dialogue give us a rich understanding of its meaning and purpose. Giving appropriate time and energy to the generative dialogue within a conversation will help create a shared worldview and shared meaning within and among your group.[8]

*For this first set of trigger questions only, allow 10 minutes per person. If the group is large, break into smaller groups.*

***Trigger Questions: Do you normally engage in discussion or dialogue? What usually stops you from engaging in real dialogue? What's your 'listening style'? What do you normally start thinking of when listening to other's ideas, opinions? What about when you're listening to someone sharing his or her feelings and emotions?***

## *Death, Taxes & Culture*

[allow 3-4 hours]

Businesses, organizations and the teams and groups within them are systems whose most influential 'components' are the people—human beings—who do the work and perform the functions that make the organization work. There are unique qualities of human systems that make them different from other kinds of systems such as mechanical or natural systems. The most important quality of human systems is the *culture* that emerges whenever people gather over time.

Human cultures evolve as ways of knowing, being and doing within a group of people guided by the values of its members. When we fail to give conscious reflection to the driving values behind our cultural habits and rituals, we often simply do things because that's the way we were taught, either 'formally' or by "lessons" we've learned from our personal experiences in life. Many traditions, rituals and customs are rarely revisited for their appropriate-

ness in changing times. While we won't explore this concept in depth, there are some of principles of culture that, failing to recognize, can cause problems within your organization:

1. Where people gather, culture emerges. It is as inevitable as death and taxes.
2. We can't "create" culture, it emerges as a complex whole reflecting the values of every individual within a group demonstrated in their behavior and interaction with others.
3. Because people change personally, and because people come & go within groups, culture changes.
4. Just because we can't control culture does not mean we can't create the conditions for healthy cultures to emerge or change in positive ways. Physicist and Evolutionary Theorist, Ervin Laszlo, explains that in the final analysis, cultures are value-guided systems. By adopting values that serve the organization, cultures will emerge that serve the organization.[9]

Values are simply the ideas, knowledge and things we value because they reinforce what we consider to be *our own* value—the 'meaning' we give to our life and how we exist in the world around us. Because of our evolved capacity for reflective consciousness, we can reflect on our values and the choices and behaviors that are the result of those values.

*One person with a belief is equal to a force of ninety-nine who only have interests.*

— ANONYMOUS

This focus on values is often one of the most overlooked aspects of the design process. The agreed upon *organizational* values create the climate and culture in which the mission and purpose can be achieved.

This should be a comprehensive "list" that is explored in depth by the core leadership. The list will not be totally inclusive of everyone's unique ideologies, but rather reflects the values everyone agrees will best serve the organization itself. These values can then provide you with guidelines to use when disagreements arise. The values become the criteria for evaluating whether a specific decision or behavior supports the mission and purpose of the organization. When an organizational value conflicts with an individual's personal values, it will be up to the individual to agree or propose a change to the core leadership. Organizational values cannot be abolished or changed except by consensus of the entire core leadership (those ultimately accountable for the success of the organization.)

> ***We cannot solve problems using the same thinking that created them. We have to think in a new way.***
>
> — ALBERT EINSTEIN

A comprehensive and effective value system will include values that address the various dimensions of the organization. Dynamic, sustainable organizations adopt values that ensure its continued growth and do not ignore the principles that govern the viability of all complex open systems. We're going to introduce these principles to you now, one at a time. After each principle, allow yourself time to think about them and clarify what they mean to your organization by using the trigger questions. Have your facilitator clarify or explain any part of the principle you don't understand. We especially encourage you to share within your group how these new scientific principles support or seem to conflict with your current ideas/beliefs about how the world works and how we can live most successfully in the world.

*Since most of these principles will be new, it is important to introduce each principle separately, followed by a brief sharing/reflecting time to allow the concepts to internalize. Clarify that these principles have evolved from over four decades of systems research since Bertalanffy first published his General System Theory.*

*The principles are grounded in science, not mere opinion, so the participants don't get to "disagree" with them, unless they're interested in pursuing systems research on their own. Remember as a facilitator, your role is ONLY to allow them to generate their own 'meaning' from these principles, which may or may not agree with your understanding of the principles.*

# Principle 1: Synergy & Wholeness

Systems demonstrate an emergent property that can't be found in the sum of parts. This "emergent whole" is comprised of the sum of components PLUS their relationship to each other. [10]

In the exuberance of scientists to discover the most fundamental building blocks of life, even the atom has been split into even more elementary particles. Physicist Ervin Laszlo explains:

> In the search for the genuine rock bottom of material reality, the latest candidates are the most unmatter-like 'quarks.' They are not isolable, nor are they known to exist in other than composite states […][11]

Quarks, it seems, are not matter at all, but a collection of integrated relationships, none of which can be isolated away from the interrelation of the others. In other words, they can't exist alone, only by interrelating with the other. The "stuff of life" is not stuff at all, but dynamic, integrated relationship. Quarks aren't 'stuff' at all, they are energy relating to other energy. They aren't nouns, they're verbs. As one member of the International Society for the Systems Sciences likes to say, "There are no such things as nouns."

Wholes are more than an aggregate sum of components. Laszlo explains, "If we took the neutron, proton, and electron of a hydrogen atom and recombined them in an arbitrary way, chances are we would not get a hydrogen atom at all."[12] Building on this new understanding, science has presented a

more encompassing description that includes all systems.

A system is a "set of elements standing in interrelation."[13] A system is understood as a combination of parts, that when engaged in specific relationship to each other (not arbitrary relationship), create something *emergent,* something more than a mere sum of parts. From simple systems like a flashlight, where batteries, a switch and a bulb connected by wires can create light, but couldn't do so if those parts were just heaped on a table or 'put together' the wrong way, to complex biological systems with the emergent property of life itself.

> ***Life is like riding a bicycle. You don't fall off unless you stop pedaling.***
>
> — ANONYMOUS

In applying these ideas to social systems, you can easily imagine how not all sets of parts (or people), even if they are in relationship, create a system or an emergent whole. If you have a pile of buttons or a collection of people mulling around a park, they are not necessarily a system. These are termed by the systems scientists as 'heaps.' Heaps remain relatively unchanged if more is added or some is taken away. If you divide the pile of buttons in half, you have two piles of buttons. "If you divide a cow in half, you don't get two smaller cows, maybe a lot of hamburger, but not two cows. The essence of the cow as a whole, able to graze, convert grass into milk, and moooo, is lost."[14] Most business organizations are systems because they produce goods or services, which could not be accomplished without a structure of relationships, which collaboratively enable the whole to produce goods or services. Simply putting 200 people into a factory with mechanical equipment is not going to produce widgets.

***Trigger question: How does this principle clarify your understanding of what synergy really is?***

***How might a group try to evaluate the relationship of different perspectives and how they might fit together to create a whole that is more than the sum of their parts?***

Synergy is actually a fairly simple concept. A whole is more than the sum of its parts because a whole is the sum of its parts *plus* their relationship to each other. The difficult part is understanding the relationship of the parts and how complex relationships work.

Understanding wholes as a sum of both parts and their relationships may even seem logical, but it presents a unique quandary even for mathematicians. "Atoms more complex than helium (which has two orbital electrons) contain three or more "bodies' in their shells and our mathematics are incapable of solving the three-body problem."[15] To understand wholes, Laszlo explains, "involves integrating the data not merely for three bodies, but for three thousand, three million, three billion or more, depending on the whole we are considering." Unfortunately, traditional mathematics cannot even perform this feat for a set of three, "it is hopeless to think they can do it for any of the complex phenomena in nature or society."[16] Most systems are far too complex for a realistic understanding of the relationships that create the effect of "emergent."[17]

In other words, we do just fine when we think in terms of single cause, single effect. However, when there are multiple causes and multiple effects, it is nearly impossible to analyze and predict possible outcomes. That's why

chaos theorists use the description that if a butterfly flaps its wings in Peking, there may be rain in Central Park.

## Principle 2: Negative & Positive Feedback

Systems components interrelate with each other, and as a whole within their containing systems, using processes of negative and positive feedback. Negative feedback is how a system maintains itself within its environments. Positive Feedback reflects how a system can grow, in quantity (exponential growth), or quality, such as in occasional radical transformation (quantum emergence).

> *Anyone who believes exponential growth can go on forever in a finite world is either a madman or an economist.*
>
> — KENNETH BOULDING

The relationships that bind the components of any system are not stagnant—they are not "a relationship" which could be used simply to define their connection, rather parts remain actively *in relationship* with each other and respond to changes in their internal and external environments. The ability of a system to create small adjustments in response to the pressures applied to it is known as "negative feedback" A good example would be the thermostat in your house, which turns on and off in response to changing air temperatures. The biological systems of our body counterbalance increases in air temperature by perspiring, and social systems will generate regulations to counter behavior, which negatively impacts the whole. Systems theorist, Draper Kaufmann, in the following exercise, gives a good example of negative feedback (which, by the way, should not be understood as 'bad'):

> First, trace a circle on a piece of paper. Then find a pair of scissors and cut the circle out. Sooner or later, as you cut, you will see the scissors

> slipping away from the line you are trying to follow. Naturally, when this happens, you guide the scissors back again toward the line, and so on, with each change of direction leaving a bit too much or too little paper along the edge of the circle.[18]

As a general rule, the more complex a system becomes, the more energy it must spend to maintain itself and the more active it will be about initiating changes in its environment.[19] It's important to understand that negative feedback does not prevent change, it simply provides a process for a system to keep the effects of change under control and manageable. There are limits also, to the effectiveness of negative feedback to totally control pressures from the environment. If the pressure is too great or the response time inadequate, the results are obvious. This often necessitates the ability of a system to predict and respond to change before it occurs. "Self-stabilizing systems take an active response to change. They don't sit and ignore pressures on them."[20] Additionally, Ervin Laszlo explains that "if any given thing is to maintain itself in proper running condition, it must act as a subsystem with the total system which defines its energy supplies."[21] In other words, all systems must exist in mutual cooperation with the environments in which they are contained.

## *Positive Feeback: Quantity*

Occasionally, things happen within the internal or external environments of systems that produce a phenomenon known as exponential growth. This can be observed in certain environmental circumstances which allow for unchecked growth of a certain species (let's use rabbits). With ample food and few predators, the rabbit population will grow exponentially as two rabbits produce four, four produce 16, 16 produce 64 and so on. Fortunately, except in theoretical mathematics, exponential growth never continues indefinitely. In the real world, the limits of the environments, which provide our energy, always limit exponential growth curves caused by positive feedback.[22]

## *Positive Feeback: Quality:*

"Survival of the fittest does not explain the arrival of the fittest." Contemporary evolutionary theorists admit readily that science cannot explain the emergence of life itself, or how occasionally, biological or other organic systems demonstrate a capacity to recreate itself in new and novel ways. Wings appear, whole and complete, as do eyes. When they prove to be useful, evolution keeps them. Quantum emergence is by now a 'given', and it's up to each individual to decide for themselves whether its source is from what we consider "the divine."[23]

Likewise, the quantum emergence of life and life's continued demonstration of its ability to create itself in new and novel ways, does not explain away life's continuing dance with evolution through adaptation. The two are not mutually exclusive, they are complementary processes manifested in perfect harmony with each other.

***Trigger questions: Is your organization maintaining itself and growing in the current economy, and changing society? How much energy does it use to maintain itself, adapt and change? Would a 'quantum transformation' allow you to grow and sustain yourself with more efficiency and effectiveness?***

***How do you normally define 'growth' within your organization? How could you consider whether 'growth' in quality or growth in size would create the most stability and sustainability of your organization?***

# Principle 3: Growth Requires Diversity

Growth is possible only by a subdivision of parts in "unitary action" into varied actions of specialized parts (complexity). Additionally, the law of requisite variety states that a system must be comprised of 'components' at least as diverse as its environment in order to maintain itself. [24]

One might pose the question of why nature doesn't simply create larger systems—why haven't we evolved to just be larger single celled amebas?[25] The answer is quite simple: a collection of smaller units in appropriate interrelation are much more stable and efficient than one large unit. It is interesting to note that in physical science, the proton and neutron are the largest particles that exist in nature. Physicists have tried to make larger particles experimentally, but they are so unstable that most of them last less than a billionth of a second before they self-destruct. Uranium, the heaviest natural element, creates radioactivity because it is constantly breaking itself down into smaller, more stable elements.[26]

*If you come to me with your fists doubled, I think I can promise you that mine will double as fast as yours; but if you come to me and say, "Let us sit down and take counsel together, and, if we differ from one another, understand why it is that we differ from one another, just what the points at issue are," we will presently find that we are not so far apart after all, that the points on which we differ are few and the points on which we agree are many, and that if we only have the patience and candor and the desire to get together, we will get together.*

— WOODROW WILSON

Think of it this way: civilization evolved when people figured out that by different people concentrating on certain tasks, and 'splitting the work,' the resulting production of food grew considerably. Or, that ten people passing ten buckets of water one at a time in line would deliver more water to a fire than ten people independently running

back and forth with their own bucket.

The law of requisite variety states that the internal regulatory mechanisms of a system must be as diverse as its environment in order to effectively manage the innumerable challenges and pressures posed by its environment. To discard the necessity of this diversity within a system will result in lost complexity, creating a loss of stability and a loss of the unique emergent whole of that system.[27]

***Trigger Question: How does this principle apply to diverse cultural perspectives and individual perspectives in addition to diversified skills, specialties and knowledge within our organizations?***

It seems important to reiterate the systems perspective on the inclusion of diversity. Natural systems do not "keep" and "include" everything that happens to become a part of its internal environment. When our biological systems acquire a useful evolutionary quality, like an eye, they might include and integrate it. However, if that same biological system acquires a virus, it won't try to 'keep' it and 'integrate it.' Inclusion and integration happen when there is a "goodness of fit" between a new system element (in the case of a community, group or organization this would be a new person or perspective) and the purpose of the system itself. We've seen communities destroyed because they insist on being totally inclusive, to the extreme of allowing harmful influences of individuals who are not serving the ultimate purpose of the community. Likewise, in the case of a community trying to include and integrate values brought by the diverse perspectives of many ethnic cultures, instead of

*The greatest genius will not be worth much if he pretends to draw exclusively from his own resources.*

— JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE

evaluating each of these values for its relevance to the purpose of the group, community or organization, they are included or rejected arbitrarily.

The choice of a community *not* to adopt certain cultural values or perspectives does not mean that an individual member has to give up that value, only that it may not apply in the context of a specific community. We all belong to a multitude of interconnected social systems, and participation in one does not mean we have to "give up" another. Many American families continue to celebrate their former ethnic heritage and cultural traditions but still take great pride in being a part of American society. It is possible to hold multiple perspectives at the same time, reflected in the diverse cultures of which we are a part. Again, 'goodness of fit' will determine whether this diversity causes conflict, either on an individual internal level or within the cultures themselves. Learning to evaluate 'goodness of fit' and test for congruency is critical to create harmony among individual and collective interconnected cultural values.

*(See Appendix A, part 3: Dialogue toward Unity in Diversity)*

## Principle 4: Systems Grow around Influential Centers

"Progressive segregation" or increased diversity of parts is connected with "progressive centralization." The behavior of a system is not caused by parts with equal rank, but rather a system's components become dominated and unified by highly influential "centers" which determine the behavior of a whole by acting as "instigating causalities." The more complex a system becomes,

the more "centered" it becomes and the more "indivisible" it becomes, creating increased individualization or "wholeness."[28]

The late John Denver once related a story to his audience told to him by a friend. "I'm an agitator," his friend said, "You can throw dirty clothes in a washing machine, add soap and add water, but unless you agitate them, they won't come clean."

> *Our chief want is someone who will inspire us to be what we know we could be.*
>
> — RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Von Bertalanffy introduces a key principle of systems theory that seems to be widely ignored, even among the systems theorists. This principle states that open systems evolve themselves around "dominant" triggers that determine the behavior of a whole. "Ascending the evolutionary scale, increasing centralization appears; behavior is not a resultant of partial mechanisms of equal rank, but dominated and unified by the highest centers of the nervous system"[29]

***Trigger Question: What does this principle make you think of in terms of your role as an organizational leader? Have you ever considered yourself an agitator and an instigator?***

Bertalanffy was also a biologist, and was obviously very aware of the structure of natural and biological systems as one of being in holarchical order—integrated multiple levels—versus a hierarchical order which is singular, linear (and thus rigid and inflexible). He places this 'dominant influence' of a system

at the *center* of the system, and regards it as a trigger or motivator for action, calling them 'instigating causalities.' This influence should not be confused with a 'dominating' role (even though this is the word used in the English translation of the theory) which presupposes a mechanistic or political power-based linear chain of command.

> The point is 'dominant' does not mean 'dominating.' In the way von Bertalanffy is using it, I think we might like to think in terms of 'predominant,' such that the predominant role of certain people in a social system does not mean they necessarily have 'dominating' roles in that system. The former relate to issues of the significance and prevalence of the role, while the latter relates to issues of power imbalances.[30]

This perspective might cause you to reconsider some of your traditional notions of leadership within the community or organizational setting. Shared responsibility and genuine and effective group participation may seem like strong ideals for small groups who strive for collaborative, shared leadership and ownership, but in a more traditional business organizational setting, arrangements designed with full equality are unlikely, and according to Bertalanffy, would probably be ineffective. In large, complex organizations, the task of 'instigating' action rests squarely on its leadership. One might ask whether it is realistic to hope for real, committed participation and shared responsibility by all the members of a large organization if the 'power' or influence still

***The supreme quality for a leader is unquestionable integrity. Without it, no real success is possible, no matter whether it is in a section gang, on a football field, in an army or in an office. If his associates find him guilty of phoniness, if they find that he lacks forthright integrity, he will fail. His teachings and actions must square with each other. The first great need, therefore, is integrity and high purpose.***

— DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

rests with its leadership. It all depends on how one defines the nature of leadership's power or influence.

"Our current notion of leadership," Banathy tells us, "is associated with taking initiative, controlling, and knowing what is best for others."[31] One of the resulting challenges of traditional leadership is that leaders believe it is their task to make their people 'buy in' to their vision. The problem with this understanding of leadership is that ownership remains with the leadership, preventing stakeholders throughout an organization to feel committed to participation in its success. Instead, leadership can be viewed as a more "influential, prevalent or predominant" stewardship role. Riane Eisler, in *Tomorrow's Children*, promotes the idea to move from "dominator" models to "partnership" models in our social structures. Instead of considering leadership as a role in which we have "power *over,*" we could understand leadership as a role where we have "power *to.*"[32] Centralized leadership inspires, motivates and 'instigates' empowerment, commitment and participation at all levels of an organization. Leadership, too, is a stewardship role, and "when we serve, we build capability in others by supporting their ownership and empowerment, their right to participate at every level of the system."[33] With this model of steward leadership, even large organizations can be designed to be *equitable* even though they couldn't possibly strive for across-the-board *equality.*

Finally, it's important to clarify that the emergence of organizational culture is not solely guided by an organization's leaders, even when they do play a prevalent and predominant role in the process. As in all open, natural systems, each individual 'part' of a system influences other 'parts.' In organizations, people bring their individual attitudes and beliefs and those can, and often do, influence oth-

***When I am wrong, Dear Lord, make me easy to change, and when I am right, make me easy to live with.***

— PETER MARSHALL

ers within a group. If a person's influence is significant and meaningful enough, it could potentially have wide impact on the whole of a group culture. This can be seen in the case of individuals who are always enthusiastic and cheerful and seem to brighten a room as soon as they enter—and it can be observed in the case of the person who starts rumors and gossip which can spread like a rapid cancer throughout an organization, causing dissention and dissatisfaction on a wide scale.

This can be related to the principle of a 'trimtab' as used by futurist and inventor Buckminster Fuller. A trimtab is a small, almost seeming insignificant rudder on the back of the largest ships, but the direction of that trimtab can change the direction of the entire vessel. Leaders who hope to catalyze healthy cultures within their organizations are wise to remain aware of not only the importance of their own influence, but the potential and likely influence of every individual within the organization. Effective leaders nurture positive participation and impact by each and every member of the organizational system.

## Principle 5: Open & Closed Systems

Closed systems only use internal resource supplies. Open systems get their resources from both internal and external supplies.

A system does something. In the broadest sense, it creates a whole or an emergent property. In order to create this emergent property, a system's parts can't just sit still, they have to do something. Doing something requires energy, which a system gets either internally or externally. Systems observed over time can seem to have a tendency to wear down over time and eventually run out of energy. This Second Law of Thermodynamics describes the tendency of a system to eventually burn itself out (i.e., the flashlight whose bat-

tery runs out). Such closed systems get the energy they need to maintain themselves internally, and once that energy source is gone, the system is no longer able to maintain itself it wears out. However, other systems can be observed that not only remain viable, but also grow and evolve into increased organization and complexity (a biological system, an ecosystem). Such systems are open systems and get the energy they need from outside themselves. If the environments in which a system lives can provide long term and ample energy, the system will show a tendency toward continued growth.

***Trigger Question: How does this principle expand your understanding of your organization as a system within larger economic, societal and natural systems?***

## *Economics 101*

Our traditional notions of Economics—how we get the resources we need to "fuel" our activity—are changing. The idea of "supply and demand" is broadening to an understanding of "value exchange." In order to get the resources we need to fuel our activity, we offer something of value in exchange. We provide products and services that add value to the larger systems in which we exist, and we receive resources in return. The same principle can be applied to our "internal systems"—the people who work in our organizations, provide energy, knowledge and skills to carry out specific functions of the organization. In return, they receive resources from us in order to sustain themselves and their families.

# Principle 6: The most evolved complex systems learn how to learn.

The most evolved complex systems demonstrate the capacity for evolutionary learning.

We value our education for a reason. During the industrial era, our perception and value of learning focused mostly on how it could best suit efficient productivity. Speed, efficiency and a value for production *quantity* suggested that we learn simply *how to* do something. Now, we need to re-evaluate our learning to integrate the new understandings and principles that govern all open systems—we need to learn to value again learning itself, rather than just the products, outcomes and results of learning.[34]

> *Life is now in session.*
> *Are you present?*
>
> — B. COPELAND

Even before the industrial era, the rise of the 'scientific method' dramatically influenced how we perceive and value learning. For many people, empirical research is still the only way to "prove" the value of anything we learn. For others, the importance of knowledge itself has become more valued than the process of learning. Our friend and colleague, Robert White, likes to remind people of the adage, "If you're green, you're growing. When you're ripe, you rot." It's an important reminder that no matter what we know, the world is constantly changing, so there's always more to learn.

Second-order Cybernetics is a focused discipline within the systems sciences that explores the capacity of the most evolved systems to not only learn, but also learn how to learn. Humanity, as one of the most evolved of the complex open systems, demonstrates great capacity to not only learn to pre-

dict and respond to changes within our internal and external environments, we also have the capacity to reflect on the value of that learning; whether our learning could be improved or whether our learning processes are still appropriate in changed circumstances.

An evolutionary perspective reflects the value of learning—and more critically, learning how to learn—by evaluating ideas, opinions or information with consideration of its affect on a person's or group's own process of inquiry; whether it stifles or spurs reflection and reasoning. In order for any system to evolve, it must respond to and adapt to the demands and limits of the environments that sustain it. In social systems, those environments can change rapidly, necessitating constant reflection and re-evaluation of the basic questions of "why, what and how."

Despite the focus we've had on the scientific support for many of the new values and perspectives of organizational leadership and management, we know that you'll apply and use these ideas only if they seem reasonable and that they'll actually make a difference when put into practice.

Experiential learning, 'tacit knowledge' such as knowing how to ride a bike or knowing we're in love, is just as critical as discovering new principles and laws of science through empirical research. We can evaluate what we learn through our experience, and what we understand reasonably using logic, reason and empirical evidence by checking them against each other, as well as against our personal understanding of meaning. If a child 'learns' they are worthless because she doesn't experience feeling valued, but still grows up with a conceptual understanding of inherent value because of her spiritual understanding of meaning, then she will have to evaluate which "lesson" serves her best. Likewise, our evolved capacity for reason, logic and scientific method has served us well as a species. Instead of 'compartmentalizing' what we know and understand through reason and science and separating that from our

spiritual understanding or what we know from our own experience, we could try to find congruency among all three ways of knowing.[35]

***Trigger Question: Which do you value more, knowing or learning? How do you evaluate what you learn both in traditional 'education' and in what you learn through the experiences of your life? Which lessons 'stick' most?***

***Do your values and sense of meaning 'fit' what you know because of reason or experience? Do you integrate your values and sense of meaning when considering what to do in different situations (personal, work, family, etc)? Does your reasoning and experience reinforce your values and sense of meaning, or do you 'compartmentalize' which "knowledge" you use in different aspects of your life?***

# Principle 7: Human factors that affect Human Systems

Human Systems demonstrate certain fundamental differentiating factors in addition to general principles of open systems:

1. The need for meaning which defines human values,
2. The emergence of cultures as a reflection of the integration of individual values,
3. The capacity for self reflective consciousness and conscious choice, and
4. Human systems demonstrate the most evolved capacity for creativity

# Defining Values:

[Allow 2-4 hours]

Remember, your objective here is to design for integrity. That means integrating all of your values and principles into a unified whole. It doesn't mean 'compartmentalizing' our cultural or spiritual values or thinking they don't apply within our organizations. The goal here is to generate a 'goodness of fit' of all of our values, and how they will support the work of the organization.

*Ample time should be allowed for the stakeholders to create a meaningful list of values. Allow time for a "heart-storming" list to be generated, then discuss the meaning of each value, considering whether the value is congruent with the systems principles outlined above. This process allows traditional values such as "individuality" and financial success to be included, but in a way that does not allow the value to 'diminish' other values such as environmental sustainability (we need our outside environments to sustain us) or collaboration and mutual*

*respect. As values are considered against the core systems principles, their significance to each other will begin to evolve into a beginning "value system." The group should be encouraged to choose 10-15 "core values" which they spend time defining together and committing to their workbook to share with all organizational stakeholders at a later time. It is important to give ample, but not excessive time to this first incarnation of the organizational value system, as new values will emerge during the visioning process.*

Now is a good time to create a clarified statement that defines the organization's Mission & Purpose:

[Final hour, day one]

*Optional activity: Provide a poster board, magazines, glue, scissors, colored markers, etc. and encourage the group to co-create a collage that can more creatively reflect their generative vision, which includes the values, purpose, mission and ideal image. The project can be set on a table at the side of the room so that over the remainder of the conversation, participants can go to add something to the collage whenever they want while still participating in the dialogue.*

## *Mission:*

This can be thought of in terms of economic and 'industry' or focus of the group: "Our mission is to create a program that serves teenage girls in the metropolitan Detroit and tri-county area. We will provide self-esteem and entrepreneurial training to 2,000 young women each year." Or, "Our mission is to provide the highest quality fruit and produce in Macomb County." Be as specific as possible.

## *Purpose:*

This can be thought of in terms of the underlying, *non-economic* "reason for being" of the group or organization. "Young women should be provided the knowledge and confidence to strive for and achieve financial and profes-

sional independence." (The purpose is providing knowledge and confidence, not income). "We wish to provide quality, gourmet products and an enjoyable shopping experience for our customers."

# Part Two: Envisioning the Ideal

[Allow: 1-2 days]

*Display the following quote on a wall where everyone can read it. This quote, and others are provided in Appendix B of the process guide:*

"Nothing less than the ideal is worth the effort." –Bela H. Banathy.

*Start and end each day with a roundtable.*

## Vision

The 'vision' is the ideal image of the group in its most successful and effective state of being. Underconceptualization of this image is one of the pitfalls that keep nonprofits focused on bake sales and small businesses from growing successfully. Worse, underconceptualization of this vision is what results in larger organizations and companies making 'the bottom line' a value given inappropriate and imbalanced priority. Of course, 'the bottom line' is important, but as you've discovered, creating a healthy bottom line requires attention to all of the principles that make an open system sustainable. Bela Banathy developed the processes of "idealized systems design" as a way for social and organizational systems to envision futures unencumbered by "what is."

Envisioning the ideal requires leaping outside any preconceived limits, which may or may not be legitimate systemic constraints. This envisioning is the most fun part of the process, as everyone is encouraged to use their imaginations unbounded by "needed resources."

The "envisioned ideal" reflects the core values, but at this point does NOT consider the constraints of time, resources, knowledge or technology. This enables the "design" not to be limited by current reality.

*During these dialogues, excitement will rise. Encourage the group to "notice" each other's physical demeanor, and how they feel internally when they are truly excited about exploring the possibilities.*[36]

***Envision the "perfect day" of the organization fulfilling its purpose and mission the most successful way possible. What is that day like? How does it feel? What's the "scenery"? What's the "cast of characters"? What are people saying, doing? How are they feeling?***

The facilitator may start by telling the group "I'm Santa Claus, your fairy godmother, your magic wish genie mythological character of choice. What do you want?" [37]

Now consider the specifics all of the following dimensions of an organization consisting of a diverse group of individuals who, together, are doing the work of the organization within a larger community/environment:

***How long will this organization exist? (10 years, 100 years? 1,000 years?) How will it sustain itself over time and in changing environments?***

# Envisioning the "Evolutionary Guidance System"

Bela H. Banathy in *Designing Social Systems in a Changing World* proposes the 8-Dimensional "Evolutionary Guidance System."[38] The dimensions reflect the entire 'systems complex' of human systems, and we use it here to help ensure your design is as complete and comprehensive as it can be. We've developed the trigger questions for each dimension to help guide you to envision an ideal that is reflective of the values you defined in part one.

The dimensions are considered in this order to move the group naturally from previous dialogue to new areas of consideration.

## *Ethics/Morality/Higher Meaning:*

***How do we demonstrate our value for each other?***

***How will our values guide our behavior which each other, our clients, stakeholders and the community in ways that are ethical and moral?***

***How will we nurture a healthy "organizational spirit?"***

***How will we support (or not diminish) the diverse personal philosophies and faith practices of our internal and external stakeholders?***

## *Creative Expression/Aesthetics:*

***How do we demonstrate our value for creativity, expression, aesthetic surroundings and enjoyable experience?***

***What will our physical environment be like?***

***What will our office (or gathering place) look like?***

***Where will it be? Consider décor, artwork, lighting, background music. (You may even want to include what it smells like and what you're eating for lunch.)***

***How will we dress? What will our physical appearance (personal/ organizational) express to visitors?***

***How will our environment help remind ourselves about our values, purpose & mission? How do we feel? Are we having fun? Are we enjoying the process?***

## *Economic/Financial:*

***How do we demonstrate our economic and financial values?***

***What value will our product/service have for our clients? How will we receive fair return value? (contributions, sales, fees?)***

***How will we acquire/receive the resources we need to fulfill our mission and purpose?***

***$ Time New Knowledge New Skills***

***How will we provide value to our internal stakeholders (staff, volunteers)?***

***How will we measure the value we provide with the value we receive? (Equitable exchange of financial or other value given in relationship to the contribution of time, skills, knowledge, someone provides the organization)***

## *Health & Well Being:*

***How do we demonstrate value for the health & well-being of our internal and external stakeholders?***

***How will we sustain and/or improve the physical and psychological well-being of ourselves, our clients, and our staff?***

***Are there functions/tasks that need to be carried out which might cause physical, emotional or psychological strain (boring, repetitive tasks, physical work, uncreative and unchallenging tasks?)***

***How can we ensure that the demands of the job do not harm ourselves or our staff?***

***How can we design our processes so that everyone feels nurtured, valued, challenged and eager to improve?***

## *Social & Natural Environments*

***How do we demonstrate value for the social and natural environments that sustain us?***

***What is our relationship to our larger community?***

***How will we carry out our work in such a way that does not "take away" from the societal (community) and natural environments that sustain us?***

***How will we carry out our work in such a way that can add to and improve our larger social environments (community, society)? The natural environment?***

***What is our potential "ripple effect" globally?***

## *Continual Learning & Evaluation*

***How do we demonstrate our value for ongoing learning, evaluation and improvement?***

***How will we continually learn about:***

- ***Our focus (industry, service, product):***
- ***Our stakeholders (needs and satisfaction level)***
- ***customers/clients or program beneficiaries***
- ***Investors/contributors***
- ***Staff/volunteers***

***Our effectiveness:***
***How will we evaluate whether we are moving toward/fulfilling our mission and purpose?***
***What criteria will we use to evaluate?***
***How will we make changes and adjustments?***

## *Polity/Governance*

Obviously, the principle of 'influential centers' will apply to this dimension. But besides considering the role of the leadership, this dimension envisions the overall structure of the organizational system. This dimension will require a lot of thought, and one additional principle may help you consider what the 'ideal' for this dimension might look like:

## *Finality & Equifinality*

Natural, open systems grow and evolve into increased complexity and wholeness by using positive and negative feedback within their environments. How this happens can be understood by the principles of finality and equifinality. Finality refers to the principle that open systems as a whole are future-seeking and growth-oriented. "Equifinality refers to the fact that in open systems there may be many different ways of arriving at the same end."[39] Laszlo elaborates that natural systems are deterministic about their future and direction—but they are only determinate as a whole—not within the relationship of their parts. "A natural system doesn't care which part carries out certain functions, only that the function is carried out. There is a high degree of flexibility."[40]

A perfect model of flexible, open systems can be found in our natural environment. Nature does not care whether it is a predator, lack of food, or weather patterns that control the growth of species populations. Further, most functions of an ecosystem are carried out in a variety of ways by a variety of parts. This creates increased stability and the elimination of any one component is less likely to impact the whole. In natural systems, unlike mechanical systems, this flexibility creates stability. In a mechanical system, if one cog breaks, the whole system could malfunction. In a natural system, an ecosystem will remain stable even if one frog leaves the pond to go perform in beer

commercials, or if one gecko leaves the desert to sell car insurance. The more flexible, open and adaptable a system is, the more efficiently and effectively it is able to sustain itself.

***What type of organizational structure do we value? What's the structure of this organization?***

***Who will be accountable and ultimately responsible for ensuring that the values, purpose and mission of the organization are being realized?***

***How will all internal & external stakeholders be able to contribute to the development, evaluation and improvement of the core values, purpose, mission and vision of the organization?***

***How will stakeholders be able to contribute to the development, evaluation & improvement of functions, tasks and processes?***

***What are the main functions and tasks that will need to be carried out and how will they be organized and evaluated? (This should not be too detailed or comprehensive at this point, otherwise the dialogue may move to 'strategy' rather than the 'visioning' we are focusing on here. 'Organization' of the key departments, functions or other components are more important for now.)***

***Who will be ultimately accountable for the effectiveness of which functions and tasks?***

***Key functions/tasks to include:***
***Core Leadership:***

- ***Monitoring overall effectiveness for mission/purpose***
- ***Ensuring organizational values are congruent with behavior***
- ***Ongoing strategic planning***
- ***Ongoing evaluation & improvement of overall processes***

***Financial Systems***
***Marketing / Sales Efforts***
***Administrative Tasks (supervision of clerical work, logistical tasks, appointments, recordkeeping)***
***Product/Service delivery***
***Product/Service improvement and continued development (R&D)***

***How and what will we be communicating in order to sustain and build relationship:***

- ***Among each other?***
- ***With our clients/stakeholders?***
- ***Community/society/world?***

***How will conflicts/disagreements be resolved?***

## *Science/Technology:*

***How do we demonstrate value for the tools and technologies that enable us to fulfill our mission?***

***What technologies and tools will we utilize?***

***How will we evaluate and upgrade our tools and equipment to best provide our products /services?***

***What science or research will support our work? Our ongoing improvement and development?***

*Two laborers were watching a new computerized steam shovel at work in an open-pit mine. The shovel took in a truckload of dirt in one big bite. After just a few bites, the truck was full. One laborer said to the other, "Man, that machine has put five hundred of us out of work. It's our enemy!" The other man said, "Yes, and if we got rid of our shovels, we could create a million jobs for people to dig the mine with spoons."*

Answer the following again:

***Envision the "perfect day" of the organization fulfilling its purpose and mission the most successful way possible. What is that day like? How does it feel? What's the "scenery"? What's the "cast of characters"? What are people saying, doing? How are they feeling?***

At this point, it is important to look again at the Mission, Purpose and especially the organizational values. Does anything need to be added? Changed?

***How will we communicate and share our values, purpose, mission and vision with our internal and external stakeholders?***

# Part 3: Strategic Dialogue

[1-2 days if information is available]

*Keep up the routine of opening and closing roundtables for each day.*

Quote of the day: "Easy doesn't do it."

The planning of actual strategy should only be done after the overall "design" is clear to all core stakeholders. Spending adequate time on generative visioning ensures that all strategy is implemented to move the organization towards the ideal.

## Navigating the Obstacle Course

[Allow 1 hour]

The emergence of healthy, vibrant and sustainable cultures may seem like an idyllic aspiration. It is. That is not to say that the process itself will likely be ideal; on the contrary, it's likely to be far from perfect. Obstacles will seem to arise at every turn, and many of those obstacles will come from right inside your own organization or group. Some of these pitfalls and challenges will require extraordinary creativity, patience, and skill by the group's stakeholders. Steward leaders will need to serve as centralizing facilitators, guiding and empowering the organization or group to move through the challenges and conflicts in ways that best serve the whole system. Steward leaders, in the role of facilitators,

> ***Ideas not coupled with action never become bigger than the brain cells they occupied.***
>
> — ARNOLD H. GLASOW

do not control events, people or processes, but rather enables them to happen in effective ways. You will help the group establish rules which enable effective processes, and help the group define and identify behavior and choices which support or potentially interfere with progress towards your shared purpose.[41]

An effective steward leader will nurture an environment where all members and stakeholders of the organization or group feel a sense of shared identity, shared commitment and shared purpose. To inspire genuine, authentic, committed participation, a steward leader allows shared ownership in the community's process, vision and ultimate success. Finally, as a steward of a community's central, catalyzing value system, a leader facilitates the mediation of conflict in ways which serve both the organization and the people who work or participate in it, seeking win-win solutions and consensus rather than risk apathy by creating "losers" or settling for compromise.

Some of the obstacles a steward leader is likely to face are the established habits and preconceived perceptions of the people, a failure to create community or *demosophia,* and plain, old-fashioned conflict over ideology or strategy.

## *Habits*

Humans, as we've noted before, choose and behave largely from their subconscious. This subconscious landscape includes the panorama of an individual's personal experience, the impact of one's ethnic, spiritual, political and economic cultures, personal preferences and ideologies and emotional and psychological make up. All of these influence choices and behavior, and rarely are they reflected on consciously for their appropriateness. As a matter of fact, it would be impractical to do so, which is why we rely so heavily on our learned, automatic responses to move us through each day. But at times it becomes obvious that these learned behaviors, automatic choices and habitual responses are harmful, either to ourselves personally, or to the whole of the

social systems of which we are a part.

While we are not suggesting in any way that the value of professional psychological help and guidance should be ignored in extreme cases, it is also unrealistic to expect groups or organizations to provide this service as part of their function. In most cases, professional intervention is unnecessary, but addressing habits and learned cultural behavior is something every organization must do. As an organization comprised of a community of stewards, you serve the whole when you serve and nurture the individual people in your organization.

*My life is like one long obstacle course with me being the chief obstacle.*

— JACK PAAR

Such efforts are the focus of the personal seminars given by ARC Worldwide. In his book, *Living an Extraordinary Life*, ARC Chairman Robert White (2000) reports that it often seems to be enough simply to empower individuals to identify unhealthy and undesirable habits, many of which may be out of their conscious awareness. Once a person becomes aware of the behavior, they can consciously choose to behave otherwise, even if they never identify the source of the behavior. As anyone who has learned to ride a bicycle or drive a car can attest, by consciously directing behavior and actions over and over, new, even sometimes awkward and uncomfortable behavior and action can, and will eventually, become subconscious.

### How's the View?

Our lens of the world can be a tricky thing. Like our subconscious behavior, our perception of the world around us is often greatly influenced by the implicit, unspoken values and norms we have acquired through our cultures and personal experience. And, like behavior, perceptions can, and often do, affect individual and group effectiveness in ways that do not serve either one.

As noted by Morgan, "Human beings have a knack for getting trapped in webs of their own creation"[42]

So does this lead us back to the need for our communities to provide professional intervention? Not really. Most individuals learn how to expand, clarify, change and 'morph' their perspectives once they learn the value that the new perspectives may have to offer *(see Benking & Stalinski, 2001, Appendix A)*.

## *Demosophia*

One of the most common pitfalls of the design community, and one more than any other that can cause the failure of a group to evolve into a healthy community and successfully reach their design vision according to Banathy is the failure to spend adequate time in the process of generative dialogue.[43] It is through generative dialogue that new, viable and desirable cultures emerge within a community. Since the nature of culture is a system of ways of knowing, being and doing which reflect the values and norms of the whole, it is through culture that group behavior is expressed and manifested. "In true dialogue, a new form of consensual mind emerges, generative a rich, creative order between the individual and the community as a more powerful force than the individual mind is alone."[44] Without attention to such shared meaning and purpose, a design community is likely to underconceptualize the design of their future organization by not focusing their efforts in a comprehensive vision. They may underutilize knowledge and information, underconceptualize their models, misunderstand the boundaries of their design, fail to engage full and genuine stakeholder involvement and shift focus from a whole-system level down to lower-level objectives.[45] Worse, without a clear, compelling, comprehensive and fully envisioned ideal towards which to

> *There is nothing so frustrating as a person who keeps right on talking while I'm trying to interrupt.*
>
> — ANONYMOUS

strive, a community may 'settle' for something less than its originally conceived purpose and vision.

## *"The Magic of Conflict"*

Aikido Master Tom Crum uses the graceful martial art of aikido to teach his seminar participants the value of managing conflict in ways that honor all involved parties and create 'win-win' solutions. It's really a fascinating process to watch. As the aikidoist is 'attacked,' he or she actually moves *in* to and towards his or her opponent. By not resisting or pulling away, a sort of graceful, balanced dance seems to take place between the 'attacker' and 'victim,' usually resulting in the attacker laying on the ground, as unharmed and unhurt as the 'victim.' Crum regularly reminds his seminar participants that "Conflict does not equal competition." "Resolving conflict is rarely about who is right. It is about acknowledgement and appreciation of differences," says Crum. [46]

Conflict is a call for change, it signals that we are in a state of disequilibrium and ripe for an evolutionary shift. Failing to take the opportunity to grow from the situation will likely be painful, uncomfortable and will certainly not get one any further ahead than where they started.

***What obstacles are this group, and the individuals within it, likely to encounter? What can we do to get past these obstacles? What is the difference between these obstacles and genuine systemic constraints?***

# Strategic Dialogue

Strategy can be considered in terms of tasks, the order and arrangement they need to be carried out, the timing, etc. It is important to assess whether the group or organization has the resources it needs to carry out the tasks that need to be accomplished. All processes require "fuel" to generate and sustain activity. The 'energy' or 'fuel' needed by our organizations is financial resources, plus the time, skills and knowledge needed to carry out activities.

Strategic Dialogue often degrades into "discussion" or worse—disagreement and competitive conflict. In order to facilitate this process, it is important for the group to internalize the "six principles of dialogue conduct" used when people are trying to define and resolve complex problems, or design complex systems in a collaborative way.[47]

## *Exploring The Dialogue Game*

[allow one hour]

*(For the full facilitator's guide for the Dialogue Game, contact CWA Ltd, listed in Appendix C. The paraphrased "Tree of Meaning" can also be found in Appendix B.)*

On the following pages is a demonstration of the results of the Dialogue Game developed by Christakis and CWA Ltd. The game was developed to demonstrate just six principles that CWA uses in its total 'construct' of using the CogniScope™ computerized dialogue methodology. It is presented here apart from the other important principles used in the CogniScope™ system as a demonstration of the value of focused, disciplined and purposeful dialogue.

During the game, the participants are introduced to each of the six principles of dialogue in the order noted next to the principle. Like the principles of open systems outlined earlier, these principles are not "open for argument"—it doesn't matter whether or not the participants agree with them since they

are already established through research as being "true." Time is spent only clarifying each principle for understanding. The group is then asked to rank each principle in order of importance based on their experiences in conversations. Usually Principle #1 comes out as being most important. Then, participants are asked to rank the principles in terms of the influence they have on each other. This proves much more difficult for the participants and the facilitator explains that this is because 'ranking by influence' requires searching for interdependencies. Since this process requires comparing the principles in sets of two, they will have to compare the principles 30 different ways to evaluate each possible combination. The facilitator then explains that using computer software, that process can be shortened significantly. The results of those comparisons are demonstrated in the "Tree of Meaning" outlined below. Structured dialogue is discovered to be the 'most influential' principle, and Principle 4, the construction of new knowledge and meaning, is the most important since it is the outcome—the result—of the entire dialogue.

*Post the 'Tree of Meaning' on the wall for the group to refer to as they continue.*

## *The "Tree of Meaning"*

*paraphrased from "The Dialogue Game" © 2001 Alexander Christakis, Ph.D. CWA Ltd (used here with permission)*

**2) Dialogue must be structured and disciplined so that participants are not overloaded with two much information at once.**

*(Miller's Law of Requisite Parsimony):* The Law of Requisite Parsimony asserts that human beings can only deal simultaneously with between five and nine observations at one time (Miller, 1956).

***This most influences a group's ability to practice dialogue that includes…***

**5) Every person's contribution matters, so it is necessary to protect the autonomy and authenticity of each person's contribution.**

*(Tsivacou's Law of Requisite Autonomy in Distinction-Making):* For the power of persuasion to be equitably distributed among the observers, the autonomy of individuals must be ensured, and monopolies on persuasive ability prohibited.

***This most influences a group's ability to practice dialogue that includes…***

**6) Comparing ideas, tasks or functions in sets of two by considering their influence on each other will produce more effective prioritization than when ranking a group of concepts, ideas or tasks by importance.**

*(Dye's Law of Requisite Evolution of Observations):* Whenever observations made by stakeholders in the context of a complex design situation are interdependent, assigning priorities for action on the basis of aggregating individual observer's "importance voting" leads to erroneous priorities and ineffective actions. The effective priorities for action emerge after an evolutionary search of interdependencies among the observations through a dialogue focusing on "influence voting."

***This most influences a group's ability to practice dialogue that includes…***

**1) A diversity of viewpoints is necessary to generate real solutions to problems or to design effective systems.**

*(Ashby's Law of Requisite Variety):* The Law of Requisite Variety (Ashby, 1958) asserts that a design must possess an amount of variety that is at least equal to the variety of the problem situation.

***This most influences a group's ability to practice dialogue that includes…***

**3) The relative importance or influence of observations on each other can only be determined by making comparisons in sets of two.**

*(Boulding's Law of Requisite Saliency):* Requisite Saliency**,** or importance of an observation relative to others, can only be brought into play as a useful concept when one is dealing with sets.

***This most influences a group's ability to practice dialogue that results in…***

**4) In dialogue, new meaning and knowledge are produced by a process of searching for relationships of affinity, difference, and influence among each participant's individual knowledge and understanding.**

*(Peirce's Law of Requisite Meaning):* When we observe something or hear an idea, we will automatically begin to evaluate whether it is 'true' or to define its meaning by relating it to our own experience and knowledge. We then draw conclusions about information, opinions and ideas. This principle respects the inherent capacity of individuals and groups to construct meaning (Apel, 1981) and knows that we construct meaning by relating ideas to their own experiences, and comparing them with others. (Warfield and Christakis, 1987).

When conducting a strategic dialogue, it will be helpful to remember these principles, especially since it often becomes our tendency to focus our energy and activity on functions and tasks that we judge to be "most important" rather than evaluating functions and tasks by how they influence each other, which will dramatically improve your ability to *achieve the results* that are most important. Adherence to all the principles will enable this group to create the best possible structure, organization and strategy by extracting and taking advantage of everyone's unique skills, knowledge and perspectives.

Certain departments, tasks, and functions will clearly emerge as being related. If your organization or company does not have a traditional "business plan" or "strategic plan" already in place, now is a good time to begin work-

ing on one! If you haven't looked at your strategic plan or marketing plan in a few years, it might be a good idea to update it. Any 'cookie cutter' strategic plan outline will do: you can find them on CD at your local office supply store, or even use a standard outline easily found by running an Internet search. A traditional strategic plan is important and can help you fill in the details such as a specific marketing and financial strategy, but the limited focus is rarely enough to truly guide decisions effectively.

*The facilitator's role during the strategic dialogue is to ensure that communications remain healthy and purposeful, and follow the principles outlined in the Dialogue Game. It is most important for the facilitator to pay attention to how the dialogue proceeds, not what is being decided. It is especially critical for the facilitator to notice any conflicts emerging and encourage respectful win-win (not compromise or win-lose) resolution on the spot so the group can move on. It is unlikely that a group can answer all of the strategic questions here in one day. The 'point' of the process is to provide an experience of effective dialogue and enable the group to practice dialogue so it can continue with or without facilitation. It may happen that the size and scope of the design is such that "non-computerized" strategic dialogue would prove to be inefficient. At this point the facilitator should refer the group to CWA Ltd.*

***God gives us nuts. But he does not crack them.***

— PROVERBS

# Current Situation:

***What resources do we have now?***

***$ Time Skills Knowledge***

***Is everyone involved with this organization aligned with the stated purpose, mission and values? How do we know?***

*Unless the organization or group is small and all the stakeholders are taking place in the design conversation, at this point, the answer will likely be 'no'. especially if the conversation is taking place over consecutive days. Encourage the group to dialogue about ways to integrate stakeholders at all levels of the organization to be included in the ongoing evaluation and refinement of the purpose, mission, values and vision of the organization.*

***Who are our stakeholders? (Clients, staff, funders)***

# Overall Strategy:

***What tasks/functions need to be carried out?***

***How long will they each take?***

***How often will they need to be done?***

***How will each task/function influence our ability to accomplish the other tasks/functions (comparisons of influence/importance within a set).***

***By:***

- ***Leadership (implement/monitoring of core mission, purpose, values)***
- ***Administration***
- ***Product/Service delivery***
- ***Financial Mgmt***
- ***Marketing/Sales (fundraising, etc)***
- ***Product Quality: Development/improvement***

***What infrastructure will be needed to carry out these tasks? (Space, equipment, staff)***

***When & How often do we need to evaluate our results in each area?***

***How will we evaluate each function? What criteria will be used?***

***How will we evaluate whether our functions, tasks and processes are congruent with our stated values, and aligned with our purpose and mission?***

***What are the factors that might influence the results/effectiveness of each task/function? Make sure criteria used for evaluation reflects these factors.***

***How will disagreements/conflicts be resolved?***

It's important to design a "moving horizon" being careful never to limit the ideal by what is currently being experienced. The ideal is something to strive towards, not reach. Goals are attainable, visions are what keep us moving forward. If an organization is not growing or moving forward, "being stable" will degrade into falling behind and eventually falling apart. "Homeostasis" is always a temporary condition within the larger environments in which an organization or system exists.

***How often and when will we revisit our "envisioned ideal" and change, adapt, improve it?***

***What contingency plans do we have if we experience a major threat (internal culture, societal, financial, etc) to our organization?***

***What is the overall philosophy of the organization in each of these areas?***

***The philosophy should be compared to the overall organizational values, mission, purpose and vision to ensure congruency.***

- ***Leadership (implement/monitoring of core mission, purpose, values)***
- ***Administration***
- ***Product/Service delivery***
- ***Financial Mgmt***
- ***Marketing/Sales (fundraising, etc)***
- ***Product & Service Quality: Development/improvement***

# Short Term Strategy

***What tasks/functions need to be carried out now?***

***How long will they each take?***

***Which are one time tasks and which will be ongoing?***

***By: Within: 30 Days 60 Days 6 months 1 Year***
***Leadership***
***Administration***
***Product/Service delivery***
***Financial Mgmt***
***Marketing/Sales (fundraising, etc)***
***Product Quality: Development/improvement***

***What infrastructure do we need to carry out these tasks? (Space, equipment, staff)***

***What needs to be in our budget now to accomplish the tasks/ functions listed above?***

***How long will our internal resources last without renewal from outside sources (clients, contributors, investors, outside training/ education?)***

***When can we realistically expect to begin receiving some outside resources?***

***$:*** ***Needed Skills:*** ***Needed Knowledge:***

Time, of course is our most precious resource since it is non-renewable! When time begins running out, additional financial resources usually are assigned to bring in additional staff support so that tasks are spread out among more people.

***When can we realistically expect to be economically sustainable?***

***What functions/tasks will need to be added as we grow?***

***When & How often do we need to evaluate our results in each area during the short term? How will we evaluate? What criteria will we use?***

***Is there anything within our short-term strategy that will get us "off course" towards the ideal? Does our short term strategy put us on a course towards our ideal vision? Does the short term strategy conflict with our values or overall philosophy in any area?***

## *Endnotes*

[1] Laszlo, K, unpublished
[2] Ackoff, R. (1999) p 537;
[3] Bohm and Peat (1987); [4] ibid, p. 241
[5] Bohm and Peat, 1987; Pattakos in Banathy, 1996)
[6] Banathy, 1996, p. 219
[7] Stalinski, 2001a
[8] Banathy, 1996, p. 218
[9] Banathy, 1996; Checkland, 1993; Laszlo, E., 1996, Laszlo, A., 1999; Laszlo, Laszlo et. al, 1996; Morgan, 1998; Stalinski, 2001b
[10] von Bertalanffy, 1968; ISSS (online)
[11] Laszlo, E. 1996, p 27; [12] ibid p. 27
[13] Bertalanffy, p 55
[14] Kaufmann, 1980, ch. 1
[15] Laszlo, 1996, p. 4; [16] ibid., p 5
[17] Bertalanffy, 1968, ch. 3
[18] Kaufmann, 1980, p. 14; [19] ibid; [20] ibid
[21] Laszlo, 1996, p. 32
[22] Kaufmann, p. 38
[23] Eisler, 2000
[24] Bertalanffy, 1968; Ashby, 1958
[25] Kaufmann, 1980; [26] ibid.
[27] Morgan, 1998
[28] Bertalanffy, 1968, ch. 3; [29] ibid., p. 70
[30] Alexander Laszlo, personal e-mail, April 2000
[31] Banathy, 1996, p. 235
[32] Eisler, 2000
[33] Banathy, 1996, p. 236
[34] Banathy, 1992, Stalinski, 2000b
[35] Stalinski, 2001b, Benking & Stalinski 2001)
[36, 37] with thanks to Clarity International
[38] Banathy, 1996
[39] Morgan, 1998, p. 43
[40] Laszlo, 1996, p 84
[41] Schwarz, 1994
[42] Morgan, 1998, p. 182
[43] Banathy, 1996, p. 287; [44] ibid., p. 217; [45] ibid., ch 7
[46] Crum, 1987, p. 49
[47] Christakis, 2001

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# Appendix A: Part 1

## *PROPOSITIONS THAT UNDERLIE SOCIAL SYSTEMS DESIGN*

***by Bela H. Banathy, Ed.D., International Systems Institute***

These propositions help me to organize my thinking about social systems design. They (should) comprise an internally consistent and integrated system. The system is open. I want to continue to create it.

- It is the basic right of individuals, groups and communities to be involved in making decisions that affect them.
- They can reclaim and exercise this right and forge their destiny only if they develop competence that empowers them to take part directly and authentically in the design of the systems and communities in which they live and work.
- It is unethical to design social systems for someone else. In social systems people who live in the system are the experts.
- The role of the design professional is to develop resources and create arrangements and opportunities by which a designing community can learn how to engage in the design of their system.
- A designing community is comprised of people who serve the system, who are served by it, and who are affected by it. They collectively are the designers and users of their design: they own the design. They are user designers.
- Designers of social systems are trustees for future generations. They must constantly ask: How will the system we design affect the unborn?

Collective design capability empowers us to practice authentic, truly participative democracy. It enables us to guide the activities that enrich the quality of our lives, add value to the systems in which we live, and organize our lives in the service of the common good.

# Appendix A: Part 2

## *About the Design Conversation*

The Design Conversation is a practice introduced by Bela H. Banathy, and implemented by the International Systems Institute for 20 years in Conversation Communities around the world. The ISI is a non-profit public benefit research and educational community; operating as a network of Research Fellows, who are dedicated to developing and living by a systems and design culture, helping each other, and serving our communities and the larger society. A design conversation integrates both generative & strategic dialogue in order for groups to generate the most creative and comprehensive design possible. The Aurora Now Foundation hosts the Desert Conversation Community of the ISI, and ongoing evaluation of these programs by those who participate will provide valuable information for the systems research community in addition to the direct benefit your group will receive by engaging in the process.

## *Becoming a Level B Design Community*

Banathy (1996) proposes that a Level B Design Community will be supported by the knowledge and research of those schools and R&D centers of social science and systems science. As a 'Level A' education and research organization, the Aurora Now Foundation has participated regularly in design conversations with the International Systems Institute, including facilitating the team on the Design of Healthy & Authentic Community within the Asilomar Conversation Community and hosting the Desert Conversation Community of ISI. Our responsibility and 'calling' as an organization is to "design and offer learning resources and programs that focus on the development of professional competence in comprehensive systems design" for use by "human and social service professionals" (Banathy, 1996, p. 244); in other words,

for organizational managers, entrepreneurs, nonprofit leadership and community leaders. (Aurora Now includes youth in that list, and has found young people to be important stakeholders in the systems to which they belong.)

The information the facilitator will provide from this book during the conversation is based on systems research from a variety of scholars, practitioners and disciplines, especially incorporating the work of Bela H. Banathy, Alexander Christakis, Sherryl Stalinski and Alexander & Kathia Laszlo, supported by research of the wider systems science communities, especially ISI and ISSS. The purpose of this process guide is to provide the kind of resources that will enable organizations and groups outside the systems research communities to understand and practice the exciting, effective and meaningful methods, which have been evolving in the systems research communities for over two decades, especially the work of the International Systems Institute.

# Appendix A: Part 3

## *DIALOGUE TOWARD UNITY IN DIVERSITY*

***Heiner Benking & Sherryl Stalinski***

*Unity in Diversity -Ludwig von Bertalanffy 100th Anniversary Conference*
*University of Vienna, November 1-4, 2001, Vienna, Austria*
*(reprinted with permission)*

ABSTRACT

*The authors seek to briefly address the persistent challenges of applying general systems principles to our human cultural systems. We identify individual and cultural worldviews that continue to cause us to resist integrating diverse human perspectives and cultural systems in relevant and meaningful relationship. We introduce dialogue methodologies that can lead to cultural praxis toward a more unified and 'whole' global humanity, which not only retains our individual and cultural diversity, but celebrates and integrates this diversity into ever-increasing relevant and meaningful relationship. The authors introduce the five global ethics identified by the Institute for Global Ethics as the "centralizing influence" which can guide our inter- and intra-cultural dialogues.*

General System Theory would seem to point out the obvious reasons for humanity to value, and thus seek out Unity in Diversity. Further, to even carry on a dialogue on the topic within the systems research communities should seem trivial: We understand the value of diversity. We understand the principles that govern a complex, open system to be stable and sustainable over time. We, as systems researchers, should readily conceptualize a complex global human system, made of increasingly specialized and diverse individuals, communities, countries evolving in ever increasing integration and relationship, and evolving around influential centers, which continually catalyze our increased organization. As systems researchers, a conference on Unity in

Diversity should seem like a kindergarten reunion; an exercise in 'preaching to the choir.'

And yet here we are, still reconciling what we have learned through empirical systems research with what we have learned through personal experience. And for many of us, influenced by the wisdom and understanding of the new sciences, we find ourselves still reconciling the experiential and the empirical with new, relativist or postmodern perspectives. We continue to struggle to validate and honor our own diverse ways of knowing (Earley 1997; Harman, 1998; Stalinski, 2001) along with the diverse perspectives of others. The struggle comes from trying to choose between perspectives; an ingrained insistence that we must choose one perspective or another, rather than holding diverse and multiple perspectives simultaneously and then seeking their integration.

Jay Earley (1997) articulates the same fundamental processes of integration as von Bertalanffy by concluding that "differentiation (complexity), autonomy and wholeness are the three basic tendencies of evolution." The authors propose that in and among human systems, this process happens concurrently at the level of individual consciousness and the societal/cultural levels. It seems significant however to remind ourselves that this evolution—increased wholeness and individuation (unity)—happens through the relevant, effective and right relationship of increasingly diverse (differentiated and autonomous) components (Bertalanffy, 1968). The evolutionary process is not reliant merely on differentiation, but on the appropriate relationship of differentiated systems components; whether biological, organismic or human perspectives.

Human evolution likewise follows this principle—human perspectives which drive human behavior—is the process of evolving individual consciousness and the inevitable concurrent evolution of our social systems and their cultures (Banathy, 2000; Earley, 1997; Harman, 1998). Rose (1998), Gebser

(1949/86) and the authors (Benking & Stalinski, 2001) argue that this process is central to being, and emergence of evolved consciousness (and thus the integration of human culture) is an experiential, "concrete," as well as conceptual reality. Earley likewise calls for the integration of "participatory" and "reflexive" consciousness—again underscoring the integration of the experiential, rational and spiritual towards increased individual and cultural wholeness.

The evolution of consciousness is not a process so much of changing perspective and personally held meaning and worldviews, as it is a process of integration (Gebser, 1949/86, Rose, 1998; Benking & Stalinski, 2001) and finding internal congruency among what we know empirically, experientially and from our understanding of meaning (Stalinski, 2001). Our cultures then are the lived and experienced reflection of our individual consciousness and awareness and thus likewise, cultural evolution is a process of living and experiencing both internal and external differentiation, integration and congruency. Often our contemporary cultures express contradictory and conflicting values internally, and even as we ignore these internal conflicts, humanity seems to be striving for a more global wholeness and unity.

Within our human communities—whether local, societal or global—the unity or 'wholeness' of the systems complex of diverse individuals and subsystems is centralized by shared meaning and value. Human cultures are value-guided systems (Laszlo, E. 1996; Banathy, 1996, 2000) and we learn through personal experience and cultural influence to value that which benefits our ability to not just survive, but thrive as individuals and social systems. The cultures within our small local geographic communities or larger societal systems evolve around the 'highly influential centers' (Bertalanffy, 1968) of the values adopted by and the norms agreed upon by the system. And yet central meaning, values, and norms are rarely reflected upon and evaluated at a conscious level.

## *Internal-External Dialogue*

In the process of evolving to a more unified, whole systems complex of diverse cultural, socio-economic, religious, psychological individuals and social systems, it is dialogue which can enable us to discover the relevant and integrated interrelations which will make us a more autonomous individually, and more unified globally. This dialogue may be internal as we seek congruency between what we know empirically, experientially and from our understanding of meaning for our individual and collective lives.

This conscious reflection of personal values and meaning impacts our behavior choices, especially in how we view and perceive others who may seem different from us, and cause discomfort. The willingness to engage in external dialogue – the co-creation of meaning with others—becomes an exploration in discovering how we fit together, as individuals, communities, cultures and nations (Bohm & Peat, 1987; Lopez-Garay, 2001; Christakis, 2001). The level and focus of dialogue may require various dialogue methodologies, a few we introduce here with encouragement for further exploration:

## *Models, Maps & Metaphor*

That which we experience in life: the tactile, sights, smells, sounds, tastes and emotional feelings make up the strongest sense of understanding our human experience. While we may sometimes use our capacity to reason to try to understand these experiences, it is often difficult to argue rationally against what is learned experientially. In dialogue, we can create valuable experiential learning through our senses and emotions by languaging with the concrete. The use of models, maps and metaphor are strong tools for sharing verbally, in writing and outside the parameters of our symbolic languages. (Benking 1996, 1997; 2001 Rose, 2000; Stalinski, 2001)

## *Timeshares/Roundtables*

The purpose of dialogue is to create shared meaning. Since we currently experience life within the constraints of linear time, it is important that diversity is nurtured by enabling diverse participation in equitable ways. Timesharing roundtable exercises enable participants to reflect the other perspective and at the same time practice "communion" through empowerment, giving voice and sharing empathy in a process of establishing shared meaning. (Judge, 1994; Benking, 1998; Bohm [online]). The theoretical framework for embodied shared meaning was established by Hellmuth Plessner who re- established our ability to take on other viewpoints with the definition of "eccentric positionality." (Benking & Rose, 1996)

## *The Design Conversation*

Dialogue which seeks to create, redesign or refine human systems requires competence in the area of design. The design conversation engages participants in both generative and strategic dialogue in order to gain design competence and effectively conceptualize and create complex human systems. (Banathy, 1996; Laszlo, Laszlo, et al, 1996; Stalinski 2001)

## *Computer-Aided Dialogue for Addressing Complex Societal Issues*

Complex systems can be challenging to design, and quite impossible to fix when they are not functioning optimally. Addressing the systemic mess of complex organizational and societal issues, as well as designing ways to recreate them to be healthy, viable and sustainable can be aided with the help of computer software technologies. (Christakis, 1996, 2001; Judge, 1998).

## *The Influential Center of a Global Dialogue:*

Systems evolve around 'instigating causalities' which influence and catalyze the organization of a system (Bertalanffy, 1968). In our cultural systems,

these influential centers are the values which define the cultural system and the norms and behaviors which reflect these values are catalyzed by our cultural leadership. By understanding the role of leadership as "centralizing" and influential for the application of a culture's values, leadership can be seen not as a "dominant" role, but a "predominant" role which empowers integration and interrelationship among all system members to create a more unified and individuated 'whole' culture (Stalinski, 2001). At a global level the Institute for Global Ethics already lists five values identified around the world: respect, honesty, compassion, fairness and responsibility (Glenn & Gordon, 2001). These fundamental, life-affirming values, by being integrated within cultural dialogues at all levels of the global human systems complex, can provide a meaningful and valuable 'centralizing influence' as we strive for an increased unity, bound and influenced these central values, and expressed in myriad diverse cultural, ethnic, and even religious traditions.

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## Appendix B: Part 1: Quotes of the Day

**"It is impossible to restructure a horse and buggy into a spacecraft no matter how much energy and resources are put into the effort."**

*— Bela H. Banathy*

**"There is a great temptation to rationalize or compromise by saying: 'Be a realist.' 'There are too many constraints.' 'We have to show results quickly.' 'You are chasing dreams.' 'It would never work.' 'We have no time for it.' 'It will cost too much.' At times of dynamic, revolutionary and continuous societal changes and transformations, anything less than the design of an ideal system and a continuous pursuit of the ideal leaves us behind. Anything less is a waste of time. The ideal system could be revolutionary, but the journey toward it can be evolutionary. *Nothing less than the ideal is worth the effort."***

*— Bela H. Banathy*

**“Easy doesn’t do it.”**

*— (unknown)*

**"ECOLOGY SEEMS TO BE THE FIELD in which I am most likely to fail to prove any scientific hypothesis I attempt to test. And that's why I like it: I am constantly reminded how wrong I can be about how the world works.**

**That's half the problem: most of us need to be humbled more often, to be reminded that nature is not only more complex than we think, it's more complex than we *can* think.**

**The other half of the problem is that most children today grow up robbed of the chance of discovering anything at all on their own. They are told early on that scientists in little white coats discover all the world's "facts" in neat, antiseptic laboratories. These facts are then handed to an ecologically illiterate public on an equally antiseptic platter filled with pasteurized, homogenized truisms to nibble on as stale appetizers empty of much of their former nutritions. Trouble is, all those tidbits taste far more bland than any wild fruit plucked right off the tree."**

**Gary Paul Nabhan**

# Appendix B: Part 2

## Systems Principles:

*Open Systems:*
1. Synergy & Wholeness
2. Open & Closed Systems
3. Feedback
4. Diversity
5. Influential Centers

*The most complex systems:*
6. Evolutionary Learning

*Human Systems:*
7. Human factors: Meaning, Conscious Choice, Culture, Creativity

## Appendix B: Part 3

### The 8 Dimensions of the "Evolutionary Guidance System":

1. Ethics, Morality, Higher Meaning
2. Creative Expression, Aesthetics
3. Economic/Financial
4. Health & Well-Being
5. Relationship to Social & Natural Environment
6. Continual Learning & Evaluation
7. Polity/Governance
8. Science & Technology

# Appendix B: Part 4

## *The "Tree of Meaning"*

*paraphrased from "The Dialogue Game" © 2001 Alexander Christakis, Ph.D. CWA Ltd (used here with permission)*

**2) Dialogue must be structured and disciplined so that participants are not overloaded with two much information at once.**
*(Miller's Law of Requisite Parsimony):* The Law of Requisite Parsimony asserts that human beings can only deal simultaneously with between five and nine observations at one time (Miller, 1956).

***This most influences a group's ability to practice dialogue that includes…***
**5) Every person's contribution matters, so it is necessary to protect the autonomy and authenticity of each person's contribution.**
*(Tsivacou's Law of Requisite Autonomy in Distinction-Making):* For the power of persuasion to be equitably distributed among the observers, the autonomy of individuals must be ensured, and monopolies on persuasive ability prohibited.

***This most influences a group's ability to practice dialogue that includes…***
**6) Comparing ideas, tasks or functions in sets of two by considering their influence on each other will produce more effective prioritization than when ranking a group of concepts, ideas or tasks by importance.**
*(Dye's Law of Requisite Evolution of Observations):* Whenever observations made by stakeholders in the context of a complex design situation are interdependent, assigning priorities for action on the basis of aggregating individual observer's "importance voting" leads to erroneous priorities and ineffective actions. The effective priorities for action emerge after an evolutionary search of interdependencies among the observations through a dialogue focusing on "influence voting."

*This most influences a group's ability to practice dialogue that includes…*

**1) A diversity of viewpoints is necessary to generate real solutions to problems or to design effective systems.**

*(Ashby's Law of Requisite Variety):* The Law of Requisite Variety (Ashby, 1958) asserts that a design must possess an amount of variety that is at least equal to the variety of the problem situation.

*This most influences a group's ability to practice dialogue that includes…*

**3) The relative importance or influence of observations on each other can only be determined by making comparisons in sets of two.**

*(Boulding's Law of Requisite Saliency):* Requisite Saliency**,** or importance of an observation relative to others, can only be brought into play as a useful concept when one is dealing with sets.

*This most influences a group's ability to practice dialogue that results in…*

**4) In dialogue, new meaning and knowledge are produced by a process of searching for relationships of affinity, difference, and influence among each participant's individual knowledge and understanding.**

*(Peirce's Law of Requisite Meaning):* When we observe something or hear an idea, we will automatically begin to evaluate whether it is 'true' or to define its meaning by relating it to our own experience and knowledge. We then draw conclusions about information, opinions and ideas. This principle respects the inherent capacity of individuals and groups to construct meaning (Apel, 1981) and knows that we construct meaning by relating ideas to their own experiences, and comparing them with others. (Warfield and Christakis, 1987).

# Appendix C: Web Resources

**Aurora Now Foundation:** ***Tucson, AZ: www.auroranow.org***

**CWA Ltd.:** ***Paoli, PA: www. cwaltd.com***

**ARC Worldwide:** ***Denver, CO: www.arcworldwide.com***

**Clarity International:** ***Deming, WA: www. getclarity.com***

**Syntony Quest:** ***San Francisco, CA: www.syntonyquest.org***

**International Systems Institute:** ***Carmel, CA: www.isiconversations.org***

**Ceptual Institute:** ***www.ceptualinstitute.com***

**International Society for the Systems Sciences:** ***www.isss.org***

# Appendix D: Evaluation Forms

***(Complete & return by mail 1 week after your conversation event).***

Name of Organization: _____

Contact:_____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip/Postal Code: _____

Phone: ( _____ ) _____ ext _____

Who facilitated your conversation? _____

How long was your conversation? __ 3 days __ 5 days Other:_____

What were the results?

On a scale of 1-10, rate your results by how strongly you agree with the following statements:

Our organization is now more aware and aligned with clearly defined organizational values

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

No Yes

We have made a commitment to designing the conditions for a healthy organizational culture

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

No Yes

We have a deeper commitment to our organizational mission and purpose

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

No Yes

Our organizational culture has improved because of the quality of relationships among our group

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

No Yes

We have a more comprehensive and clarified strategic vision and plan for our organization.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

No Yes

---

*Return to: Aurora Now Foundation, 1981 N San Joaquin Rd, Tucson AZ 85743*

***(Complete & return by mail 1 month after your conversation event).***

Name of Organization: _____

Contact: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip/Postal Code: _____

Phone: ( _____ ) _____ ext _____

Who facilitated your conversation? _____

How long was your conversation? __ 3 days __ 5 days Other: _____

What were the results?

On a scale of 1-10, rate your results by how strongly you agree with the following statements:

Our organization is now more aware and aligned with clearly defined organizational values

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

No Yes

We have made a commitment to designing the conditions for a healthy organizational culture

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

No Yes

We have a deeper commitment to our organizational mission and purpose

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

No Yes

Our organizational culture has improved because of the quality of relationships among our group

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

No Yes

We have a more comprehensive and clarified strategic vision and plan for our organization.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

No Yes

---

*Return to: Aurora Now Foundation, 1981 N San Joaquin Rd, Tucson AZ 85743*

***(Complete & return by mail 3 months after your conversation event).***

Name of Organization: _____

Contact: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip/Postal Code: _____

Phone: ( _____ ) _____ ext _____

Who facilitated your conversation? _____

How long was your conversation? __ 3 days __ 5 days Other: _____

What were the results?

On a scale of 1-10, rate your results by how strongly you agree with the following statements:

Our organization is now more aware and aligned with clearly defined organizational values

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

No Yes

Our organizational culture has improved because of the quality of relationships among our group

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

No Yes

We have a more comprehensive and clarified strategic vision and plan for our organization.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

No Yes

---

*Return to: Aurora Now Foundation, 1981 N San Joaquin Rd, Tucson AZ 85743*