

Real Organizational Change

By Carol Sanford

For an organization to change at a deep level and to become the industry standard for product offerings and product systems and place of choice for talented people, they must be able to have a culture that:

- Exercises Creativity and innovation in developing a distinctive and value differentiated strategic direction which members of the business then exercise personal creativity to advance,
- Promotes flexibility to continuously change what work is done, the nature of work, and who does which work utilizing the strategic direction as the cornerstone for this flexibility
- Develops Self-accountability in individuals who exercise systems accountability for the wholes of which they are apart anchored in the strategic direction of the business

We call this a developmental approach. A developmental approach to business and human development is uniquely designed to create such

capability and culturally characteristics for organizations to achieve these ends. The human and organizational technology used for causing such an organization to come into place must be disruptive, by design and intention, to move people off their current way of viewing their job and the place they and the business are positioned in the marketplace. It is fundamentally different than an instructional model of learning, and yet it happens in workshops settings. It looks like it should be training, but it does not feel like training—which is based in knowledge transfer. This is further, at least initially, disruptive to participants. The model of working in the sessions is not presentation style, but uses Socratic method and Systems Frameworks for developing thinking and experiential understanding. The intention is to invite people to think, although interactively, for themselves. This is different than the classroom model where they would be given a set of answers they can use; one's that come from others as a source of thinking and therefore the process does not necessarily develop the participants creativity and reflective judgment. This Socratic Process is critical to the end state of fostering self-accountability for the decisions each person makes and for reflecting on the current modes of working and engaging in the

business. It also invites flexibility of thinking and acting to enter and to build the foundation on which creativity emerges.

All this is highly disconcerting to a percentage of people who enter the process, but ends with a very small percentage, if any, questioning it in the end. People become very different in their way of engaging and value what they have learned by their own effort. But to achieve this change, several factors must be accounted for in how the change process is structured.

- A strong business leadership presence that believes the ends are needed, this approach will get them there, and who is willing to “hold” people to the process for the time it takes for them to take on personal accountability for their own learning— usually about 4-6 events over about 6 months
- A highly visible exhibition on their own part of the new way of working, including the shortfalls and successes being made apparent.
- Holding people accountability for applying the learning and implementing the ideas that emerge in the process and tracking and

reporting the impact and effect on the business bottom and top line
(rigorous documentation and broad reporting)

When people enter the process it is quite typical that approximately 1/4 to 1/3 will enter with no desire to change their current way of working or their accountability for the results and effects they produce. They will resist all efforts to make this change in their way of working and will actively and often time vociferously complain about the process and its lack of value and approach. It will seem wrong to them. There is no need to seek to avoid such people or responses. They will move forward in the process and with very few exceptions will become great supporters of the new approaches with time. Those who do not make the shift will find themselves desirous of looking for other work and realizing they are not a fit with where the “new” organization is going. The process becomes self selecting.

Critical to this “” group’s change is the leadership commitment and constancy in moving forward with the effort. Without this leadership for the new direction, this group of people will do everything they can do avoid changing and seek to involve others in the same resistance. With leadership

constancy, they will stay the course and eventually be effected by the changing field around them. It will permeate them.

A second 1/3 or so, will come into the process and love it. They will see personal value immediately and work with everything they are given— applying it, extrapolating to other arenas, and helping others gain the new ability and way of working. This group typically has already developed a way of working that is more flexible and values changing. They serve as the group providing the early returns. Even without a strong leadership presence to support the process, they will take things as far as they can personally. However, in a developmental change process they can only go so far if the rest of the organization is not committed by leadership to move in that direction. But they will thrive in a culture that has taken on a developmental way of working and lead the organization to rapid payouts. They feel a responsibility for the business as a whole and what they can do to ensure its long-term accomplishments.

The last 1/3 will be looking for direction and waiting to see what the leadership is expecting of them. Without a steady hand that is moving

resolutely forward, there will be not real progress with this group. They will take what they can use for their own personal development but not initiate many work changes. With a clear direction and the umbrella in place from the top, this group quickly makes the turn and participates in roles they had not see they could play before. They rise to new challenges and the organization frequently is surprised by their leadership and creativity. They had been waiting, even without knowing it themselves, for a more meaningful role and way to contribute to the organization.

Internalization:

With a developmental change process it is critical to have strong leadership from the top who is committed for the duration of the effort, sometimes a couple of year, until the new culture and way of working are imbedded in the organization. With this commitment, business returns come quickly even those it may take several years for the culture to be completely integrated.

After the first few months, the internalization of the “way of working” picks up speed and more people want to learn how to support teams working in

this new way. It is possible to develop the role of internal resource which is different than a trainer. They are more like organizational development practitioners, but with a very different way of working with individuals, teams, and groups. It requires some transfer of knowledge, but also a change in understanding about how to work with people that comes with new experiences and a change in what the ends are that are being pursued in each setting where “resourcing” work is done. And each person will do it differently

Why is the Process Required to Be Different

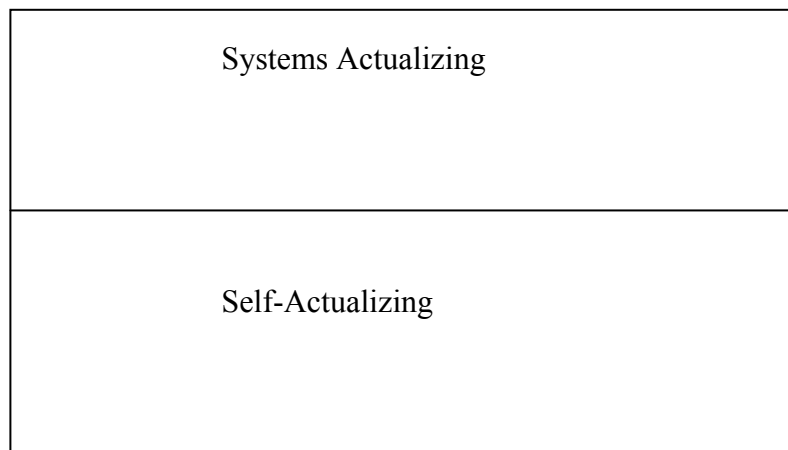
This process takes a different route than typical training and development for two reasons. One is, we have an American culture that does not support people becoming truly self-accountable. We tend toward excuses and using third parties (e.g. courts, insurance companies) to resolve issue of accountability. So people tend to come out of school into jobs, waiting for direction and offering excuses for their shortfalls. Using typical training just re-enforces the idea that “I am told what to do by others” and “the organization is accountable for what I know and do”.

To take on this approach requires a switch in tenets about the source of motivation and of development and exercise of will. Studies over the last several decades of students, adult workers, and children have corroborated an intuitive understanding of how motivation is sourced. It seems that people who have a sense that their own actions lead to the results that are produced (internal locus of control) tend to be more likely to complete goals, overcome restraints to success, and tackle increasingly difficult challenges, more than people who attribute success and failure to external factors which are out of their control (external locus of control). The studies also validated that those with an internal locus of control had a much higher level of self-motivation toward assigned as well as chosen tasks and objectives and a significantly high degree of personal accountability. So locus of control has a profound impact on motivation, accountability, completion, and pursuit of excellence— all critical to the management of performance.

The challenge here is that, in our Western culture, there has been a tendency to foster external locus of control, and to promote a belief that others and external factors are the source of our ability to succeed or not succeed.

The second reason for this approach is based on following a path that is well understood in developmental psychology. As people mature and gain in wisdom and experience, they follow a progression of identifiable stages. As they progress they are more self-accountable and more accountable for the outcomes of the greater systems of which they are apart. They do not leave the changes and improvement work to others, but actively take on the role of leader.

Stages of Developmental



Social satisfaction

Self-satisfaction

Self-Satisfaction

This stage is about finding what interests us and immersing ourselves in it and its opportunities and challenges. We have to first understand the difference between being able to focus attention on something and having an interest? Sometimes we work on an increased attention span as a substitute for interest? Having meaningful roles, and over time different roles, is key to maintaining an interest. When people have a role at work it enables self-creation and the exercise of creativity. If people do not feel like they have a role at work, rather than a job, then it becomes very difficult to create any growth and development process. People need a role that enables them to uniquely apply themselves to meaningful work. This creates self-satisfaction whereby the unique self we each are, is more satisfied. When we are homogenized with others, as though we are all the same, there is much less satisfaction. Until we have experienced how to find or create this, we cannot move past this stage of development very well.

The foundation of the growth process at self-satisfaction stage is being able to do those things and achieve a level of performance in doing things such

that one experiences self satisfaction. There is a sliding scale of what is considered the effective performance of functions. At different points in life, the scale raises and lowers. If the activity is an activity in which one desires to continuously be adding value, there is a continuing upward slope in regard to what one considers effective performance. In playing a musical instrument, most of us would not achieve satisfaction unless there were a slope of continuous improvement.

Self satisfaction becomes a vehicle for growth when we discover activities which hold a continuing interest for ourselves. Such activities provide satisfaction to the nature of being which we desire to emote—coming from inward and going outward. This contract with activities that may only cause us to feel good i.e. sensations coming in an “outward—in” direction. A singer may experience a song that makes them feel good. In singing, the singer may find a deeper satisfaction in what singing enables bringing forth from within one’s self. An interest can range from singing to rock climbing, to an area of study, to the understanding of a technology. The common denominator is that it must be able to be done to different levels of

effectiveness and in the doing of it, it provides one an emotional experience related to one's own effort.

Social Satisfaction

Social development involves the capacity to manifest intrinsic processing (what I am reflecting on) in an extrinsic process (some task or activity) in some medium (an event or arena) with those who share similar interests.

Social skills, in the form of desirable demeanor from a societal point of view and the skill from verbal or written articulation, may be a means but are not the substance for social development. In fact they may be misleading in this regard, where they are considered ends and not just one form of means.

Social development can be conveyed by different media such as art, crafts, games, dancing, etc. as well as by demeanor and words.

Social development requires the capacity to see how one can fit in with others in a way that adds something to the others as well as to one's self.

Social development involves therefore the building of an energy field within which those involved experience the desire for extension and growth.

In social development, a structure or means is built between those involved. This structure transcends the immediate subject areas of experience. It relates to the larger sphere of life. It creates areas within which we can count on others, and others can count on us.

If we are following a rote pattern or in a repetitive setting, we cannot engage in social satisfaction. We have to be able to see the possibility of effecting change or there is no space to develop ourselves socially. We come to see how something is happening and can see other ways “it” could go that would produce a different or better outcome. We see the way events and situations are working as a changeable or improveable “process”. When we can see a process or understand the process that is happening we are beginning to satisfy the part of us that is developing how we can work in social settings and still be ourselves.. When we see the process as changeable, then the game is no longer in the cards, it is in the people and the interaction. Seeing a process is what is critical to social development. People need to see the process that IS OCCURRING in relationship to a value adding process and the process that NEEDS TO OCCUR in order to operate in an

interdependent way and bring about social development—of the situation and therefore of ourselves.

The capacity to conceive of the process is critical. We are then bringing the process into being in accordance with what is in the mind—what it should be— rather than adapting our actions to it—what is. The critical factor is what is in control changes. The controlling phenomena becomes what the mind can see as possible, not what is already happening. Where people have to create a process and manage by that process it makes a huge difference.

If we give people a non-routine thing to do where the process is not given, creativity and innovation abound. This results in social satisfaction and let's us move to the next stage of development. The nature of our culturalization processes are often what stops development or evolution. For instance, we are taught how to fit in rather than how to engage in social development and envision how to make things happen.

Application of Social Development in Work: In a developmental approach to work, we work on putting in place work processes and ways of leading an organization that foster the integration of these two stages of development.

This includes supporting people in taking on challenges they believe would make a difference to the business that they can uniquely contribute to creating—always in line with the strategic direction of the business. This involves working with others such that the social development is encouraged and required. All along the way capability is given and reflection to encourage discovery and integration of these two phases.

An example in a classroom: Suppose we are trying to accomplish social development in the classroom while learning to read. There are all sorts of potential processes relevant to reading e.g. we can read alone, read out loud to one another, read one sentence at a time and then try to convey the meaning of that sentence. We do not want to stop learning “how to read”, even as we learn to read. We end up with a better reader if we examine the process and develop that process and manifest that particular process that is created in the mind that seems appropriate at that point in time to whoever is doing the reading. In everything we do there is an implied process that has become invisible to most of us. We are better if we can also examine and learn about the process involved. Seeing of the process add to the learning as well as to development?

Self-Actualizing.

To engage in self-actualizing development we must engage with phenomena that deals with Will and developing will. Will is something we can develop.

What happens when we develop something like a piece of property is we increase the value of it or the value generating capabilities of it. Will can be developed such that it is of increased value and improves our value generating capabilities and is of more value in carrying out the growth process. It is not always present, we need to call on it to make it present but it is always possibly there.

Another way we can phrase “self-actualizing development” is developing character and being able to maintain that character under adverse, disturbing or exciting conditions. We can improve on the capacity to develop character and maintain character. What does that, is an increased sense of what is right —rightness.

Early on in life, the means people have of sustaining that character are not that effective. As we progress, our means of sustaining that particular

character, that sense of rights and rightness, really improves. Will is that which provides or develops the means. Its a colorless phenomena. The people we call egotistical are those that do not have the will developed that is essential to a strong solid character. They know they need it, play the game of having it and do those sorts of things that satisfy themselves they have it. Where in reality it is incomplete, the will is not sufficiently developed.

In self actualization, understanding is the essential phenomenon to build upon. It is recognized by ourselves that we can not achieve understanding unless we are able to see things from multiple perspectives.

In self actualization we seek to bring ourselves, others, and the things we work on to a state where they have the ableness to perform at their best or to their potential. This capacity relates to all sorts of different situations and all sorts of different individuals and individual backgrounds. The context for situations involved may

vary from discipline, to study, to financial transactions, to sports, to work etc. The individuals involved may vary from adversaries, to friends, to family, from the aggressive to the cooperative.

In self actualization there is a futurizing aspect. The futurizing aspect is systemic in nature and its subject matter is focused on the ableness to be as well as the ableness to do. It involves an ongoing continuance of pursuit that does not exist with social development. In social development it is important to have and achieve goals. In self actualizing it is important to have aims that bring about higher order being in ourselves and others.

Systems Actualization

When we evolve toward systems actualization, we deeply care about the potential of all systems we touch and are touched by realizing their full potential This realization takes place when we can see the essence of each entity in terms of its core purpose, core process and core value. It requires a different mind to be put to work, a different way of seeing that our day to

day view of how things function. This is a significant extension of our capability and is build on the self actualizing capability of being able to manage our state when we are faced with a variety of challenges and destabilizing situations, including learning and developing new abilities to think.

A developmental approach is different in regard to material as well as in the interactive process

Developmental Process Approach—each building foundation for the next

- Increased consciousness of one's mental processing through reflection
- Thinking and thought is increasingly managed in a higher ordered and organizing way through systems frameworks
- A decrease in extrinsic impact on being through work toward internal locus of control with Socratic processes
- Increased ableness and capacity to develop and sustain state of being through self observation and self-remembering

- Transitions of the will from service of self to serving the whole through reflection modes of behavior and levels of system effect

Material change

If we try to deal with the material presented in the normal textbook sense, it becomes very abstract and very difficult to comprehend. In order to understand it, we must apply it in a way that we internally experience what is happening within us as we engage in that application. It is then our ability to reflect on our experiencing that enables us to understand this material.

This is because we are dealing with subject matter of enabling ourselves to generate what it is we want to do and be. In order to do this, we must go much deeper into ourselves than normal textbook learning requires. As people read through materials, they must try to keep this process of internal experiencing alive in regard to what you are reading. It requires involvement of both sides of our brain rather than purely the logic processing work of the left side of the brain.

Cultural Non-Accountability

The initial reason for a different model of working came from the challenge of having a culture that has not only not foster self-accountability to move up the stages of development but has tended to erode such development. In Western culture we have systematically worked in a way that has instilled processes that tends to erode self-accountability. First our parents, then our teachers, and then our employers/bosses tell us (i.e. give us feedback regarding) what to *do*, how we are doing in our *performance* and what our *grade*, or *rank* is, or to what degree our behavior is *correct*. This is so embedded in our way of operating it is difficult to see how pervasive it is and how much the external appraisals and directives works against creating self-accountable human beings.

There is an assumption in most organizational settings in our modern society that human beings can *not* be self governing or self auditing because they can not be objective about themselves. Human Beings, even with a more complexly functioning brain and an ability to make choices, are assumed to be less able than complex machinery to be self regulating. Unfortunately this is partly true, but not innately so. With humans, if this ability is not developed in us from childhood, the capacity to be self-reflecting (self-

observing and self-remembering) steadily diminishes.

A *key* discovery , however, was that externally introduced feedback seems to shut down evolution toward self-managing using self-assessment. Gregory Bateson, who has produced the most significant research regarding schizophrenia, and has been one of the primary formulators of the field of cybernetic systems. Bateson pointed out, “The external feedback model, begun by parents, pattern-imprinted by teachers in school, and solidified by an organizational work life, has actually caused external feedback loops to be addictive, with all the negative aspects that go with that metaphor. The individuals become dependent upon its continued presence.”

So we are seeking to break this addiction and put people back in charge of their own development, for being critical thinkers regarding themselves and the world around themselves, and to take on accountability for the actualization of the systems they serve.