CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Designing Preventative Solutions for Chronic Social, Economic, Political and Environmental Conflicts

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If you want to build a ship, don't drum up the men to gather wood, divide the work, and give orders. Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea.
Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

In your veins, and in mine,
there is only one blood,
The same life that animates us all!
Since one unique mother begat us all,
Where did we learn to divide ourselves?
Kabir

"I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest person whom you have seen, and ask yourself if the next step you contemplate is going to be of any use to that person."
Mohandas K. Gandhi

The Chronic, Systemic Sources of Conflict

"The fact is that all the power in the world cannot transform someone who hates you into someone who likes you. It can turn a foe into a slave, but not into a friend. All the power in the world cannot transform a fanatic into an enlightened man. All the power in the world cannot transform someone thirsting for vengeance into a lover."

Amos Oz

"Few people are capable of expressing with equanimity opinions which differ from the prejudices of their social environment. Most people are even incapable of forming such opinions."

Albert Einstein

"You need power only when you want to do something harmful. Otherwise, love is enough to get everything done."

Charlie Chaplin

"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Systemic Nature of Conflict

- Every conflict takes place not only between individuals, but within a *context*, culture, and environment; surrounded by social, economic, and political forces; inside organizational systems, structures, and technological settings; among a diverse community of people; at a particular moment in time and history; on a stage, milieu, or backdrop.

- None of these elements is conflict-neutral. Each contributes – sometimes in veiled and unspoken, yet profound ways to the nature, intensity, duration, impact, and *meaning* of our conflicts.

- Each profoundly affects the quality of our work lives, our personal capacity for joy and compassion, and our ability to collaborate in solving our problems.

- Like ripples in a pond, every conflict and every resolution in the workplace extends outward, impacting others and creating a "mediation butterfly effect."

- As a result, we are each responsible as organizational citizens for building conflict resolution capacity in our workplaces.

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What are Chronic Conflicts?

Chronic conflicts are those that nations, societies, organizations or individuals

- Have not fully resolved

- Need to resolve in order to grow and evolve

- Are capable of resolving

- Can only resolve by abandoning old approaches and adopting new ones

- Are resistant to resolving because they are frightened, dissatisfied, insecure, uncertain, angry, or unwilling to change

Features of Chronic Conflict

Chronic conflicts can often be distinguished by their:

• Repetition

• Low levels of resolution

• Incongruity between high level of emotion and apparent triviality of the issues over which people are fighting

• Being commonly mistaken for miscommunications or personality clashes

• Tolerance of disrespectful and adversarial behaviors,

• Seeming irrationality

• Accidental misunderstandings

• Apparent idiosyncratic causes and circumstances

• Underlying similarities

4 Meta-Sources of Chronic Conflict

- ## Social Inequality

- ## Economic Inequity

- ## Political Autocracy

- ## Environmental Degradation

What Won't Be Able to Solve Them

- Military force and coercion

- Treaties and international agreements

- Legal interventions and the rule of law

- Adversarial styles of negotiation

- Traditional rules and regulations, policies and procedures

- Customary power-based approaches to diplomacy

- Nation states and political governments

- Capitalism and market principles

- The United Nations, as presently constituted
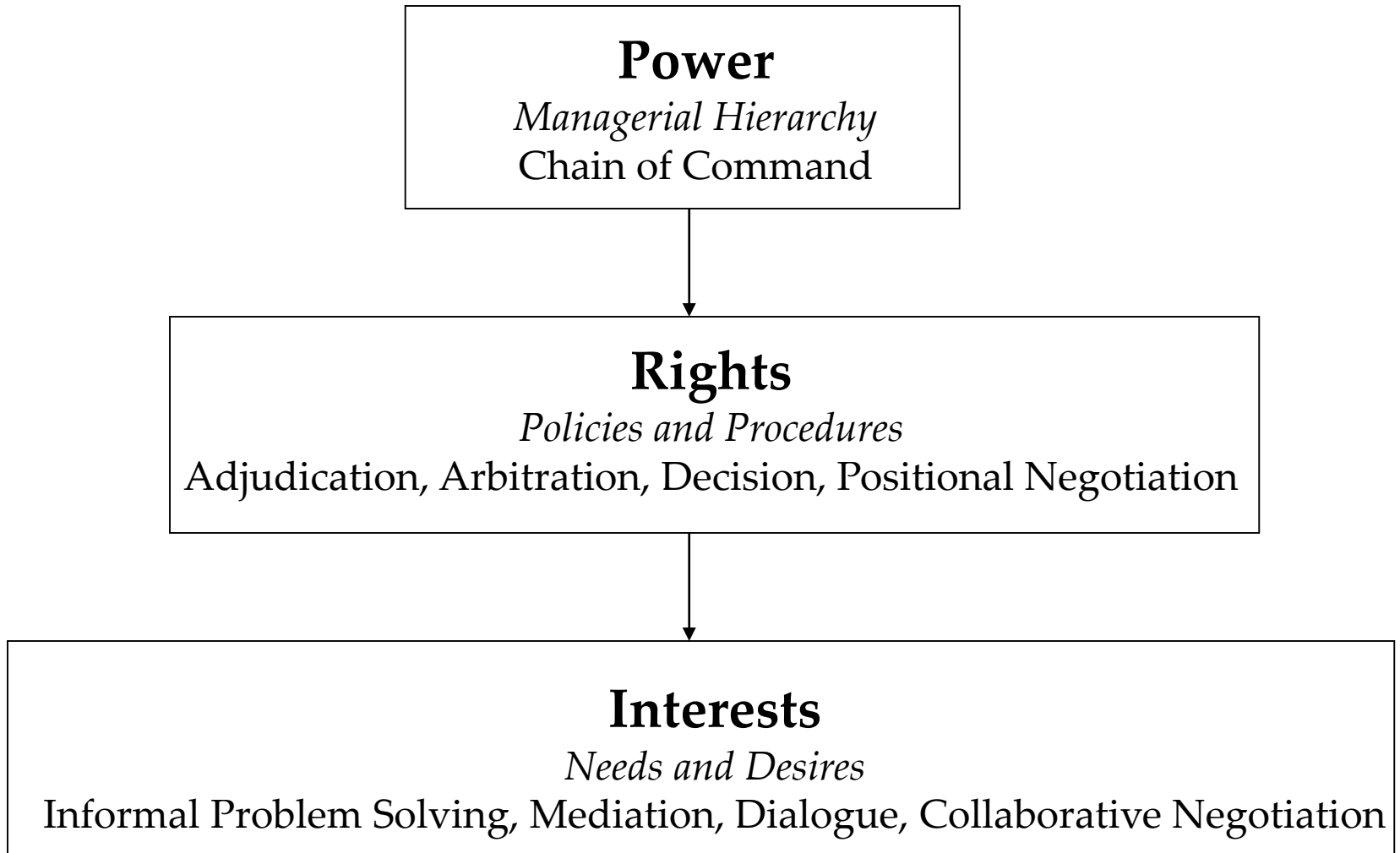
What We Can Predict

- That global problems will become more widespread, severe, impactful, common and costly;

- That conflicts will be triggered by these problems, and escalate as more individuals, groups, nations and eco-systems are impacted;

- That conflicts will accumulate around the failures in local, national and global response systems;

- That the ability to resolve these conflicts quickly and effectively will have a direct impact on the amount and severity of the damage they create;

- That mediation, collaborative negotiation, dialogue, and allied conflict resolution methodologies will increasingly be needed to address and resolve disputes that result from efforts to act beyond borders.

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What is Conflict Resolution Systems Design?

"Our systems, perhaps, are nothing more than an

unconscious apology for our faults –

a gigantic scaffolding whose object is

to hide from us our favorite sin."

Henri Frederic Amiel

Power, Rights and Interests

Power
Managerial Hierarchy
Chain of Command

↓

Rights
Policies and Procedures
Adjudication, Arbitration, Decision, Positional Negotiation

↓

Interests
Needs and Desires
Informal Problem Solving, Mediation, Dialogue, Collaborative Negotiation

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25 Conflict Resolution Processes

1. Active, empathetic and responsive listening
2. Appreciative inquiry
3. Non-violent communication
4. Emotional intelligence
5. Collaborative, mutual gain and interest-based negotiation
6. Consensus building
7. Prejudice reduction and bias awareness
8. Support for diversity and cross-cultural communication
9. Team building
10. Community organizing
11. Mediation
12. Dialogue facilitation
13. Circles
14. Opening heart-to-heart conversations
15. Restorative justice
16. Victim-offender mediation
17. Awareness, mindfulness and meditation
18. Informal problem solving
19. Conflict coaching
20. Conflict resolution consulting
21. Participatory feedback and evaluation
22. Conflict resolution systems design
23. Apology and acknowledgment
24. Forgiveness and reconciliation
25. Training and capacity building

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25 Varieties of Mediation

1. Neighborhood and Community Mediation
2. Peer Mediation
3. Cross-Cultural Mediation
4. Prejudice and Discrimination Mediation
5. Sexual Harassment Mediation
6. Divorce Mediation
7. Family Mediation
8. Family Business Mediation
9. Marital and Relational Mediation
10. Prenuptial Mediation
11. Workplace Mediation
12. Organizational Mediation
13. Ombudsmanship
14. School Mediation
15. Victim-Offender Mediation
16. Restorative Justice Mediation
17. Public Policy Mediation
18. Social Justice and Advocacy Mediation
19. Environmental Mediation
20. Healthcare and Hospital Mediation
21. Commercial Mediation
22. Litigated Case Mediation
23. Insurance Mediation
24. Multi-Door Courthouses
25. Conflict Resolution Systems Design

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Reasons for CR System Design (1)

- Prevent conflicts before they occur

- Reduce the risks and costs of conflict

- Encourage settlement before costs and attorneys' fees accumulate

- Provide a forum for final resolution outside the courts

- Create inexpensive internal mechanisms to prevent, manage and resolve conflict

- Improve participant morale

- Pinpoint and resolve the underlying reasons that created the problem

Reasons for CR Systems Design (2)

- Once conflict is seen as a system it can be addressed in more than one way

- Emphasis in the past has been on discrete dispute resolution procedures, rather than on integrated systems design

- It allows organizations to respond not only to single disputes, but to the *stream* of disputes that arise in all organizations

- Some procedures work better for certain disputes than others

- Systems are needed to encourage negotiation and de-escalation procedures throughout the life of the conflict

- A variety of different professionals can work on the same problem from different perspectives

- A systems approach can promote synergy, in which the whole is seen as greater than the sum of its parts.

Some Questions on Systems Design (1)

A. WHAT IS THE CONFLICT ABOUT?

1. Who are the disputants?

2. What are the issues that are typically in dispute?

3. Are there other important players in these disputes?

4. What types of conflicts do they experience?

5. How frequently do these disputes occur?

6. What is the likely frequency of similar disputes in the future?

7. Have changes in the organization, relationship or wider environment impacted the number or nature of disputes? How?

8. What do people believe is causing these disputes?

9. What do people typically do when these disputes occur?

10. What sources of support, guidance or resolution are typically available for these disputes?

11. What is the attitude of others within the organization to people who are in dispute, or to the issues they are arguing over?

12. What is one thing that might be done to prevent or resolve the dispute?

Some Questions on Systems Design (2)

1.	What do people do if they have a complaint? With whom, if anyone, do they raise it ?

2.	How frequently do they avoid conflict? Accommodate to it? Compromise? Engage in it? Collaborate in creating a solution?

3.	What happens when disputes are negotiated? What proportion are resolved in this way? Do the parties search for settlements that will satisfy each other's interests? Do they focus chiefly on their respective rights? Are their negotiations dominated by threats, intimidation efforts, or similar power tactics?

4.	How frequently do negotiations break down? What happens when they do? Do the parties turn to others -- lawyers, union officials, friends, for help in negotiating? Are disputes turned over to superiors for resolution?

5.	Do parties turn to a neutral person for mediation? How often?

6.	Are adjudicatory procedures available? What kinds? How often are they used? How long does it take before a decision is reached? Does one party prevail most of the time?

7.	How often do power contests erupt? What types of power behaviors are used? What outcomes result? Is there typically a winner, or does the power contest serve no purpose beyond the release of pent-up anger and frustration?

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Some Questions on Systems Design (3)

C.   WHY ARE DISPUTES HANDLED THIS WAY?

1.   Why are people resorting to rights and power contests instead of negotiating?
2.   Are interests-based procedures available to handle the full range of disputes that occur?
3.   Are some disputes being left essentially unresolved simply because no established procedure exists to deal with them?
4.   Does a mediation procedure exist that focuses on interests?
5.   How satisfied are disputants with the procedures that are available?
6.   Does the procedure provide an opportunity for "day in court"? Can disputants air their grievances fully on their own terms? Do disputants have control over the procedure--are they in charge or does someone take it out of their hands? Do disputants participate in shaping the outcome? Do they think the procedure is fair?
7.   Does the procedure allow for venting emotions? Is it a way of getting even?
8.   How costly do disputants feel the procedure is in terms of time and money?
9.   Does the procedure serve the interests of parties other than the disputants?
10. Does the procedure serve purposes other than resolving particular disputes?
11. Do people know what procedures are available and when? Do they know how to use the procedures to generate a satisfactory resolution?
12. How skilled are the disputants and their representatives in problem-solving? Negotiation? Listening? Identifying interests? Exploring creative options?

Some Questions on Systems Design (4)

D.   HOW MUCH DOES CONFLICT COST?

1.   How long do the various procedures take, and how much money is consumed by them?
2.   How satisfied are disputants with the outcomes of disputes? The process?
3.   What effect do existing procedures have on personal or organizational relationships?
4.   How often do the same disputes recur because they were never resolved?
5.   What costs are associated with the continuation of the conflict?

E.   WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION?

1.   Are there people to whom the disputants can turn for help--people to represent them, give them advice, or serve as mediators or coaches?
2.   How skilled are these representatives, mediators, and coaches? Are they perceived as unbiased?
3.   Is negotiation hampered by a lack of norms, precedents, laws, and other standards that could be used to settle disputes, or by a lack of information about the problem?
4   Do the procedures need to be actively administered by a person or an institution? What can be done to provide people with information about resolving conflicts on an ongoing basis?
5.   Is the lack of resolution due to insufficient funding? Are alternative low-cost solutions available?

Some Questions on Systems Design (5)

F.   WHAT ARE THE OBSTACLES TO IMPLEMENTATION?

1. In what ways is conflict resolution impacted by existing decision-making procedures? How centralized are they? Hierarchical? Bureaucratic?
2. How are procedures in use affected by the organization's formal and informal reward systems? What kind of dispute resolution behavior is rewarded by superiors? By peers? By the "culture of conflict?"
3. What impact do other systems like hiring, discipline, feedback, evaluation, compensation and training have on the dispute resolution system?
4. How does the surrounding culture impact the procedures that are used?

G.   WHAT SHOULD INFORM THE OVERALL DESIGN?

1. Why are some procedures used and not others? What functions are served by power contests and other high-cost procedures? What hinders the use of interest-based procedures?
2. Is it necessary to have different tracks for different kinds of disputes?
3. What procedures should be built into the system? What should be the sequences?
4. How can people be motivated to use these procedures?
5. How can people be given the necessary skills to use these procedures?
6. What would help disputing parties use these procedures?
7. How can the system be made self-adjusting? What mechanisms need to be set up for learning, feedback and adaptation?

Some Questions on Systems Design (6)

H.   IS THERE ADEQUATE SUPPORT FOR THE NEW SYSTEM?

1. What are the key problems that need to be overcome?
2. Are there hidden agendas? Is dispute resolution seen as a means of management control, or to conduct power struggles? Is there motivation to implement the system, build coalitions to support them, assure allocation of resources, justify support, develop monitoring and evaluation procedures, and use information from the conflict to create a self-learning system?
3. How much will it cost to build and support the new system? What coalitions can be created to support it?
4. How should opposition be addressed? Or those threatened by the changes or "winning" under the old rules? Or hidden agendas and power struggles?
5. How have you assured the allocation of resources for the system?
6. Have disputants been motivated to use the new procedures? (e.g., demonstrations, using leaders as examples, setting goals, designing incentives, publicizing early successes?)
7. Should the parties be trained or coached in the new procedures?
8. How should the success or failures of the system be evaluated?
9. How can the system be evaluated or improved?
10. Have successful procedures and systems been publicized and propagated?

(Based in part on work by Chris Moore and William Ury)

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Elements of CR Systems Design

- Conflict audit and collaborative design process
- Identify predictors of conflict, high conflict areas
- Design preventative measures
- Create safety nets, informal problem solving
- Open outlets for constructive expression of differences
- Provide rich array of procedures for resolution
- Focus on interests, rather than rights or power
- Provide low-cost rights and power back-ups
- Build in "loopbacks" to negotiation
- Provide training before and feedback after
- Arrange procedures in a low-to-high cost sequence
- Offer motivation, skills and resources to make it work

Effective Systems Design

- Contains options for preventing, identifying and resolving issues
- Promotes a culture that seeks to solve problems at the lowest level through direct negotiation
- Allows multiple access points
- Empowers employees to select from a range of options for addressing conflict
- Contains effective structure and support to maintain options
- Has the support of leadership
- Is run by an oversight body composed of representatives from all key groups
- Uses evaluation processes
- Provides training
- Has a central coordinator
- Aligns the "conflict competency" with mission, vision, values, and policies
- Institutionalizes incentives for effective operation
- Develops a communication strategy
- Provides incentives for early resolution
- Is given adequate resources for the system to function properly
- Emphasizes conflict prevention rather than conflict management
- Increases the ability to understand sources of potential conflict and deal with them before they escalate
- Recognizes existing organizational culture and conflict narratives

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An Algorithm for System Design (1)

- All interested parties are included and invited to participate fully in designing and implementing content, process, and relationships.

- Decisions are made by consensus wherever possible, and nothing is considered final until everyone is in agreement.

- Diversity and honest differences are viewed as sources of dialogue, leading to better ideas, healthier relationships, and greater unity.

- Stereotypes, prejudices, assumptions of innate superiority, and ideas of intrinsic correctness are considered divisive and discounted as one-sided descriptions of more complex, multi-sided, paradoxical realities.

- Openness, authenticity, appreciation, and empathy are regarded as better foundations for communication and decision-making than secrecy, rhetoric, insult, and demonization.

- Dialogue and open-ended questions are deemed more useful than debate and cross-examination.

- Force, violence, coercion, aggression, humiliation, and domination are rejected, both as methods and as outcomes.

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An Algorithm for System Design (2)

- Cooperation and collaboration are ranked as primary, while competition and aggression are considered secondary.

- Everyone's interests are accepted as legitimate, acknowledged, and satisfied wherever possible, consistent with others' interests.

- Processes and relationships are considered at least as important as content, if not more so.

- Attention is paid to emotions, subjectivity, and feelings, as well as to logic, objectivity, and facts.

- Everyone is regarded as responsible for participating in improving content, processes, and relationships, and searching for synergies and transformations.

- People are invited into heartfelt, spiritual communications and inner awareness, and encouraged to reach resolution, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

- Chronic conflicts are traced to their systemic sources, where they can be prevented and redesigned to discourage repetition.

- Victory is regarded as obtainable by everyone, and redirected toward collaborating to solve common problems, so no one feels defeated.

Sample Conflict Audit Questions (1)

1. How much is spent on lawyers, litigation, and human resources time related to conflict?

2. How much time does the average managers spend each week trying to prevent, manage or resolve conflicts? At what salary?

3. What is the cost of stress-related illness and conflict-related turnovers?

4. How much time is spent on rumors, gossip, lost productivity and reduced collaboration due to conflict?

5. What is the impact of conflict on staff morale and motivation?

6. How many conflicts recur because they are never fully resolved?

7. What customers, creativity and opportunities have been lost due to conflict?

8. Where might the organization be now had it not experienced these conflicts?

9. What are the core values of the organization regarding conflict?

10. What are the main messages sent by organizational culture regarding conflict?

Sample Conflict Audit Questions (2)

11. How are negative conflict behaviors rewarded?

12. How do leadership and management typically respond to conflicts? How might they respond better?

13. Have employees been trained in conflict resolution?

14. What do people do when they have conflict? Where do they go for help?

15. Is there an internal mediation process? Who can use it? How often is it used? How many know about it?

16. How satisfied are employees with existing resolution processes?

17. How skilled are managers in using these processes?

18. What hinders the use of existing resolution processes? How can employees be motivated to use them?

19. What skills do employees and managers need to resolve conflicts successfully?

20. What systems changes could prevent, reduce or help resolve conflict?

Consequences of System Design (1)

- Shift from hierarchy, bureaucracy, and autocracy to heterarchy, participation, and democracy

- Reduce inequalities in status, inequities in wealth, and autocracies in power

- Foreswear the use of military options except in the decreasing likelihood of self-defense when under attack

- Invite direct public participation in all significant decision-making

- Substitute dialogue for debate

- Reach consensus whenever possible and vote only as a last resort

- Shift from exercising power and defending rights to satisfying interests

- Commit to open, honest, authentic communication and elimination of government secrecy

Consequences of System Design (2)

- Conduct foreign and domestic policy based on collaboration and partnership rather than antagonism and hyper-competition

- Celebrate diversity in race, gender, sexual orientation, culture, and individual personality on all levels

- Flatten hierarchical agencies by reducing the ranks of middle management and leveling pay differentials

- Treat employees as equals and reorganize internally into self-managing teams

- Bridge organizational silos and institutional specializations

- Implement continuous feedback and 360-degree performance improvement processes

- Reward disagreement and dissent, and invite organizational learning

- Encourage self-assessment, organizational learning, evolution, and transformational change

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Introduction to Political Conflicts

"Genuine politics – politics worthy of the name, and the only politics I am willing to devote myself to – is simply a matter of serving those around us: serving the community, and serving those who will come after us. It's deepest roots are moral because it is a responsibility … [T]here is only one way to strive for decency, reason, responsibility, sincerity, civility, and tolerance, and that is decently, reasonably, responsibly, sincerely, civilly, and tolerantly. I'm aware that, in everyday politics, this is not seen as the most practical way of going about it."

Vaclav Havel

Some Classical Purposes of Politics

- Search for the highest common good (Aristotle)

- Provide for the general welfare (Aristotle)

- Make sure that laws are fairly conceived, wisely interpreted and justly enforced (Aristotle)

- Make the citizen "as good as possible." (Socrates)

- Search for justice (Plato)

- Support "… not the disproportionate happiness of any one class, but the greatest happiness of the whole." (Plato)

- Promote democracy (Democritus)

"Every state is a community of some kind, and every community is

established with a view to some good, for mankind always act in order to

obtain that which they think good. But, if all communities aim at some

good, the state or political community, which is the highest of all, and

which embraces all the rest, aims, and in a greater degree than any other,

at the highest good."

Aristotle

What's Wrong with Politics as Usual

- It is unnecessarily divisive and adversarial

- It is nearly always win/lose and winner take all

- It is power-based, yet "all power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely;" or rights-based, yet controlled by power

- It takes too long, costs too much, and is exercised too personally

- It is increasingly ineffective in solving global problems

- It is controlled by wealthy individuals, military and industrial elites, corporations and special interests

- Global political collaborations, as in the United Nations, are perceived as reducing sovereignty and imposing alien ideas

- It is grounded in domination, inequality and disrespect

- There is little interest among elites in openness or direct democracy, and great interest in secrecy and amassing power

- It easily slips into autocracy and boosts social inequality

- It generates bureaucracy and corruption, stifles change and increases chronic conflict

"So long as only one ideal is the true goal, it will always seem to men that no means can be too difficult, no price too high, to do whatever is required to realize the ultimate goal. Such certainty is one of the great justifications of fanaticism, compulsion, persecution …. If there is only one solution to the puzzle, then the only problems are first how to find it, then how to realize it, and finally how to convert others to the solution by persuasion or by force. But if this is not so …, then the path is open to empiricism, pluralism, tolerance, compromise. Tolerance is historically the product of the realization of the irreconcilability of equally dogmatic faiths, and the practical improbability of complete victory of one over the other. Those who wished to survive realized that they had to tolerate error. They gradually came to see the merits of diversity, and so became skeptical about definitive solutions in human affairs."

Isaiah Berlin

Three Simple *Interest-Based* Ways of Defining Politics

1.   *Politics is a social problem-solving process.* As a result, a diversity of views about the nature of the problem and multiple alternative ways of solving it will predictably result in better, more sustainable solutions.

2.   *Politics is a large group decision-making process.* As a result, the greater the consensus, the stronger the democracy, and the more people agree with a decision, the more likely it is to be effective.

3.   *Politics is a conflict resolution process.* As a result, the amount of chronic, on-going, systemic conflict can be dramatically reduced by assuming there is more than one correct answer and a complex, egalitarian, interest-based approach can result in no one having to lose so that that others are able to win.

Three Elements of Political Conflict (1)

1. *Diversity*: In the first place, there must be two or more distinct individuals or groups of people, each with diverse beliefs, ideas, opinions, needs, and interests. Without this, there cannot be conflict.

2. *Inequality*: In the second place, there must be an inequality in power between these individuals or groups, reflecting their ability to implement their diverse beliefs, ideas, opinions, etc. Without this, the conflict will not take a political form.

3. *Adversarial, win/lose process*: In the third place, there must be an adversarial, win/lose process for problem solving or decision-making that pits diverse groups against each other, allowing only one to win. Without this, the conflict will not become polarizing.

Three Elements of Political Conflict (2)

1. *Conservatives* and the right commonly seek to reduce the level of political conflict by decreasing diversity, boosting respect for accepted, conventional ideas, and buttressing established authority.

2. *Liberals* and the left commonly seek to do so by increasing equality, drawing attention to new and diverse ideas, and championing the freedom to articulate, argue for and implement them.

3. *Neither*, however, focuses much attention on the adversarial win/lose nature of the political process, without which diversity and inequality do not routinely result in political polarization.

The Language of *Power*

The language favored by power-based organizations such as the military, police, and monarchical states requires clarity, simplicity, and uniform interpretation in order to encourage unthinking obedience.

The communications that emanate from these institutions therefore take the form of declarations, pronouncements, and orders, which reinforce hierarchy and command, and imply punishment and contempt for those who disobey.

The Language of *Rights*

The language favored by rights-based organizations such as legal institutions, bureaucracies, and formally democratic states, requires narrow distinctions, exceptions, and adjudicated interpretations in order to maintain control by permitting some behaviors and forbidding others.

The communications that emanate from these institutions take the form of rules and regulations, policies and procedures, legislative definitions, and legal interpretations, which reinforce bureaucracy and control and imply coercion and censure for those who do not fit in.

The Language of *Interests*

The language favored by interest-based organizations such as teams, civil society, and radically democratic states, requires affirmation of diversity, dissent, and dialogue in order to encourage collaboration and participation.

The communications that emanate from these institutions take the form of open-ended questions, public dialogues, value-driven rules, and consensus decision making, which reinforce social equality, economic equity, and political democracy.

Some Trivial Examples

Power: "You must ..." "You shall …" "You will ..." "… or else." "… because I said so, that's why."

Rights: "You should …" "You ought to …" "You need to …" "You have a right to …" "You are entitled to …"

Interests: "You could …" "You might consider …" "What would happen if you …" "What would you like to have happen?" "Why?" "What do you think will happen if you …"

Distortions of Language in Politics (1)

- Broad statements that are so abstract and meaningless they cannot be opposed

- Excessive personalization of issues so they can only be addressed individually

- Negative frameworks that reinforce pessimistic images of the world

- Inculcation of a "learned helplessness" that assumes change is impossible

- Adversarial assumptions that undermine trust

- Strangled or suppressed expression of intense emotions, glorification of abstract symbols, and romanticization of virtues, destiny, and ideals

- Stories of demonization and victimization

- All or nothing assumptions that eliminate common ground

- Demonization of all critics and independent actors

Distortions of Language in Politics (2)

- Repeated references in noble, *basso profundo* tones, to "the country," "the fatherland," or "the people"

- Crass manipulations of maudlin sentimentality, particularly regarding children, struggling families, religious figures, the nation's history, and recently departed political leaders

- Facades of personal outrage and affront about others

- Loud protestations and harsh denunciations of moral transgressions committed by others

- Simplistic claims of uncompromising toughness, formulaic responses, and unyielding principles regarding complex, multilayered, shifting problems

- Demands for punishment of opponents

- Crass use of religious sentiment and God's support for one nation

- Sanctimony and self-righteousness combined with false humility

Conflict and Systemic Change: Changing the Way We Change

"Everyone wants to change the world, but no one wants to start with themselves."

Leo Tolstoy

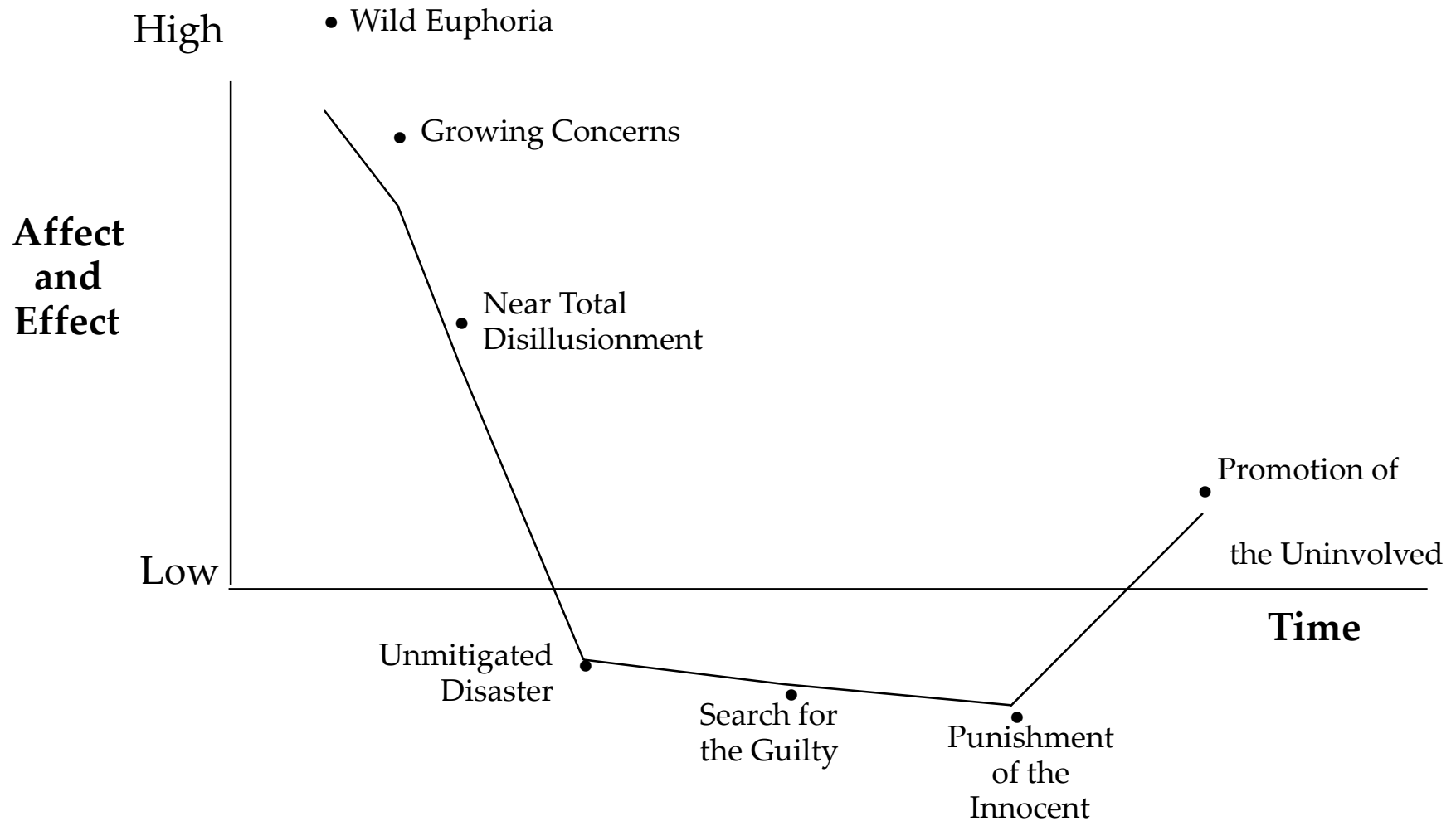*"People don't resist change. They resist being changed."*

Peter Senge

"If you cry, 'Forward!' you must be sure to make clear the direction in which to go. Don't you see that if you fail to do that and simply call out the word to a monk and a revolutionary, they will go in precisely opposite directions?"

Anton Chekhov

Stages in the Mismanagement of Change

High   • Wild Euphoria

Affect and Effect

      • Growing Concerns

• Near Total Disillusionment

Promotion of

the Uninvolved

Low

Time

Unmitigated Disaster

• Search for the Guilty

Punishment of the Innocent

"It must be considered that there is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things. For the reformer has enemies in all those that profit by the old order, and only lukewarm defenders in all those who would profit by the new order, this lukewarmness arising...partly from the incredulity of mankind, who do not truly believe in anything new until they have had actual experience of it."

Niccolo Machiavelli
The Prince, 1513

12 Ways Systems Resist Change (1)

1. *Marginalization:* Making ideas, people, perspectives, or insights that could threaten the system appear unimportant, irrelevant, irrational, or impossible to achieve.

2. *Negative Framing:* Using language that frames new ideas and critics negatively so that nothing that threatens the system can be thought or communicated successfully.

3. *Exaggeration:* Stereotyping or exaggerating one part of an idea in order to discredit the other parts and the whole.

4. *Personalization:* Reducing ideas to individual people, then discrediting or lionizing them.

5. *Sentimentalization*: Using sentimental occasions, ideas, emotions, and language to enforce conformity and silence criticism.

6. *Seduction:* Describing the potential of the existing system in ways that unrealistically promise to fulfill people's deepest dreams and desires and blame the failure to achieve them on others.

12 Ways Systems Resist Change (2)

7. *Alignment:* Communicating that in order to exist, succeed, be happy, or achieve influence, it is necessary to conform to the system regardless of its faults.

8. *Legitimation:* Considering only existing practices as legitimate and all others as illegitimate.

9. *Simplification:* Reducing disparate, complex, subtle, multi-faceted ideas to uniform, simplistic, superficial, emotionally charged beliefs.

10. *False Polarization:* Limiting people's ability to choose by falsely characterizing issues as good or evil, right or wrong, either/or.

11. *Selective Repression:* Selecting individual critics as examples, bullying them for disagreeing or failing to conform, and ostracizing them.

12. *Double Binds:* Creating double standards that require people to live divided lives, or make it difficult for them to act with integrity.

Why Fix It?

When faced with organizational or personal change, many people respond by saying: "If it ain't broke, why fix it." Here are some reasons for fixing it:

1. It may actually be broke and you haven't noticed.

2. Your competition is busy trying to fix it.

3. When you stop trying to fix it, you stop caring about it.

4. It's not about being broke, it's about improving it.

5. Unless you consistently try to fix it, you will grow accustomed to dysfunction, and new ways of fixing it will escape your attention.

6. Who cares whether its' broke, it's challenging and fun to try to fix it.

"In any system, once a relative orderliness has been achieved, the only means by which a broader and more complex interrelationship among the various elements can be achieved is by introducing or generating disorder. The system can come apart to be put together in a much more integrated way. Any system that resists this creative disintegration and re-integration can only suffer the gradual erosion of its established order due to the energy required to protect the system from change."

George Ainsworth Land

Some Assumptions About Change

We often enter into the process of planning change based on a set of unexamined assumptions, including these:

- The future can be envisioned

- Initial conditions can be known

- Change can be designed and planned strategically

- Timing can be controlled

- Impact and outcomes can be predicted

- Resistance can be anticipated

- Change can be efficiently managed

- Culture will change by itself

- Change can be complete and finished

Seven Fallacies of Change

1.   The Fallacy of Models

2.   The Fallacy of Prediction

3.   The Fallacy of Reductionism

4.   The Fallacy of Separation Between Planning & Doing

5.   The Fallacy of Good Intentions

6.   The Fallacy of Formalization

7.   The Fallacy of Completion

[Based on Henry Mintzberg, *The Fall & Rise of Strategic Planning*]

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Why Change Efforts Often Fail

- The change is too timid and does not include strategic or systemic objectives
- Critics with useful ideas are excluded from the process
- Internal and external conflicts are allowed to continue unresolved
- Skills in communication and conflict resolution are not improved
- Change is viewed as an important event, as opposed to something that occurs daily
- Improvement in the design of systems, processes, relationships, communications, and technology are not prioritized
- Bureaucratic work takes time and energy from change efforts
- Not working strategically when facing emergencies or uncertainty
- Creating a plan and not implementing it
- Thinking only tactically or incrementally about change
- People's belief they will not benefit from the change
- Not using teamwork and collaboration to bring the change about
- Not assisting outsiders in understanding the need for change
- Not making the change an objective of the entire group, as opposed to the team that worked on it
- Not changing the culture of fear regarding change
- Not implementing the change at all levels
- Not being able to visualize what is planned or intended
- Unclear priorities or vague objectives
- Inadequate financial resources
- People don't know how to put the change into practice
- Changes are seen as a cure-all

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Conflict, Culture and Change

1. *Power and Vision:*

   Do people believe they have the power to make things happen, to create change? Is there a clear, compelling vision for the future?

2. *Identity and Relationships:*

   With whom do people identify within the organization? Do they identify with their teams? Their functional work units? Their professions? Or the organization as a whole? Does the organization value relationships?

3. *Communication, Negotiation and Conflict:*

   What behaviors do people engage in when they have a conflict? How do others respond? Is it swept under the rug, or discussed openly? How do conflicts finally get resolved? How do people communicate? How do they negotiate with each other?

4. *Learning and Assessment:*

   How does the organization learn? How does people respond to new information that doesn't fit? How honest and real are they in assessing problems?

(Based on work by Richard Pascale, Mark Millemann and Linda Gioja)

Cultural Obstacles to Change

- Conditioned passivity and reactiveness

- Rewards for competition, narrow focus and selfishness

- Fear of failure or punishment

- Cynicism, apathy, control-orientation and obedience

- Stories of victimization and demonization

- Reliance on external discipline and authority from above

- Isolation, lack of communication and social fragmentation

- Conflict avoidance, accommodation and aggression

- Acceptance of covert behavior and mediocrity

- Lack of ownership of "someone else's problem"

Change, Conflict and Community

Attitude to Change	Conflict Style	Form of Community
Apathy and Cynicism	Avoidance	Isolation/ Non Community
Obedience and Passivity	Accommodation	Civility/ Pseudo Community
Resistance and Reaction	Aggression	Hostility/ Negative Community
Acceptance and Compliance	Compromise	Tolerance / Legal Community
Ownership and Affirmation	Collaboration	Synergy/ Diverse Community

Axioms of Change (1)

- Change is inevitable, improvement is optional.
- The pace or rate of change also changes.
- Without action, ideas about the future remain in the future.
- Real change is really difficult and takes real time.
- Change is painful, and pain is evidence that real change is taking place.
- If it's going smoothly, it isn't really changing.
- Change is a search rather than a solution.
- False starts, wrong turns and negative results are inevitable.
- Everyone is for change as long as nothing important changes.
- Change means doing things differently, not just harder or longer.
- Civility and conformity are obstacles to change.
- Letting go is more difficult than adding on.
- People suspect whatever they don't understand.
- Leaders are most successful at doing what most needs to change.
- We are all either agents of change or targets of change.
- Change means taking time to get things right.
- Tradition and inertia, and apathy and cynicism are enemies of change.
- Radical problems require radical solutions.
- The risks of not trying are greater than the risks of changing.

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Axioms of Change (2)

- Change generates opposition and unity. The deeper the change, the more powerful and committed the opposition.
- Opposition can be expressed negatively or positively.
- Negative opposition recreates what it opposes. Positive opposition leads to improvement, learning, and deeper unity.
- Small changes can trigger unpredictability and chaos.
- Higher levels of order can emerge out of chaos.
- Incremental changes can lead to transformational change.
- The more complex and transformational the change the less it can be forced.
- Changing part of a system can change the system as a whole.
- Changing people doesn't necessarily change the system.
- All change is two steps forward, one step back.
- Profound changes occur only when people are dissatisfied with the old ways and have a positive vision of the future.
- Real change takes place at the level of actual human behaviors.
- What people expect of change becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Axioms of Change (3)

- Change is more successful when people know where it is headed, and when goals and outcomes are collaboratively and clearly defined.

- Change can't be predicted. It is a journey, not a blueprint.

- During the transition nothing is clear and no one is satisfied.

- To complete the transition, it is necessary to change the culture.

- Changing culture means changing the hidden, unspoken context.

- Change induces loss, insecurity and fear, which fuel resistance.

- Anyone who is not involved in the change may actively resist it.

- Those who resist can be won over, or moved to neutrality or support by having their interests satisfied or acknowledged and their objections answered.

- Change is personal, and begins by changing ourselves.

- Change takes place more smoothly when feedback, evaluation and self-correction are built into the process.

- Change is reinforced through communication and celebration.

- The effects of change last long after the change is over, and need to be managed as much as the change itself.

- Change is outdated the moment it is born, initiating a new cycle of change.

How We Change

Individuals and organizations change by:

- Changing their language, culture, and physical environment
- Altering not just content, but context, process and relationships
- Changing roles and responsibilities
- Using imagination to explore alternatives, creating a vision of what life could be like, then integrating vision into the way people actually work
- Identifying what is dysfunctional or doesn't work, and linking it to paradigms and systems that need to be changed
- Including outsiders in examining the possibilities and implications of change
- Altering the way decisions are made
- Changing what is counted and how score is kept
- Opening new lines of communication and letting information flow more freely
- Altering expectations, challenging underlying assumptions, and rejecting what has been accepted, or is merely based on authority

How to Change the *Way* We Change

- Bring in people who don't know how it should be done

- Increase awareness, especially of hidden rules and habits

- Create a context of ethics, values and integrity

- Speak the "unspeakable"

- Listen closely to critics and dissidents

- Ask "silly," "ridiculous" or "stupid" questions

- Give and accept genuine, honest feedback

- Change how evaluation and assessment take place

- Alter the ways people succeed or fail

- Shift work to teams, networks, and webs of association

- Include people or groups that have not been included before

- Engage in small acts of love and kindness

- Change ourselves

- Model what we want from others

Advice for Change Agents

- Walk your talk.
- Don't drink the water.
- Fix systems, not people.
- Changing yourself automatically changes others.
- There is no such thing as neutral observation.
- Look with peripheral vision.
- Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee.
- Search for preventive opportunities
- Take a little longer to make it right
- Think of conflicts as opportunities
- Change me vs. them into us vs. it.
- Don't stand between an addict and their dope.
- Be optimistic and realistic.
- Let go. Give up your expectations.
- Not everything works for everybody.
- Change always takes longer than planned.
- Learn from each other.
- Don't control the process - leave room for others.
- There are no magic wands.
- Don't be afraid of success.

"What would it mean to live

in a city whose people were changing

each other's despair into hope? –

You yourself must change it. –

what would it feel like to know

your country was changing? –

You yourself must change it. –

Though your life felt arduous

new and unmapped and strange

what would it mean to stand on the first

page of the end of despair?"

Adrienne Rich