

THE CORPORATE TEAM Talk #4 Imaginal Education

This week we have talked about images, a life method, and a comprehensive design. Today we are going to talk a bit on the corporate team. Or how you create a style that allows image change to go on. This afternoon we will talk on the practical implications or how you create the interchange flow system for your workplace.

How do you create a corporate team? This is not an easy one. The last session talked about creating an environment or a climate in which images can be changed. But without a kind of nurture (does that speak to you?) the individual inside your workplace is not sustained in positive images. The key, I think, is the eventfulness you are able to create whenever you have the opportunity to be up front. Dramatization gives another clue. Wasn't that a great talk yesterday with those dramatic images and the way we were involved in the illustrations?

Let me read you a great dramatic story about a team of circus performers. This is about one member of the team who is an image changer and a fortuneteller. "The widow Mrs. Howard T. Cassan came to the circus.....Well, I must say, you are the strangest fortuneteller I ever visited....."(from THE CIRCUS OF DR LAO-Apollonius and the Widow)

What is an effective action force? Sometimes I want so much just to do everything my self rather than having to depend on someone else to do it. My self story at these times go something like this: "It'll get done right and faster if I do it." Have you been through this? It is a strain often to work through a team. Some days when daydreaming, I think of myself as becoming the perfect leader. One who never loses her temper, one who patiently listens to the office's pain in the butt, one who can slice through problems and give clear directions in the midst of simultaneous demands.

In fact, I look carefully at certain movies and t.v. shows to inform myself of the style that is most helpful in my work. The two movies that have really impressed me in this regard have been Superman and Raiders of the Lost Ark. Now Superman is a leader. He has power to get done what needs to be done and there never seems to be doubt on the exact action required. However, even in my daydreams I don't see myself in that style. For one thing, supernatural powers is not my thing. Now, the Raiders of the Lost Ark. If you can't have super powers, then find a team. And what a team. The leader admits he is making it up as he goes along. The team is a woman with certain aspects that helps the team. The Arab has certain qualities that can help out in certain situations. And the leader is something else. But between the three of them and a lot of luck, they get their task done. Well I

don't have supernatural powers and I don't have a lot of luck so my team depends on corporate planning.

It has taken me a long time to realize that being a team is not something extra that I can call into being for a little while or a special task. Something has happened in the 20th Century that has called forth corporateness. For lack of a better name, I call it the simultaneous dynamic universe. I feel split in two every once in a while. Part of me lives in the world picture of a perfect one to one universe. In this universe, everything has a place and all pieces fall into line and make perfect sense. And if I do this, that effect will always happen. And I use words like always and never a lot. However, there is a warning voice in the other side of me that goes: Life is a swirl and it is changing, changing, changing all the time. This lights up and fades away and this lights up. This is most important for this brief time span and this is the key thing. In this world picture, I have 1000 eyes and 100,000 fingers looking and reaching for everything all at the same time. And demands and questions come at me all the time. And I find that this simultaneous, dynamic universe keeps me on my toes. I have to do more research, more listening, more study, more model building, more working at it to keep on top of daily demands. And I can't do it alone.

Someone gave the image of the lawyer's library once that was helpful. He said that a lawyer didn't memorize all the law cases in history. He learned where and how to look at the cases he needed when he needed them. Well, in our time information access is power. And the team is the way all of us can get the active input of our colleague's minds rather than trying to cram it all in one lifetime. Just think, with a team, you have all those lives available to you rather than your own short time span. It is like wiring your minds together so you can tap the resource bank that a team is.

But what happens in so many teams? They fight, they argue and you get no where with them. You tap into nothing but defensiveness and anger. Have you had that experience? Well, how do you have a creative team. I think it helps to define the team. A team can be either your professional colleagues who meet only on occasions or your team can be you (the supervisor, or whatever) and those who work for you or with you. But to have a team who does pool their ability, there has to be a consensus on a common task and on the way the team will proceed to operate. The style of the boss just doesn't hack it today. People will not tolerate being told what to do without having a chance to participate in the decision making in some way. Or they do what they are told with the least effort and poorest performance. But we have already talked about that.

What is the style today. The corporate style is the style of the facilitator; one who enables the group to learn the process rather than the expert who tells people what and how they are to learn. The implication of this is that there has to be structural change in the training set-up. It involves the whole group in participating in the training situation so that if someone disagrees, he disagrees as a part of the group rather than as an outsider.

Let's look at model building. We have found that the negative images of what can't be done dominate our thinking. Therefore there has to be some way of getting the team to think, not of the problems or the issues before us, but the vision of the end result. We have a method called "maneuvering" which starts with the phrase: "Standing in the victory, what do you see." It forces you to leap ahead to the finished product or the conclusion of the program or whatever and describe what the victory would be. That way, you leap over all the reasons you can't do it as well as directing your energy away from the abyss of the problem. Let's look at the end of this course. Now don't look forward to the end on Wednesday. You are standing on Wednesday, looking back. You have already completed the course and you have become the imaginal educator. Now as you look around the room at your team, what do you see? Describe the victory?.....Good

In model building, the first step then is the victory or the vision or the expectation. And it is not the leader telling the team. It is the team finding out for themselves what they really intend to have happen. Now the leader sets up the situation. You remember my context: you are all imaginal educators so what do you look like?

What is the second step? Locate the block. What is stopping us from the victory? Have you noticed that some people are so tired that they can't stay awake? Is that the contradiction? Should we therefore spend more time sleeping? No, the real block is that people don't have time to think these things through before we go to new material? No the block is ...What is it?

The third step is a series of proposals. If this is the block, what are the direct and indirect actions you are going to take. Looking at this block, what would you say a direct proposal would be? O.K., changing the time design. What would be an indirect proposal? One that would work on the block but not head on. Yes, something like a manual given to each participant with all the exercises in it might deal with this block indirectly. Why or how? You think it might imply to him that this is going to require a lot of individual thinking. O.K.

There are other steps to this process. It is called the LENS or the Consult method. We will not be doing that in this course but the other steps include the tactics or detailed steps you will do in each proposal and the implementaries which include who will do it, when it will be done, where it will be done, what and how it will be done.

Another common model building method we use is the consensus method. How do you get your team to come to a consensus. Years ago, when I was first introduced to consensus, I could not rid my mind of the idea that you have to convince me of something before a consensus could be made. We were a curriculum planning group who were trying to meet a grant deadline and we were frustrated and ready to quit. A seminar was being offered by our office that was going to take us through a new method and allow us to learn it by teaching it. We all wanted to go. So our supervisor set up the situation for us. We have to finish this curriculum planning or we don't get our grant and we want to go to this methods seminar. What should we do? Now, that was a foolish thing. All of us were new at this teamhood, not to mention consensus. So we voted. Well, she knew that voting was not part of the consensus process. When you vote, you take sides and someone hates the proposal if he loses the vote. So how do you get a consensus? Well, we fought for four hours and finally the staff delivered our ultimatum. We are going to the methods seminar because that is what we all want to do. Well, the supervisor was close to tears but she went with us. Now, in the back of my mind, I knew that was not consensus but I didn't know what was.

Consensus has to do with making a raw decision on the direction you have decided to go out of what is necessary. Not the direction you want to go or even have the majority votes on. But how do you get to this step? For you are asking people to be detached from their hard earned defensive position. Intuition plays a large part. Here are the steps.

First you lay out the options on the board like this. I use an example we had. We had 3 options on self-sufficiency in an experimental program. Option 1 was to make the department totally independent with no financial interaction and no

participation in the overall planning meetings. The 2nd option was to continue as it was and have our section oversee the budget and weekly planning sessions with the experimental department. The 3rd option was to move the location of the department and make it legally autonomous relative to the future plan of having this department in other countries in 3 more years. We talked through each options, getting out the values and disadvantages.

The second step is to list the **foundational principles** of our organization that are being honoured in each option. This is to get the value screen out, of course. These principles can be tradition or law, legalized or just understood. Like our understanding that our budgets are always reviewed by a larger and disinterested group. That began to reveal some things. And we began to articulate just what our values were in this situation that had been unconscious before.

The third step is to list the **foundational principles that we are going in the face of** with these options. This was harder to do. But you never seem to have an option that honours all business principles. That is what makes it a struggle and a choice. So we lay out what we will have to give up in each of these options.

The fourth step is to use your intuition and decide what the **bold new move** is in each options. This gets out any hidden agendas that people were planning to do anyway. A hidden agenda is that which you intend to do whatever the group decides and you wait until the decision is almost formed before you spring it on the group. At any rate, the group stares at the option and decides what the "newness" is in each option that would demand a change. And how this will affect our future. What are the implications in these options.

By this time, it usually becomes obvious that there are bits and pieces of each option that can form a different option and we begin to create a consensus on the best plan. Now, if you can not agree on the values or the principles you are holding, you will never come to a consensus. And sometimes, you don't come to a consensus. You either bracket this issue or you sometimes have to make an arbitrary decision. But if you can get to this point, where there is a common understanding of the values and issues involved, you can make your declarative statement: In light of the values and priorities we have stated, our consensus is...

Now this effort is worth it. You would be amazed how much motivity is generated by people getting inside of the decision and having to struggle through what is best for the situation rather than defending their opinion to the death, whether or not it is needed.

Now the third major planning method we use (and it is the one we use most often) is called the workshop method. Our workshop this morning will be on this but I want to lay out the steps and do one with you. The five steps are: **context, brainstorm, gestalt, name, reflection.** I am going to demonstrate it only because you will be getting a form with the steps on it to analyze later. Also, we will break into teams to have 4 of you prepare a workshop to present to the total group.

Today, we are going to look at our corporate time design for this seminar week. We will be teaching Imaginal Education next week to another group of agencies and we need to look at the issues.

Everyone write down 2 things in the timeline you would like to see changed and 2 things you would like to see us keep. Alright, star your top two answers. Ready! Let's go around the room, and everyone give us their top answer. Just one. O.K. Let's go around again and get your second answer even if it is already up here. We want to see what you have. Now is there anything on your paper that is not up here? Let's get it up. Anything else we have left out?

Let's sort these out and gestalt them. I am going to put a X here by the first item. Are there any other items like this one? We will put an X by them. Next, we will label this item an O. Are there any similiar items....

Let's name them now. What is the arena of this group of X's? What would we call it so we don't lose any of the data? O.K. How about this group....?

As we look at this data, what has become obvious are our priorities in changing this time design. You see what we have done here and here? Looking at this data, what has been our chief value in retaining some of the old time design? Let's draw this together in a chart and look at it at the next meeting. Nancy and George, do you think you could draw up the chart for us? Yes, I'll check it and then you can present it to the group. Good!

Now, that is the workshop method. Does it look like fun?

In this next section I want to come back to a theme we have had on creating the climate or the environment for image change. I am going to put it into the four corners of this box: **time, space, eventfulness, story**. Do any of you read science fiction? Often, they pose in dramatic and extreme circumstances, the issues we have in creating a new social fabric. One story I remember was on the creation of the team on a run-a-way space ship. It was suppose to be a relatively short trip but something went wrong and they had to decide that they may be living together for life. They had all put up with the "captain is the boss" and had the best room and makes orders as long as this was temporary. But as soon as they learned otherwise, the great change began. What is the rhythm of the day when you can decide it. Some like to work in intense moments and then stop and some like to plod along every minute until one big break at the end of the task. Is it possible to get other decor than working charts if we are going to be here forever? How about some classical pictures? From which culture? Oh, there were some fights on that one. And why should the officers be the only view to have the viewing screen. Everyone wants a break in the routine.

I don't know how you relate to stories like this but I begin to identify with everyone's problem and I begin to think: what kind of time, space, eventfulness, and story would I begin to tell. And then I begin to think of my own attempts to create a team. We have had several workshops on these issues, especially time and space. In the time design we finally came up with the conclusion that although none of us like long meetings, we had to have some time together to work through a consensus on issues. Otherwise, everyone had to check with everyone else for decisions. And then we need large hunks of time just to get our ongoing work done. And then there were special issues time and extraordinary task force time. We finally created a chart that held the conserving "everyday the same time-line" on one chart and then with clear plastic, superimposed our adventuring timeline that would break into the routine. We found that we could keep issues to a minimum if we had scheduled in a time when issues could be raised during the week. At any rate, the key to the time design is the rhythm.

In space, we had a real fight. Everyone wanted an area where they could do their department's work plus be near by the equipment and files. We must have moved tables and chairs around and files for two weeks before we were satisfied. We discovered that there were all sorts of values that became revealed in the midst of this exercise. What should our entry look like? We want to discourage casual people from dropping by and interrupting us but we want a place that we want to walk into everyday that makes us feel welcome. And how do you have one large space with enough conference tables so the whole department can meet plus tables for each post to meet

plus space for the ordinary work to be done plus keeping some flexibility in order to have interchange.

And the decor. How much of the wall should be our working charts and how much should be gracious decor. We have a cartoon on the wall that shows 100 desks all in 4 rows with no decor and everyone staring straight ahead. The caption has one man say to another: "What sets the tone here." Well, in our office, since we are responsible for both North and Latin America, we have decided to have decor from each geographical area. And a lot of working charts and of course our timeline, the ICA's symbol and the name of our department.

Eventfulness in your relationships is harder to come at. Because it takes a lot of planning by someone. How do you break through the routine and see the significance in what you are doing. (Without upsetting the timeline, of course.) Sometimes that could be the supervisor holding a special evaluation or someone standing up to make announcements. I try to keep current jokes on the bulletin board. Since I am a coffee nut, sometimes we serve special coffee and snacks. And of course we have opportunities for celebrations. These do not seem like much but we have found that weekly events of some kind enable all of us to pull together as a team rather than isolated workers.

Recreating the story for the team is the last point in creating motivity. We have found that regular and either formal or informal reflections are crucial. We have shown you our life method on this in the second session. Some way, people need to be able to see again where they have been and where they are going. And the simple method of saying: What did we do this last week? What were our breakthroughs? What will be the most important thing we will do this week?-- can give the team a way to breathe new air into some very ordinary events.

Evaluation is another way to tell the story. We do this once a quarter to really look at our directions. What have been our past accomplishments? Where have our strengths, our vulnerabilities been? What advantage do we now have that lets us build our new vision?

Now this talk was on the team but it must be obvious that someone has to facilitate the team. We have tried to come up for a new name for leadership but it is hard. The Facilitator, the Guide, the First among Equals. I like that one. Well, someone has to decide to say "yes;" to "captain the ship." How do you guide your team?

Everyone on the team is on a journey. How many of us at 40 have decided to change our life style. We are in an age when people realize just how much power they have in deciding

their mode of operations. And how do you be the guide in this journey. One way is to make a chart (a private one) of each member of your team—their individual gifts and vulnerabilities; their skills and what they want to learn. Someone has to be brooding on how to sustain the team. And how to head off crisis in relations before they happen. And how to have a screen to listen to complaints and fears. I'm not talking about being a counselor. If you are going to have quality work with your team, they have to believe that their task is significant and that somebody gives due consideration to their views. And this means you. All it takes is one person in the team holding back to destroy the motivity of the rest of the team. And you are the one who has to find a way to pull them back into the mainstream and get their creativity into the pool. Or to let them go.

How long does it take to create a team? You can get a good start in a week's planning—set up the system, so they say. But to sustain the team means a yearly rhythm of planning, consensus, reflection, evaluation, celebration, time designs, space decor, eventfulness and a story that tells you: this has been a great year and I really have enjoyed working with this team.

Let's move into our workshop now on how to do a workshop?