

Global Research Centrum: Chicago
Social Methods School
12/14/74

TACTICAL THINKING

The discourses the last couple of days set the context for thinking through the Primal Community Experiment. First, we worked through in three arenas, the practical vision having to do with social demonstration, the primal community and the local church, or local religious institution. Yesterday, we worked through the design necessary for working in the context of that vision. This design has to do with the framework, the structural dynamics and the catalytic role.

Today, we want to look at the methods of effectivity that would allow implementation of those designs and get a stew going in three different arenas. I have a couple of stories that help me to focus a bit. They get said what we are about here and what is occurring in society.

I have a job in which I have a boss. I go to meetings with him occasionally. One meeting in particular, every other Friday morning, has been going on now for what seems like eons. At the end of the meeting, the same ritual goes on. Not only my boss but everyone else goes out the door rehearsing the fact that everything they got done at this meeting could have been done in the last five minutes. My boss goes into a little more detail than that because we have a long walk from the meeting place back to our office. So every other Friday we leave this place and go through this same ritual, in great detail, about how everything done there could have been done in the last five minutes.

I finally got tired of listening to it one day. I decided-- I think it was just out of meanness, really, to say, "Now suppose we take this conversation we have been having over the last year together, a little bit further. What are the three things that group of people need in order to operate in their meetings differently than they do now? What do they need to have?"

I was amazed. My boss is not a particularly bright man, but I was amazed. He said, "They do not know how to solve problems. They can't think together." I thought, "That is not bad." "They can't plan and they do not know how to work together," my boss continued, "It would be a miracle if they could simply talk one at a time. They would be far down the road relative to operating corporately. They do not know how to work together as a team. Thirdly, even if they did know how, they do not want to anyway."

That is not bad in terms of articulating the concern relative to effective operation: a way of thinking tactically, of operating corporately and of standing on the long haul in the midst of the first two. We have called these three methods Tactical Thinking, Corporate Action and Depth Motivity. This morning, I want to talk particularly about Tactical Thinking.

I want first to hand out a chart that represents work done in all 3 arenas. This is not intended to represent anything final, but I think it will allow you to do further stewing. A group took each of these 3 methodological arenas, tactical thinking, depth motivity and corporate action, and thought about them in terms of five components -- five ways in which that particular method gets done.

This chart then breaks them down further into the elements of each component, the issue involved and the function of that particular component. You end up with a three by five chart -- 15 components that you can call the components of the methods of effectivity.

I am beginning to think that grid of 15 represents a rather comprehensive screen of the 15 concerns that you must have in order to have an effective operation. If you are going to move into a particular situation and operate effectively with a corporate body, you have 15 things to worry about. Another way to say this is you have 15 tactical systems to create, and those 15 tactical systems intermesh into one thing that finally is going to allow you to operate effectively. Fifteen different tactical systems may be the way of explaining what that chart represents in terms of methods of effectivity.

Second story. A variety of effectivity training courses have emerged recently. One of the ways in which we know we are pretty well on target in talking about methods of effectivity is that everyone else is doing the same thing. There are about 1500 different courses to choose from. You can pay anywhere from one hundred to several thousand dollars for training in some of these methods.

One of the most popular courses is called KFA (I believe that stands for Kepner Friedman Associates). I read part of the book that was written as a basis for that course. The book is called The Rational Manager. They don't have a lot to say; however they have phenomenal imagery.

In an early part of the book they lay out a typical meeting in dialogue form. It is like reading a play. First Man X speaks, then Man Y speaks, and so on. In reading through this play you see that this is a description of every meeting you have ever attended. They lay out the general flow of commentary as it takes place at the meeting. That is the first hooker. You know you have been there

Then they say "let's take a look at what was really going on in that corporate action, that attempt to think something through." They are geniuses in their use of images. They take the comments made in this meeting and break them into four categories. They had comments which they called "irrelevant." That was one set. They had comments relating to "what is the problem," another set related to "what is the cause behind the problem," and a fourth set that raised the question of "what shall we do about that."

Then they went through and chronologically charted the flow of that meeting. It went like this. The meeting opened with an irrelevant comment. Then someone either asked a question or made a statement addressing "what is the problem." Someone else then talked about the cause behind the problem. From there on through this long meeting, the chart went something like this: There were two particular comments side by side that were actually on the same level as the meeting went on; I think at the level of "what is the cause behind the problem." Two comments that followed chronologically were actually on the same topic. Then the meeting closed with an irrelevant comment. You know you have been to this kind of meeting before.

I did this thinking, "Those guys are on to something relative to spelling out the actual situation. I think this has marketing possibilities among other things." I had my boss in tears laying out our meetings in this fashion for him.

This random fluctuation in the corporate thinking through of a particular set of problems occurs because meetings begin with the question "What is the problem." The responses to that question lay out the situation. As soon as you begin the meeting with "What is the problem," you have forced everybody into his own arena that he has to defend, so that statement of the problem doesn't hit him, but hits somebody else.

I suggested that we begin meetings with the question, "What is the situation," which was the question they were answering anyway. If we were intentional about that question, we would be setting limits on the random comments that could be made. My boss agreed. It made me think that we were on to something relative to tactical thinking.

Tactical thinking represents the consolidation of what has been taking place in ways of thinking for hundreds of years. We are not fooling around with something simple here. Tactical thinking represents a new way of thinking. (Similarly, corporate action represents a new way of doing and depth motivity, a new way of being). Tactical thinking represents a new way of thinking that is out to accomplish nothing. It relies upon exposing corporately the deep intuitions about a situation which produce the insights to revitalize the situation.

Two kinds of diagrams have helped me to discuss our experiences in the labs under the category of tactical thinking. One rather rationally lays out the 5 components of tactical thinking. The practical vision, timed implementaries and your social analysis are laid out on that chart. There is a sequential nature to these 5 components. We must clearly say to ourselves, however, that we are also interested in each component as a method that stands on its own bottom as well. This tension must be held in talking about components of tactical thinking.

Society has difficulty in creating practical vision or laying out the actual situation. It is frequently assumed that everyone understands a given situation. There is no attempt to state that practical vision. Your practical vision

states the trends in your situation and should say what your programs are out to do. Your practical vision has to do with your ideology, your programs, the direction in which you are headed.

The underlying contradictions involve an objective statement of the blocks that prevent the new from coming into being. The underlying contradiction states what you are over against in society. It is an articulation of the challenge. It states where you will apply pressure to accomplish your program.

Your creative proposals are the workable ways in which you intend to deal with the matrix of contradictions. You do not end up with proposals on a one to one basis with contradictions, The contradictions are a web of challenges and the proposals are a set of ways which together will deal with the contradictions.

Your proposals are built out of the particular situation. This is the creative portion of tactical thinking. This is where your homework gets done. This step is a response to the "Hey, what if. . ." that people voice intuitively about a situation.

Your recommendation on a direction to move is almost a twist on what is going on. It is built out of the situation in which you find yourself. This is the beginning of your indirection in creating a set of proposals to release the challenge in your statement of contradictions. You are not talking about doing more and better. That would be uncreative proposing; it might work and it might not. More and better is what you are up against during the creation of creative proposals.

Your system of creative tactics is an arrangement of actions --particular actions, indirect actions -- which, operating together, will accomplish the proposals. This is a key here. A tactic is part of a system of actions which can do nothing by itself, but operating in the context of that system, pulls off the proposals. This component can also be called programmatic actions which, again, operating in systematic fashion, will do the proposals.

Next, your timed implementaries are your miracles, or catalytic actions to do the tactical system. Here you can begin to see the dynamic interrelation of all of these. Your timed implementaries--who, what, where, why, how, when--will catalyze the tactical system.

Another way of talking about miracles might be as further clarification of your contradiction. Once you have snake-eyed the tactical system to discover the catalytic actions, you are really able to talk about the contradiction you are facing.

Society certainly knows about miracles and catalytic action. Most people in society operate between practical vision and timed implementaries. You go into a particular situation, discover the problem and do a shoddy job of practical vision. Society knows that action to solve the problem must be catalytic. Slogans, poster campaigns and a thousand other actions suggest that society is not out to deal directly with a situation; they are out to do catalytic action. Our task is to bring rational clarity and depth into the process that society already participates in.

I found this image helpful in getting clear what we are out to do with tactical thinking. In tactical thinking, you step outside of what is going on, as represented by your practical vision, to do a very careful analysis of that through your contradiction, goals and tactics. A systematic set of miracles, injected back into the practical vision, gives it new vitality.

The only reason for doing an analysis of your practical vision is to begin that process of stepping outside of it to create that which will give it new vitality. Every group has a practical vision and that practical vision is constantly being recreated. This recreation brings intentionality to your practical vision. You start out with a practical vision that is simply going on, go through the process of creating miracles, which you inject into that, and you get a new practical vision. The process never ends. This is the dynamic of tactical thinking; this is the heart of the matter and where our stewing has been and needs to be most.

This sort of statement helps me to grasp the simple fact that I am not in charge in this universe, that I am not in charge in any given particular situation. Through my thinking process, I come up with something to do. The situation shifts, perhaps not at all in the way I intended it to. There is a response and a change in situation, and a

response and a change through your whole life. It is that kind of ongoing dynamic process of thinking that we are talking about here.

Tactical thinking goes beyond the static. It is beyond goal orientation which finds a clearly stated objective, then finds complex administrative procedures to bring this down into smaller achievable objectives. If the clear objectives are not realized, the goal orientation system assumes that the objectives were not clearly stated, or were incorrect.

Tactical thinking goes beyond the problem-solving process which lists problems next to the actions which need to be taken to deal with the problem. The problem solving process cuts off both your practical vision and any possibility for real indirection

Tactical thinking is beyond the luxury of activism. Tactical thinking knows nothing about concrete goals. As soon as you allow yourself the freedom of thinking that you are out to accomplish a set of miracles, you will find yourself thinking that you are trying to solve some contradictions through a set of concrete goals.

If there is a shred of practicality left in you, you know that this applies in every situation, even in the world of business. If you can operate with no concrete goals, no reduction of your particular objectives and thus avoid the traps and superficial problems, misdirected actions, relevant tactics, you can actually make more money. There is a certain amount of practicality, I believe, at the bottom of tactical thinking.

As a response to the way life is, tactical thinking cannot be accountable to a set of concrete goals. It is only accountable to the practical vision, and finally not even that. We need to find far better ways of saying that secularly.

Tactical thinking occurs through interplay of the intuitive and the rational. We are using intuitive gaps in each of these components to allow people to shake off their prejudices and find their deepest intuitions about what needs to happen.

We used the cross polar gestalt as a gimmick to allow a creative gap in dealing with the contradictions. Our clustering activity was the gimmick to create an intuitive leap so that the tactics did not relate 1-1 to proposals and proposals did not relate 1-1 with contradictions. The category of "snake-eyes" is the intuitive gap we use to come up with our miracles.

I finally understand a little bit about "snake-eyes." It comes out of the movie "Little Big Man." They throw a clay pigeon up in the air. One character says, "the only way to hit it is to draw and go snake-eyes." If he had drawn his gun, kept his eyes wide open and done a bit of mental calculation, "I have to shoot just a bit above and right..." he would likely have missed. But if you just squint at it and use your deepest intuition, you can hit the clay pigeon almost every time.

With every one of these you are after some way of fleshing out the group's deepest intuitions. It doesn't make any difference, finally, what gimmick you use. We have found polar gestalting, swirling, plotting on the triangles and cross-gestaltting fairly helpful. But finally, you want a way of cutting across simple rational processes and allowing a group to make a genuine creative leap in their thinking. You do it as many times as you have to.

You know that you finally have your underlying contradictions when the reaction to your rational set of statements is a corporate a-ha. The a-ha comes from the interplay between the intuitive and the rational; the intuitive leap and finally the rational statement of what you discovered in making that leap. That is the remarriage of art and science. You work with your art in the rational product of science that holds things together.

There are all kinds of pitfalls if you get to thinking that the actual methods you are using are swirling, cross-gestaltting or gapping. It is important, at least in my mind to state that you are after the practical vision, underlying contradictions, creative proposals, systemic tactics and timelined implementaries. Swirling, plotting, gapping are the tools that get you there.

The key to gaining clarity on a practical vision has to do with stating the deep, underlying trends in operation there. The key to the underlying contradictions lies in simply stating the challenge. It lies in eliminating contradictions that begin with "lack of." It lies in being faithful to the actual situation.

The key in stating proposals is in being creative and practical. In terms of tactics, the key is in the systematic, getting the system rationally clear. The key for miracles is simply the explosive rallying point which catalyzes all kinds of other action and has a smack of the impossible. I find it hard to come across proposals that are genuinely creative these days. Maybe this is an edge.

I finally jotted down 5 guidelines which will make tactical thinking yours. You need common procedures. The procedures everybody received the last couple of days are not a bad start. They are simple procedures spelled out with all kinds of pedagogical hints.

Second, you need intuitive holding images on how each component is to be done. The holding image represents pictorially what is in the actual doing of that component.

The picture that you create may be a tactic under the guidelines of holding images. Your picture might hold, as an example, your intention of producing 25 trends, 5 contradictions, 7 creative proposals and 48 systematic tactics and implementaries. If your holding images are clearly stated, a group can grasp in an image what that product is. They can invent numerous ways to go beyond their ancient prejudices.

Delineating screens may be a fourth guideline. They are criteria to define what a tactic or a miracle really is. You pull your data through these screens at every point in the process. Delineating screens provide a way of never losing sight of the forest for the trees.

Common procedures, holding images, a picture of product flow, delineating screens-- these are all one method. It sounds so simple. You would think that anybody ought to be willing to do this. I have tried from time to time, in particular communities like my office, to implement tactical thinking. I discover that what is so simple and clear to me causes great rebellion from others.

In working on these methods you and I stand upon the shoulders of men from Plato and Socrates, Copernicus and Galileo, to Einstein. We represent a pulling together of all the thought of those men. This is a new way of thinking. It is no wonder, where you get it down to something so simple, that people look at you like a man from Mars.

--Gary Tomlinson
12/13/74

INTRO: - BOSS -

WVV

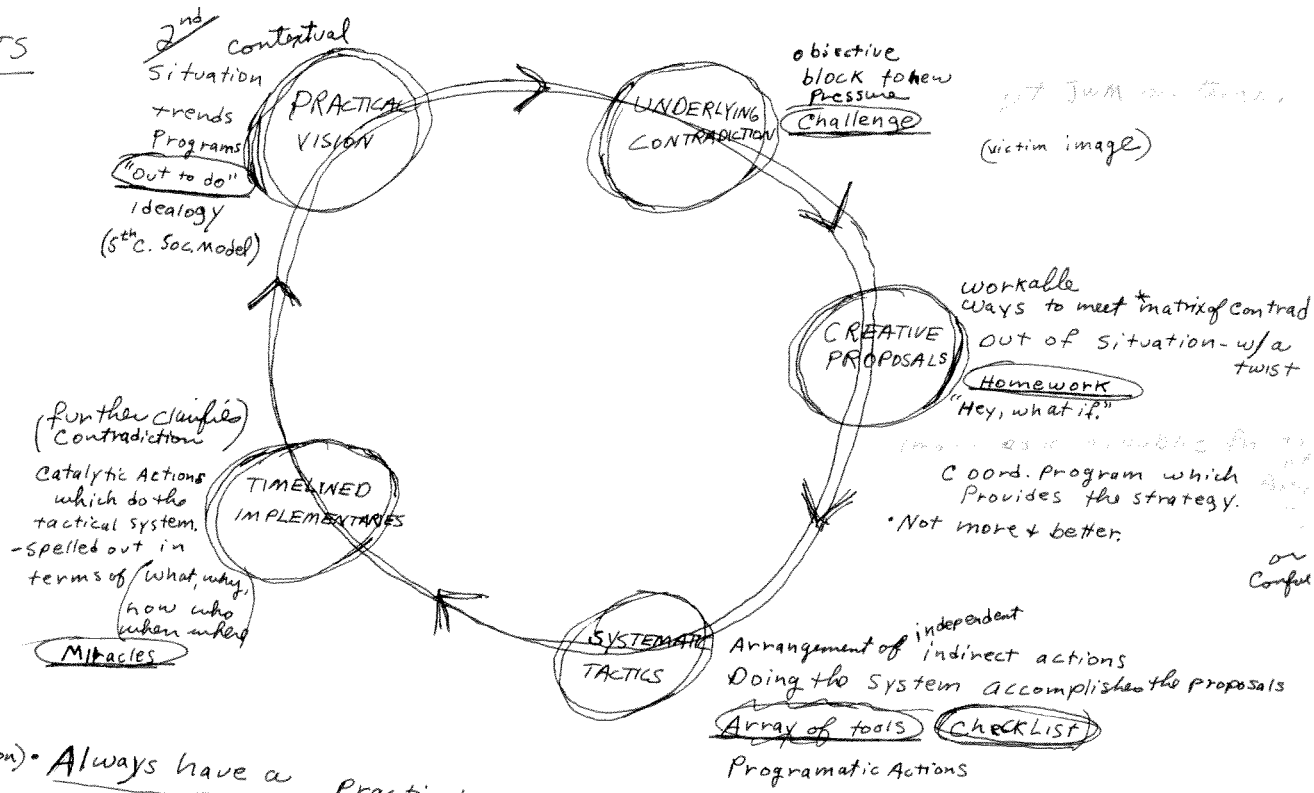
TACTICAL THINKING

T-T - new way of thinking ^{which is out to accomplish nothing} & reliant upon ~~flourishing~~ ^{exposing} corporate, the deepest intuitions about what is going on & how it can be catalyzed or revitalized.

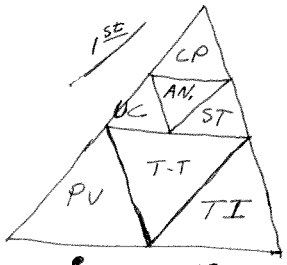
I. COMPONENTS

INTRO - Hand-out

15 tactical systems

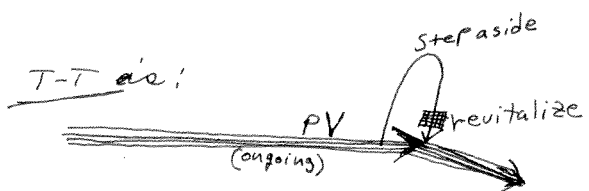


(Transition) • Always have a Practical Vision - always clarifying & revitalizing it.

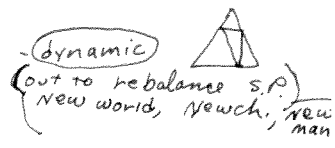


society generally jumps between these two.

II. PARADIGMS (PHILOSOPHY)



- get clarity on PV only to enable the analysis & implementare
- DYNAMIC Helps to grasp not in charge of situation - do X & situation shifts, somehow, & do Y & shift, etc.
- Beyond STATIC
 - goal orientation which fixes a clear objective & finds a complex of administrative to break the objective down, assign it & where it fails assume a poor assignment on the need for training. ^{or poor goal} (MBO)
 - Problem solving which lists problems & creates actions to deal with them. (cuts off PV, & indirection)
- Beyond ACTIVISM
 - No concrete goals, really - dynamic
 - In that freedom avoids,
 - 2) superficial problems
 - 3) misdirected actions



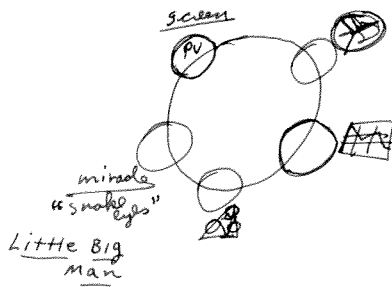
OPERATING SCHEMES

III. ~~PRINCIPLES~~

(~~CONCEPT~~)

• WAY THIS HAPPENS

Intuitive creative GAP + RATIONAL PRODUCT in each component ^{↳ ("5 contradictions")}



← (Image over which to converse.)

- art + science remained
- many "gapping" techniques (miracles is an edge here)
- OUT to leave ancient prejudices & create "aha" → RATIONAL PRODUCT
- trap is thinking the gimmick is the method. (Moffett + brainstorming)

• KEYS

- PV 1. ~~miracle~~ Underlying trends
- UC 2. Challenge (faithful to sit'n) - not lack of global resource bank
- CP 3. Creative, Practical
- ST 4. Systematic (Programmatic Actions)
- TI 5. Explosive rallying point (Smacks of the impossible)

IV. TOOLS (Local Application)

Simple Procedures | Hints

5 guidelines to making this yours

- COMMON PROCEDURES
- HOLDING IMAGES
- PRODUCT FLOW picture
- DELINEATING - miracles
- SCREENS - tactic

• "ONE METHOD" - OUT to get contradiction - Not get lost in forest.



CONCL.

Like men from MARS.
~~med.~~ Council - standing on shoulders.