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MOTIVITY

For my first full time Job I was hired as an assistant dean in the school of adult education at the University of Pittsburgh. My particular charge was to prepare us for moving into expanded facilities with expanded staff and to do something about our advising services for adult students who were coming to school part time I did a fantastic job of tactical thinking and came up with a tremendous set of implementaries and began implementing them. I discovered in the attempt to analyze my contradiction that what was going on there was just the objective fact that there were people who had been registering for courses, taking two or three a term at night, and had not consulted with anyone for four or five years. What had happened to them was that they had deviated completely from any possible way in which all those credits could be applied toward a degree. I took it upon myself to say that this was not an effective operation and so I built a battleplan. I started implementing it and implementing it and implementing it.

Three months later the dean called me into his office and asked me what I was doing. I told him that I was getting files updated and sending out letters to people telling them we have counseling services, and they are in serious trouble with their program as it stands and they should come in. He told me that about fifteen or twenty of the other assistant deans and advisors had been complaining about the fact that they have so many appointments that they couldn't get anything done except see people. In that moment the fantastic practical vision just collapsed. When your practical vision collapses you are thrown into a profound awareness of rootlessness. Rootedness is in a practical vision, being related to the future.

After I had that experience of indicative battleplanning, I left that job and got my second job, also at the University of Pittsburgh, in the department of English I was called to build a new curriculum for the freshman English program and I had learned my lesson. I learned that when you zip through this process of practical vision --analysis, contradiction, proposals and tactics of practical implementation-- and start throwing implementaries around, you are not only perpetually in this swirl, but also forced into a second arena. It is not only what is to be done or inventing a mission, but who is going to do it. It is the question of troops, the question of corporate activity. What collapsed on me in the dean's office was that I had not known enough to see that I couldn't do any action by myself. I learned that lesson and so I built a common symbol, first of all with a group of six or eight teachers. We built ourselves a fantastic corporate discipline with fantastic symbols. In 1968 we were the only instructors at the University of Pittsburgh who had long hair and beards, and dressed in business suits. It was fantastic. We created a corporate style of interchanging with one another. Nobody knew what surprises were in store for him when he showed up in class. He only knew one of us would be there. We worked out a fantastic corporate consensus. We would sit down and work things out over and over again. This is the question of who is to do it or the question of the development of corporate consensus. I learned that lesson thoroughly and three months after I started doing this, the mission didn't collapse, all my colleagues collapsed.

I resigned from my second job and went on to my third one. I am not going to tell you about the third one. But it was the third one that made me realize that when you have got some picture of what is to be done and who is to do it, when your colleagues collapse, your experience is somewhat like total ineffectiveness. You know and yet the work collapses, and your colleagues collapse. You notice that is an indirect way of saying that you collapse, too. You show up in weakness. I was thrown into the awareness that the real issue is not what is to be done, nor who is to do it, but the real issue is how to keep at it. This is the question of motivity.

When your vision is clear and you have your missional task, and when you have a group of people who are going to do it, the issue becomes-one of common discipline, one of care. I learned that one of the reasons those colleagues collapsed is that we did not have clear symbols to focus on. There was no symbolic life. That is to say, that they were not RS-I grads. That is why they collapsed. When you have created a body of people and are caring for them, not for their sake but for the sake of that mission, then depth motivity arises as a serious question. If one dynamic is inventing your mission and another is inventing the people, the third is something like inventing inventiveness. Motivity methods make no sense whatsoever save in the context of a shared action being implemented as common mission. If you go to a psychiatrist for motivation he will fail you every time. Motivity depends fundamentally upon a picture of mission, on a practical vision. It depends upon a people to whom contexted motivity can happen over and over again, the process of allowing corporate action to take place.

The question of depth-motivity is how do you get other people as excited as you are now. How do you do it? You don't do it unless you build a corporately acting body and you do not do it unless you have hammered out the practical picture of mission.

Depth motivity shares some qualities with tactical thinking and with corporate action. One is that depth motivity is totally practical. The word you say to yourself over and over again is practical, practical, practical, practical. It seems that depth motivity has to do with the practical inclusive space in which a body of people missionally operate. Once you have established a story, one that deals with the mission and who the group is, then it must deal with all of space, in our day the whole globe. And it deals with time --that is all of time-- sort of kairotically. What is the significance of the time we live in? This is an age of resurgence. What time is it? --if you will. Let me give you an example of what an inclusive story is for me --a practical inclusive story,

In the first Bombay Lens seminar I was just a green, recently retired hippy liberal, I told myself. At that time India was in the midst of the eighth year of no monsoons, terrible drought and people were coming into the city. There was no food. The government had set up distribution centers for food but they weren't working and it looked at that time as if there wouldn't be any rain that year either. I was talking with a young Indian business man around the edges of that seminar and I said to him, "Things must really be difficult for you right now in India."

He looked at me as if I had said, "There is a fly running up and down your nose" and said, "What do you mean, things are difficult?" I said, "Well, the drought and the

food.” He said, “Drought and starvation is just the way life is. The way it really is in India today is that 25 years ago when we became independent, no one expected, including ourselves, that we would ever be able to feed ourselves. We haven't fed ourselves yet, but it is like when you get up in the morning and look toward the East. Before the sun comes up, the sky turns pink. We haven't seen the sunrise but the sky is a glorious pink.”

Now that is what I mean by a story that is a motivity event. The story you tell about what you are doing is a true story, but it is a story that you decide to tell. It is a story that takes the given situation, the future, and the catalytic necessity of the moment and lets meaning come through. As you tell stories, you give little images. You sing them. Sometimes you ritualize them. Every religion ritualizes and rehearses theirs over and over again. Stories are true to the way life is. At the same time they are that without which a group has no possibility of authentically going on year after year.

Stories change because the situation changes, as you are implementing all those tactics. To keep doing corporate activities, change the situation, and as soon as the situation changes the story changes. But without missional motivity, a story that tells about its community, its history, its destiny and what it is struggling with at the moment, motivity is a joke. Motivity is not simply an inclusive story. It is a way of making inclusive all of the kinds of relationships that a group shows up in on its march.

It is a way of making inclusive its community. This has to do with space. What I mean by relationships are those of space, to time, to engagement. We tend to operate as if there is some space which is important and some space which is not. Motivity methods are miracles that allow all space to be significant. I have a friend who once did a kind of indicative battleplan with a group of people in his company and they discovered that the key to the motivity on the shop floor would be to paint the bathrooms. Now I would not suggest that you all run and paint the bathrooms and think that that will get motivity going around your home or your church. What I mean is, let that insignificant space in people's imagination become profoundly significant. That is what I mean by a motivity method or a motivity tactic or a motivity miracle.

I suppose you might as well say it right out loud that what it means to do depth motivity is to do tactical thinking about the depth mood of the times, of the people on its march through its mission. Tactical thinking is not just about society. When you decide to bring people into missional being you had better do tactical thinking about where they are going to come from. When you decide to motivate mankind, you have to decide what tactics you do, to pick up particular people. You do not motivate anyone by thinking globally, alone. What motivates him is to come up with some gimmick that allows the whole globe which has sat out there like insignificant space to come alive. Maybe you send him on a trip to make all that space come alive. Practical significant engagement is to actualize depth motivity tactics.

There are parts of my life that I don't particularly want to be made significant. I spent the last quarter out marketing LENS in Beirut, Cairo and Addis Ababa. Along about the middle of July last year it became obvious to me that we had to go market this course and so I employed all of my great tactical prowess with the practical vision that someone

else market those courses if possible. First of all I came up with a list of five people who ought to go. I thought that you don't decide that this particular one ought to go. You say from this five, somebody ought to go. Pretty soon I realized that one was going to do this and one was going to do that and I looked around and pretty soon there wasn't anybody else. I want to suggest that significant engagement is to make it clear to people that there isn't anybody else to do what it is that has to be done.

Significant engagement is the totally impossible task. We have some fine people around this place who are great friends of mine in that they can be depended upon to come around and say that we don't have enough people to do a job. You know any of those in any of your communities? I mean they are great people because they keep reminding me that when you give them enough people to do a job, the motivity inherent in an impossible task is over. You are the only one and this body seriously expects you to do this impossible task.

My dad was good at depth motivity. He used to have 17 things to raise about my personal appearance. When I came home from college one time my hair was not cut. I wanted my Dad to be proud of me when I came home from college. So the next time I came home, my hair was cut, but my shoes weren't shined. The next time I came home my hair was cut and my shoes were shined, but my fingernails were dirty. So the next time I came home from college, my fingernails were clean, my shoes were shined and my hair was cut, but my suit hadn't been to the cleaners for a while. He had commissioned me as his son to go and be the genius of my university. He was telling me that he seriously expected that to happen. That is what I mean by significating engagement. It means this whole engagement. It doesn't mean all the great opportunities.

When you scrub the floors, wash the toilets or go out and do RS-1 recruiting, it has to do with significating that engagement. Depth motivity has to do with making time significant --all time. How do you invent gimmicks which allow all of history to show up in a given moment? One of my favorite gimmicks is simply to say that "I think the times we live in are just like the times before the pyramids were built." I don't know if it happens for you. Time comes in here and the pyramids show up sitting right next to that candle. It is something like seeing to it that destiny seeps through into every moment. Every moment allows you to recover your whole personal past and project your whole future. It has to do with keeping a group aware of its heritage. I am not interested in the ways you do it. There are one thousand ways to do it. The struggle of motivity is the struggle of allowing the time that you have invested in your corporate action to be significant, not in terms of your little particular group, but in terms of your mission, I get angry with my colleagues when they put out statistical reports that are not in a helpful, missional form. It has to do with an imaginal way of dealing with that objectivity which allows the future to be born, to be invented, now.

And now inclusive community. Motivity is about something like what I used to experience in my family. I called it the "Bring the Stranger Home" syndrome. Everybody-was influenced by it. I thought first of all it was just my grandmother's concern. Then my mother started talking like her. Then when my sister got old enough and I went to college, she wanted me to bring some stranger home. It is something, every

time you sit down to dinner some stranger is sitting there with you. How is it that you create events in the life of a body which lets them see that the table they are sitting around is the table that every stranger in the world sits around. The funny thing is when you invite some man to come to dinner. Remember the character in the Broadway play The Man Who Came to Dinner and stayed for twelve years? When you find a way to invite that child starving in Africa to come and sit down to dinner with you; when you find a way to let that humanness participate in your mundane situation, those people come to dinner and never go away. Those are the arenas in which you talk about motivity.

Now I want to talk for just a minute about methods of motivity. It is hard because methods of motivity don't really exist. Methods of motivity are tactical thinking in the midst of corporate action. Methods of motivity are giving yourself enough distance on your old cause-and-effect image of how the universe runs. Methods of motivity are giving yourself enough distance on your I-vs.-they or sometimes we-vs.-they, the sort of brain washing which all of us have had in our culture. We operate in terms of other people --I, they, we. How do you come over against that brainwashing, inventing and indirectly injecting events that allow time and space and relationships and stories and community to burst with life? That is all motivity is.

The only methods of motivity are the methods that your creativity invents for motivity. It is hard for me to imagine giving a talk on motivity methods because motivity methods happen in a particular context. They happen when your colleagues are down. Mind the word "indirect". That is not that you want to be indirect, but you try to talk to anybody directly and motivate them. You are dead before you start. What motivates mankind is care. The only thing that motivates mankind is his care. The issue today is not, "Do I care?" The issue is trying to care effectively. Don't you dare try to motivate me by coming to me whomping something up. When you go out these days and try to tell stories that break people loose, those stories better be true stories or they won't work. Sometimes they have to bounce over against six walls before you dare hope they will hit the target you aim at. All you are doing is tactical thinking. You are throwing a set of tactics into the depth human yearning of a body of people. You don't have any guarantees that because you throw these tactics the effect will be this result. All you have is your integrity of operating corporately.

I have a list of five operating principles for motivity methods.

1) Motivity methods involve the orchestration of every single tactical system simultaneously. You all know how paralyzing it is when you are sitting with seven different tactical systems and nobody can pull them together. Motivity methods means orchestration of your tactical systems, all the mission and all of its complicated parts.

2) Motivity events depend on the time in which they show up. Motivity events depend on time. What I mean is this. It may be fantastic when you get a picture of the globe held by the global grid, and the first time you saw the grid that space broke loose for you. But it doesn't do that any more. The first time that mini-park came into a community, it transformed space. It doesn't do it any more. What I mean is that particular motivity events become part of your essentialistic given. They become part of your being. They

become part of your operating context. They become part of your practical vision. They no longer motivate. I get angry with getting the latest great idea out to everybody. That is fine. It belongs to everybody. The problem is that you have to go invent an even greater one the next time you need one.

3) Use the necessary, particular tactic, not the cute or not even a great possible one. I mean the necessary one in the particular situation. Motivity is dangerous. You are dealing with humanness. You are literally dealing with the stuff of creativity itself. You are dealing with lives. You do what is necessary, not what you can do.

4) With motivity methods you are never in a hurry. You discover that you can live with ambiguity. Even when the ambiguity is more than usual, like the last quarter or two, you can live with it. You are not out to find quick gimmicks in order to shortcut that ambiguity. You live with it until you know. If you don't know what the next step is on a journey of a body of people, wait until you know. Figure out programs for your tactical thinking. Determine the mood of the group. It gives you time and space. There is no hurry. Never be in a hurry.

5) Motivity methods are about keeping the common awareness of the mission, the common resolve to be the mission and the common resolve to do the mission and the common mood of the mission. Mood is not accurate --the common "being" of the mission. to keep on the march, that is what motivity methods are about. They are to keep you on the march. You probably know more methods than I do.

I want to close with what I think is the cost of being one who has decided to be a motivity methodition. The first cost is that you discover a sort of perpetual loneliness. When you are building your mission, it is possible for you to have some friends. When you are taking responsibility for corporate action, maybe it is possible to have one or two. When you are taking responsibility for the human motivity of a body of people on a missional march you have no friend but one. That is Jesus. It is life. It is perpetually lonely.

The second cost you discover when you take that kind of responsibility upon yourself is that there is no escape. You have no more loopholes left. You can still escape when you are building your mission and actuating your implementaries. You can always find little cracks. You can escape when you are doing corporate activity. You cannot escape when you are doing motivity methods. Motivity methods depend on when you're deciding to be one hundred per cent engaged in the mission as a one hundred per cent corporate man. Then you have been granted the right to seriously deal with motivity. Not until then. If you do not know whether or not you have established your right, your colleagues do.

The third cost you discover is that life keeps disclosing itself to you all the time. You begin to do strange things. You try always to talk with the cab-drivers, or you catch yourself looking up at the buildings above your eye level to see what kind of design is there. Once I found myself riding the ferry back and forth beneath the Sydney Harbor bridge, seven times, so I could keep watching the Opera House. Disclosure happens. That wracks you. You are wracked by perpetual exposure.

The fourth cost is a kind of perpetual uncertainty. You are enduring because you are deciding to endure. You have been endured, but because of that fact, you don't know. You have no guarantees. You don't know what the next event will disclose. You don't know.

Let me be practical for a moment. If we go out of here with our really incredible miracles, with those incredible frames, if we go out there and start doing these things, in three months we will all be dead. The task upon us is practically speaking to create a people. You obviously can't do that without a concrete vision. But you can't sustain that save you decide to be the guy whose final thing, if all else went, is perpetually throwing tactics. Perpetually acting corporately to motivate the deeps of life. Not for yourself. You can't do that. Your care does that. Not for your friends. Not even really for your colleagues, but for every person across the earth, to whom the earth and its goods and its decisions and its inventions of humanness belong.

Steve Allen