

Collaborating for Change

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For all that has been - Thanks!
To all that shall be - Yes!
~Dag Hammarskjold

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Brokering Change

SEEING TOGETHER

Can there be any more contentious topic than the issue of change? What does it entail to lead a congregation in change? Which leadership skills should be accessed? Is it best to lead “out front” or “from behind?” While answers are always contextualized by the individual congregation, one way to understand your role as a leader is to think in terms of “brokering” change. Brokering assumes an understanding that times of transitions call for collaboration between clergy and laity at deep levels of relating as the church bridges the gap between the world that was and the world this is developing.

Otto Scharmer delineates “four levels of responses” to change:

- **Reaction** is when a congregation operates out of existing habits and routines.
- **Redesigning** involves the congregation in addressing and changing underlying structures or processes as when the decision is made to “revamp” a particular ministry of the congregation.
- **Reframing** occurs when the congregation changes the underlying pattern of thoughts and assumptions as when an underlying belief is examined and found wanting so the congregation moves on to a more appropriate belief for their present reality, e.g.. female ministers.
- **Presencing** happens when a congregation learns from the future as that future emerges.

The deepest level of response, *Presencing*, involves a congregation’s ability to perceive the dynamics and realities affecting it. In this context a change-broker does not create visions, goals, and directions, but rather helps people discover the power of seeing and of “seeing together.” The role of the change-broker becomes the one who facilitates a seeing-together which moves the congregation towards a turning point where a shift in thinking patterns can occur and a *Preferred Future* state (see below) may emerge.

It is in the act of seeing-together that those brokering change allow for transitions at the deepest level of response. It is at the level of *Presencing* where change becomes both substantive and sustainable as it emerges out of the creative collaboration of clergy and laity.

BARRIERS TO SEEING TOGETHER

If seeing-together were a habitual practice by congregations and other groups there would not be a need for the plethora of information concerning change management and change leadership. Unfortunately the shadow side of seeing is blindness.

When it comes to congregations and groups there are four particular areas in which blindness may occur.

- **Not recognizing what you see:** when a group trusts its own ideas more than trusting the data reality is presenting. The idea of a roll count as opposed to the reality of people present in worship often blinds a local congregation to the true size of its ministry.
- **Not saying what you think:** engaging only in conversation which reproduces the “company” line rather than sharing non-conforming ideas. Group-think can

exist for the purpose of promoting habitual behavior and be resistant to information which may threaten that behavior.

- **Not doing what you say:** wasting time and energy in ministry that doesn't count builds frustration and cynicism. Words are cheap while follow through is priceless.
- **Not seeing what you do:** blind spots created by the force of habitual behavior. Habits occur when a familiar stimulus triggers a familiar response and, therefore, becomes the dominate mode of action in that context.

Brokering change is the art of facilitating a congregation to see-together their turning points where passions, suspension of judgment, and intuition interact in a way that the *Preferred Future* is crystallized and embodied. The rest of this guide should help you understand the dynamics of moving people to their turning points.

Change Language: Sameness – Sameness with Difference - Difference

As we think about change and collaboration as a seeing-together, we need to be aware of the mental filters among our congregants when it comes to the subject of change. For example, once I facilitated a discussion on implementing transitions in local congregations. As the group came to the conclusion of the conversation a fellow pastor piped up, "But change is not always needed." An hour of conversation on proactive, purposeful, healthy transition was eviscerated by six words at the end. I had unknowingly run across a person who understands change through a "sameness filter."

The Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) field has determined that when it comes to handling change people will fall mainly into one of three areas along a continuum running from rarely changes to revolutionary. By being familiar with these filters we can begin to speak of change in ways that are "safe" and "appropriate" for helping people see-together.

SAMENESS FILTER: Hell no!

Those church members who match novel information to older and tried information when encountering something new have a **Sameness** filter. **Sameness** congregants have difficulty managing pioneering innovations and handling change. As a general rule, **Sameness** folk only initiate major changes every 15 to 25 years. **Sameness** members will filter out any information with which they cannot spot the similarities to previous situations. **Sameness** people say things like: "same", "similar", "in common", "as always," "static", "unaltered", "as good as", and "identical." When communicating to these members you will want to couch your language to their comfort zone such as: "This may appear different but if you really think about it this is the same as..."

SAMENESS WITH A DIFFERENCE FILTER: Let's see...

If you run across members who first notice the similarities in situations and then become aware of the differences, these people run a **Sameness With A Difference** filter. They first look for similarities or continuity in a situation and then tend to spot the difference or novelty. They like the evolutionary approach to change, preferring a major change every 5 to 7 years. However,

they will resist any sudden changes that may happen. **Sameness With A Difference** members will filter out information where a compare-and-contrast cannot be made. **Sameness With A Difference** people say things like: “the same except,” “better”, “improve”, “gradual”, “increase”, “evolutionary”, “less”, and “although.” When communicating to these members you will want to couch your language to their comfort zone such as: “The design will be fairly similar to the last one, however, you will be involved with a new situation...”

DIFFERENCE FILTER: Bring it on!

If you relate to members who thrive on change these persons operate a **Difference** program. True revolutionaries, they orchestrate life changes about every 18 months. Such members will initiate change simply for the sake of change. While **Difference** members can see the other side of the coin, they also delete vast amounts of information in which they cannot spot the novelty. **Difference** people say things like: “different”, “altered”, “changed”, “revolutionary”, “completely new”, “no comparison”, and “I don’t know if you’ll agree or not...” When communicating to these folks you will want to couch your language to their comfort zone such as the simple: “Let’s do something new!”

Sameness

- how they are the same, identical
- what they have in common
- how it has not changed

Sameness with a Difference

- how it has evolved over time
- it is the same except more; less; better; worse; improving, etc (comparisons on a sliding scale)

Difference

- may not understand the word “relationship”
- will describe how it is completely different
- focus on the destination, ignore the trip

Part of seeing-together is awareness that all people do not perceive change the same way. Those who appear to resist change are not those who “don’t get it,” neither are those who push for more radical transitions “willy-nilly” in their actions, nor are cautious people “plodding along.” A part of brokering change is bringing the various filters together in a collaborative effort from which the change may emerge.

Directions of Change: Away From (don’t-want) & Toward (do-want)

Seeing-together also implies looking in a particular direction. The focus of the collective gaze provides the gravitation for congregational movement. As a general rule, congregants invest time, energy and resources either moving toward something they find pleasing or away from something they find threatening. What they use in deciding whether to move towards or away from an action or object are their values by which they determine if something is good or bad.

Consider the story of a man who, when asked by a cabdriver where he wanted to go, answered “just get me away from here.” This story illustrates the pitfalls of not knowing where you’re going: “away from” may be worse off than “here”. Like the famous scene from *Alice in Wonderland* when the Cheshire cat inquired of Alice where she wanted to go, Alice replied she didn’t know, and the cat answered “If you don’t know where you’re going then any road will take you there.” What the man in the taxi and Alice share in common is the *Away From* pattern for developing outcomes or the “preferred future” to their situation.

Motivation and action comes down to one’s level of discomfort or inspiration. Those dealing with discomfort will move away from the source of irritation. Mother Theresa is quoted as saying that she began a life for others when she realized there was a little Hitler in her heart. This negative image of cruelty and egoistic aggrandizement was a major motivator in her life.

Here’s a more personal example: Why don’t you put your hand on a hot stove? Simple, you want to avoid the pain of third degree burns. These two examples indicate the usefulness of avoiding things we don’t want and moving *Away From* them. *Away From* motivation helps us to identify and solve problems which we do not want to follow us into our preferred future.

A *Toward* pattern is outcome or goal oriented and allows us to articulate what it is we want, how we’ll know when we get it, and keeps us motivated until the desired preferred future is achieved. Those who move *Toward* an outcome are usually those who feel inspired to implement changes which benefit the community. A *Toward* person will enter a cab and tell the driver the exact address. Should the cabbie inquire, “Why this place?” the *Toward* person will answer “because what I want is there.”

Smart outcomes take into consideration both what we don’t want and what we do want. For example your church may come into a half million dollar gift. Absent *Away From* or don’t-want thinking those responsible might place the money into all sorts of investments that perpetuate injustice around the globe. Absent *Toward* or do-want thinking the money might languish in a bank account making no difference in the life of your church.

CONSEQUENCES FOR CHANGE-BROKERS

While both filters are needed in the dialogue of change the preferred future and outcomes that move a congregation forward must be stated in a *Toward* manner. If the preferred future simply exists to move people away from a difficulty the congregation as a whole will be driven by crisis management. The *Away From* organization tends to gravitate to problems and often is distracted from other priorities and trajectories of movement. The *Toward* organization gravitates to confidence and out-of-the-box thinking.

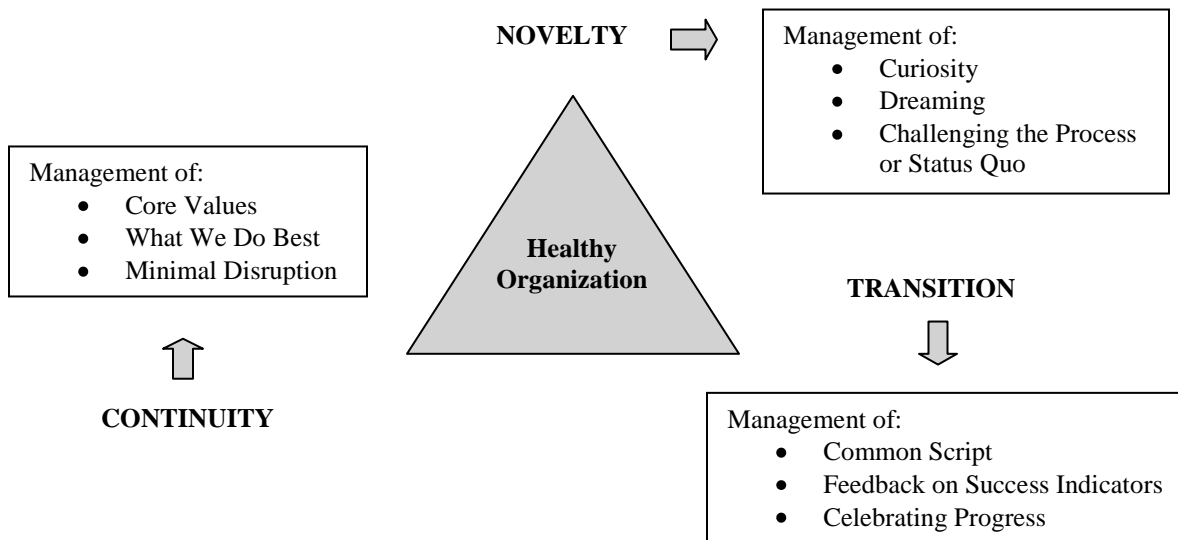
Continuity – Novelty – Transition

Collaborating with folks so they may see-together does not have to happen chaotically. Seeing-together can be intentionally brokered, for the purpose of guiding congregations into living out their identity and values in more holistic ways.

Research has established that visionary organizations and their leadership have the capacity to learn and apply lessons from the

*best of the past (**continuity**), to surface and develop ideas for creative acts (**novelty**), and to enact acutal changes in systems and behaviors to progress toward a desired state (**transition**).*

~Appriciative Inquiry Handbook



CONTINUITY: The Gift of Sameness

Brokering change starts with a focus on continuity, the consideration and gratitude of an congregation’s woven tapistry of identity, purpose, self-esteem, wisdom, and history that maintain and bond the daily life and minsitry of the congregation. It is of vital importance to comprehend that continuity is an essential part of change and transformatoin. “Change is good, but first know what should never change.”

In attending to continuity, the dialogue is built around the system’s founding stories, turning points, proudest achievements, best practices, empowering traditions, intergenerational wisdom, legacies, and amazing moments. It is a discovery of the organization’s history-as-positive-possibility.

~Appriciative Inquiry Handbook

NOVELTY: The Gift of Difference

When considering novelty, change-brokers seek also to present occasions when unanticipated and unpredicted innovation ocured. Change-brokers work to ensure that a space for the valuing of inventive thinking and actions is opened up.

Symphonies of logical rationales are repalced with cacophonies of wild, half-baked notions; and typical incentives to conform are supplanted with celebration of those who constructively challenge the status quo. “Creative chaos.”

~Appriciative Inquiry Handbook

TRANSITION: The Gift of Sameness with a Difference

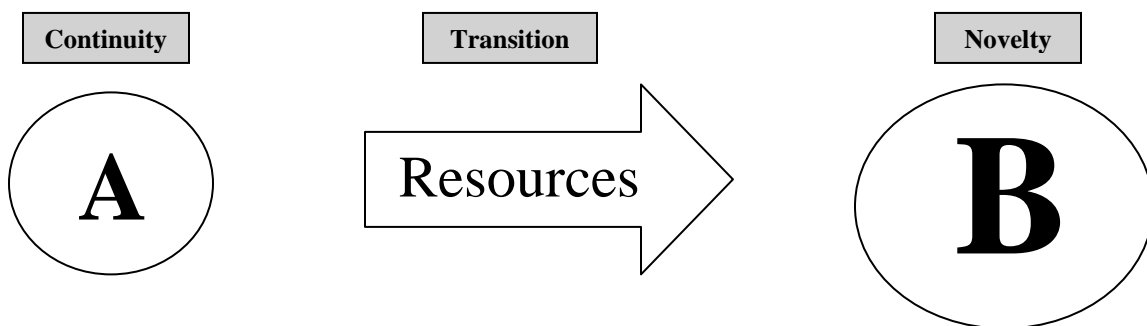
In attending to transition, change-brokers unearth ways in which new thinking and fresh ideas (novelty) are made tangible through changes that are experienced as positive movement toward an outcome or the preferred future with minimal disruption (threat to continuity).

The system is enlivened through a shared sens of enacting a “common script,” whereby everyone recognizes the positive reason to change, the desired state to be achieved, and the next few steps to be taken. This allows for healthy management of transition through:

- *A common vision, from which priorities are determined.*
- *Helpful feedback/measurement mechanisms on key success factors.*
- *Support for purposeful experimentation.*
- *Involvement strategies to promote a “common script.”*

~Appriative Inquiry Handbook

The A → B Change MAP



As seeing-together becomes the road to change it is good to keep in mind that all change – personal or organizational – follows a simple map moving from **State A** to **State B**.

WHERE THE CONGREGATION IS AT: Point A – Present Reality

The successful change-broker helps the congregation to see-together where they are currently at. Where is the church starting from in terms of attitude, values, purpose, skills, and resources?

For the purpose of collaborating for change, there will naturally be conversation about where the congregation is currently at. Some churches will not like being at **A** (it they did not there is no motivation to move to **B**). However, congregations might want to spend a large amount of time and energy in exploring **A**. The drive for this exploration is to find the culprit to blame for being at **A**. Blaming, while emotionally satisfying, never moves a church on to **B**. Blaming only leaves another with a sense of shame.

In the local congregation **Point A** carries a lot of weight. It is important to help the church celebrate what is good and valuable about **A**, even if **A** is imperfect. Some of the resources for moving to **B** are the things the church already values at **A**. **A is not an evil and dead place,**

but rather the platform from which the congregation is launching their new journey. Many of the resources for this journey already exist at **A**.

The wise change-broker will not participate in cursing **Point A**. The wise change-broker will help the congregation bless **A** so as to grow the best of **A** into a larger and more life giving **B**.

WHERE THE CONGREGATION IS GOING: Point B – Preferred Future

A quality change-broker helps the congregation see-together the place where they want to be. What is the church's destination, the church's ultimate outcome, the *Preferred Future* state? While change brokers are open to organizations altering plans, mapping changes should always focus toward reaching a destination, achieving an outcome.

Churches with goals are nervous shorts of organizations. They know outcomes attainment awaits them. They know that for them the outcome will be worth all the trials and tribulations entailed. However, never having attained this specific *Preferred Future* they are lost as to what actually awaits them. To motivate the church to outcome attainment and to keep them focused on **Point B** – their *Preferred Future* – **B** must be a world in which others want to belong. If **B** is not larger than **A** the church will not be motivated to undergo those changes necessary in order to reach **B**.

The Voyles asks these questions when discerning the *Preferred Future*.

- Is **B** positively stated?
- Is **B** a desired outcome and not just the elimination of an undesired state (*Toward or Away From*)?
- Is **B** specific? While the vision needs to be grand the steps need to be specific and achievable.
- How will the church know when the outcomes have been achieved?
- What makes **B** valuable? What are the reasons the church desires this outcome?
- Which of the church's values will the outcomes manifest?
- How will the outcomes help the church manifest their purpose?
- Are the church's purpose and values aligned with the outcomes?

As the congregation moves out on the journey for **A** to **B** and comes to understand some of the obstacles along the path they may begin to raise objections. The smart change-broker seeks to satisfy the objection and aid seeing-together by asking the congregation what values they feel are being violated by this particular path. By working to satisfy the objection we honor that part of the church which is having difficulty in attaining the *Preferred Future*.

WHAT THE CONGREGATION NEEDS TO JOURNEY FROM A TO B: Resources

Having chosen the preferred outcome, the process of creating change is about helping the congregation see-together the resources needed to journey from **A** to **B**. Resource needs vary from faith community to faith community and may include such tangibles as money or personnel, and intangibles as confidence or skills.

One of the basic dynamics of brokering change is clarifying goals in light of what is already valued followed by the identification of resources. The focus of collaborative work may be on naming and developing skills, resolving motivational issues, or even defining the purpose of the organization.

The skillful change-broker will help the congregation to discern and access the resources needed to achieve the outcomes. The change-broker will also need to help the congregation avoid the pitfall of lamentations – all the reasons the outcomes cannot be achieved. Resource-based decision making is a different path than the trail of indexing limitations of why an outcome cannot be reached.

The competent change-broker will keep the church's attention on the outcomes even as obstacles pop up. Success is keeping the church's focus on the preferred future and the necessary resources to achieve it rather than on the limitations of the congregation.

Reverse Engineering: Journeying Backwards from B to A

One way to discover and access resources is to use your imagination to plan backwards from the perspective of the goal having been accomplished. Take some time to imagine that you have actually achieved the goal and that your future dream is now your present reality. From the perspective of the future look back and “remember” the steps you took to achieve the goal. As you imagine each step you will become aware of the resources you needed to accomplish the step.

~Rob and Kim Voyle

The secret to discovering the necessary resources is in the seeing-together of what got the congregation from **A** to **B**: the “what” is the resource. Great change-brokers help congregations discover the resources they need.

CREATING THE FUTURE NOT BLAMING THE PAST

From the change-broker's perspective it does not matter why or how the congregation got to where they are (**A**). What matters most is that the congregation knows where they are at, the preferred future they want to reach, and what they need in order to reach that outcome. Change-brokers seek to open the future, not to blame the past.

The important note of this design is that persons want to be blessed and not told what to do. Appropriate discernment (seeing-together) at the appropriate time blesses and helps the church to discern what is life-giving.

*A common belief about people is that they don't want to change. We think people do want to change – but what they don't want is to be ripped off. If the change that is offered is not perceived as a blessing it will be resisted. For people to gladly journey to **B**, they need to know what they value at **A** will not be taken from them, and the final state **B** will be of more value than **A**.*

~ Rob & Kim Voyle

Joining

The purpose of joining is to establish a respectful, creative, and collaborative relationship with the church is working work “with” the church rather than working “on” the church. Working “on” results in the church feeling misunderstood, spiritually violated, and will inhibit the congregation from seeing-together.

Combining the insights of Transactional Analysis and the language of “I’m OK, You’re OK,” made popular by Eric Berne with the approach of Appreciative Inquiry, the Voyles have plotted four ways a change-broker may join with a church.



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I'M OK, YOU'RE NOT OK:

A large portion of social outreach has been offered from this perspective, often with disastrous results. Joining your congregation here keeps them down and dependent. “My way is better than your way.”

I'M NOT OK, YOU'RE NOT OK:

This is a common place for church leaders and churches to join. We know we have places that are “not OK.” Often we feel relieved to find others who we can share these places with. Yet, because the joining is made at a place of weakness, the relationship only reinforces the weakness.

I'M NOT OK, YOU'RE OK:

If I do not perceive myself as being worthy of your guidance I will not be able to tell you what I need. My sense of shame and unworthiness will cause me to feel exposed and make me want to hide. I will need to steal your guidance. But the guidance will not be life giving as it will create dependency and reinforce shame.

I'M OK, YOU'RE OK:

We care for one another, not because some are needy, or we are needy, or both are needy; we care because we recognize the unique worth and dignity of each other. We compassionately discover what is good, and join that good to create the foundation for a successful relationship.

Appropriate joining blesses and helps the church to see-together what is life-giving.

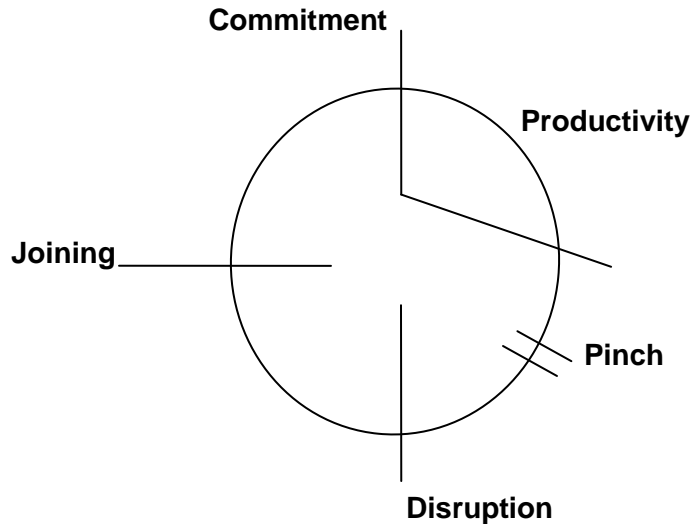
The Relationship Loop

One of the reasons why change raises anxiety may be found in how change is approached, how change is initiated, and how change is followed through on often tests the bonds of the relationship among congregants and between the congregation and the pastor.

More than likely a congregation’s mental picture of relationship resembles a stepladder. Carefully the rungs are negotiated one by one until the upper most rung is realized. A pastor is often deemed “good” by the smoothness and quickness she or he advances up the ladder. The problems with the ladder are twofold. First, the third rung causes most people to stumble as perfection eludes most if not all people. Second, the structure itself is unstable, and any “rocking” will cause the ladder to topple over.



Another mental picture which helps to create stability in the midst of change is that of the Relationship Loop. From the loop or wheel we gain a sense of continuing development, and valuing as one “processes” through a relationship.



PHASE 1: Joining

The relationship between a minister and a congregation begins – whether formally or informally – when the two join to pursue a common achievement or enrichment. Typically, the common achievement is spelled out in Letters of Call or other personnel documentation.

The expectations of this agreement to pursue a common achievement become the benchmarks by which the partnership is measured. Clarification of expectation is the primary undertaking of Phase 1. Normally it is during the search process that these expectations are raised by both the pastor-to-be and the calling congregation. At this point both parties are testing the relationship for its potential wealth and debts and establishing the expectations of the partnership.

PHASE 2: Commitment

Within the church this phase begins with the formal call or extension and acceptance of a position of ministry. In the Commitment Phase we seek to act on and make permanent the expectations worked out during the time of Joining.

Shallow commitments result in loose or weak connections for a partnership. Almost anything will pull the relationship apart. Strong commitments allow for flexibility in the relationship. Deeply committed Joinings are dynamic growing partnerships, able to make room for the unknown, the unexpected, and the change that is called for.

PHASE 3: Productivity

This is the “honeymoon” period between the pastor and the congregation. Both parties are living into the conscious expectations worked out during the time of Joining. Everyone is comfortable with the relationship; the desired results are being produced; conflicts are a minimum; communications are healthy and easy.

As the clergy-laity partnership moves into a time of productivity *hidden* or *unconscious* expectations begin to operate among the persons involved. Usually the end of the Productivity

Phase is signaled by the appearance of a “Pinch”. The Productivity Phase has ended when a person uses as much energy tolerating the Pinch as maintaining the partnership. Pinches are often the result of hidden, unconscious, and secret expectations never before expressed in the relationship. Pinches often manifest themselves during the time of change and transition.

PINCH

At the time of Joining much energy and thought is given to being explicit about what is expected of each partner involved and what the rewards of meeting those expectations will be. We commit to the partnership moving forward on our ability to meet these conscious and negotiated expectations.

Hidden and unconscious expectations are those that have not had an occasion to rise in the relationship. Often we are unaware that we carry these expectations until a particular circumstance occurs prompting significant change.

Hidden expectations usually arise when persons feel something foundational is being violated. Such remarks as “I didn’t know you felt that way,” or “I thought I knew you better” make us aware that we are dealing with unexpressed foundational expectations.

Now to add to our loop, imagine the very center as a wheel hub. The hub at the center of a bike, or wagon wheel, is the strength of the design. A spoke can be compromised and the wheel is still usable until repair can be made. If the hub breaks the wheel is immediately unusable. The hub is the strength of the design and supports the wheel in all that it is meant to do.

In the center of the Organization Wheel are the identity, ethical norms, emphasis, mission, and vision of the organization – in short the values, identity, and purpose that drive the congregation. It is these “intangibles” by which the church and its people are able to live out its mission in the world.

Hidden expectations tend to be strongly connected to the hub. One reason the expectations are hidden is that we often assume everyone shares the same outlook since we are all tied to the same hub.

The Pinch can be lived with for a long time. However, persons can only compromise their foundational expectations for so long. Ultimately the need to reclaim and assert the dynamics of the hub will lead to conflict and disruption.

PHASE 4: Disruption

As the Pinch developed we have moved around the loop to where something must be done. The relationship as it presently is can no longer be sustained. We are at the creative and can-be-healthy phase of disruption.

According to the Ladder Model of partnering this is the point where the ladder topples. In the life of congregations this is the time voices begin to be raised around the continuing employment of the pastor or the continuing leadership of a lay person.

Disruption offers four options to follow: termination, continual eruption, recommitment, renegotiation/rejoining.

Termination

The most appealing and popular response to disruption is termination. In the Ladder Model it is the standard response. This option is favored by persons with low level of tolerance for conflict. Organizations which use termination as the first option tend to experience high levels of turn over. Since relationships are always in danger of being ended, they remain weak.

The key discernment – Is this partnership dead? If either party in a relationship has no desire or hope for continuing and reconstructing the partnership then both should bless each other and part company with dignity

Continual Eruption

The Mount-Saint-Helen's-syndrome lives out in congregational systems which thrive on emotional crises. Blowups and eruptions are continuous; promoting a perpetual state of uproar. These eruptions can be a source of power for those who want others to cringe before them, or they can be substitutes for positive and genuine intimacy.

Persons accustomed to living in conflicted families will often create the same atmosphere in the church family. The eruptions are a way of testing the relationship to see if others care, or how far a person can push the relationship. Eruptions have little to do with the other persons in the partnership, and more to do with the one blowing up as a way of getting attention or manipulating people. Eruptions place the focus on personality as the dominate issue.

The key discernment – What is the truth behind the eruptions? Often blowups contain a kernel of reality. Address the reality if warranted, yet also help the person understand that an over-reaction has taken place.

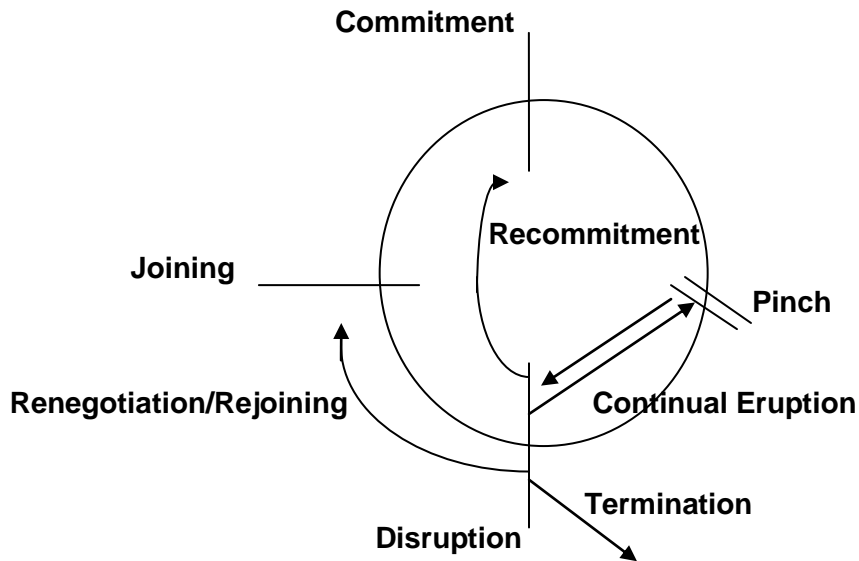
Recommitment

For people connected by Christ the most tempting option is to recommit, go back, and try harder. Recommitment calls upon persons to keep the relationship the way it has been. It asks people to continue to compromise their values for the sake of the partnership. It demands that persons keep suppressing their negative feelings while increasing their determination to "make it work."

"This option has one outstanding feature... persons will invariably move from the commitment stage back to the disruption stage in one half the time it took the first time" (Ernest White). Why? The persons have already experienced the unworkable expectations they hold. When unmet expectations reappear discouragement and disgruntleness sets in more quickly.

The key discernment – Is this the "kiss and make up" approach? When there is no fundamental change around the impasse the hidden expectations remain unfulfilled.

The three preceding options are exercised from the point of overcoming objections instead of satisfying them in order to resolve the issue raised by the dynamic of change.



Renegotiation/Rejoining

While renegotiation, or rejoining, offers the most fruitful option when disruption occurs, it is also the most difficult. “In renegotiation, parties in the relationship agree to reconstruct their relationship. They practically start over except that they now have experience in the relationship. Both parties examine and express their expectations” (Ernest White).

Persons surface and negotiate the hidden, unconscious, and unexpressed expectations which led to the conflict. Persons come to understand and honor the values which all parties bring to the partnership. At this point, the parties involved must say and hear, “We are not the same as when this relationship began. We are different persons and need a different partnership.”

The first key discernment – Honesty, is everyone one involved speaking their truth to the conflict? *The second key discernment* – What is the wisdom of the violated domain? (see below)

When radically valuing another we find the energy and inclination to renegotiate and rejoin with those we are experiencing the transition with. This commitment proves invaluable to the capable change-broker who understands that conflict is not the end of the relationship, but the beginning of a deeper phase of partnership. The Greek Scriptures name this type of mutual searching and seeing-together “reconciliation.”

The Unfolding Spiral of Life

According to the Voyles, “Life cannot unfold and flow from the Source of Life in generative ways if there are disconnects between the organically-related domains.” As we seek collaboration and seeing-together we need to confirm that what we do in one domain on the unfolding Spiral of Life aligns and is congruent with the other domains. Without this alignment and congruency life will not flow or ever be complete.



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THE SPIRAL AND THE DYNAMICS OF CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION

When change is brokered in on domain, changes will naturally and almost automatically occur in the dynamics further out from the Source of Life. For example if a congregation experiences a change in their sense of purpose, the congregation will experience change in their sense of identity, which will then impact their values, which should lead to transitions in the remaining domains.

This domino effect, however, does not work in reverse. A change in the congregation's environment will not result in a change in their sense of identity. A transition in a domain further out from the Source of Life will not automatically lead to changes in the domains closer to the Source of Life.

Change-brokers must discern where transformation is waiting to happen and seek to effect transition in the appropriate domain so the transformation sought in the succeeding domains can take place.

THE SPIRAL AND RESOLVING CONFLICTS

As congregations experience transitions and changes related to new and emergent realities they are likely to experience conflict between or within elements of a domain. The resolution of the discord cannot occur in the conflicted domain itself. Rather resolution must be sought at the level of a domain closer to the Source of Life where there still exists a point of common agreement. Say a congregation is in conflict over pastoral expectations they would need to go to the domain of values to find a common foundation from which to resolve the conflict. If they

cannot find a point of agreement at values, then they would need to find a common point of agreement in the domain of identity, and so on till the point of agreement can be located.

Where there is fundamental disagreement over the purpose of the church or organization, no resolution will be possible to conflicts occurring in the other domains. At these times it is probably best for people to go their separate ways. Alternatively they could stop their conflicted conversation and sit in silence with each other until they can hear the other person's heart beats irrepressibly within them despite their differences and without regard for the rightness of wrongness of their thinking and beliefs.

~Robert and Kim Voyle

THE SPIRAL AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Each domain raises up unique issues which call upon particular resources to manage the elements found in them. Each resource calls upon a different leadership skill.

Environment

Issue: What environmental factors or physical and social resources are needed?

Leadership Skill: Consulting and advising by either the pastor or outside consultant with expertise in the new or emergent reality.

Skills

Issue: What new skills or improved skills are needed to enhance the ministry of the congregation?

Leadership Skill: Training people to perform a specific duty, or teaching people to strategize and plan skills for new and emergent realities, or modeling behavioral competencies

Expectations

Issue: What is needed to increase the expectation of success?

Leadership Skill: Imagineering and inspiring people to discover their own success and applying that success to the new and emergent realities.

Values

Issue: What values must come with the congregation from **A** to **B**?

Leadership Skill: Clarifying and influencing beliefs and values, and aligning environment and skills with values.

Identity

Issue: Who is the congregation and what role does it play in the life of the broader community?

Leadership Skill: Sponsoring and blessing self-identification.

Purpose

Issue: What is the congregation's God given purpose for being?

Leadership Skill: Enabling the congregation to awaken to their unique being and becoming in God's vision for creation.

Changing Limiting Beliefs

Brokering change in a religious setting invites the collaboration into territory formed around a complexity of compromises, compacts, and governance. Even though seeing-together it is still easy for a collaboration to be stymied by a “limiting belief” which hinders the congregation from embodying the *Preferred Future*.

The following is a process to help a congregation crystallize the new belief they are seeking to live into. When used in a group setting the goal is to help those gathered to perceive the benefits of the new belief, which in turn motivates the embodying process.

Identify the limiting belief.

Write it down in precise words. Once it is identified by words, the belief has lost half of its power, it is vulnerable. Find out the positive intention of this belief. What does it achieve in the life of your congregation, or for you that is positive, despite the fact that it is limiting in a number of ways?

Ask yourself/your congregation what they would rather believe.

- It should be stated in positive “toward” language.
- It should be open to feedback and able to be tested against experience.
- It should be “ecological” (i.e. it does not violate your values or harm other people).
- It should fulfill the same positive intention as the old belief.

Write down this new belief.

The new belief should be carefully phrased so it speaks to self/congregational development. It should be worded in the present tense as if it is occurring now.

Sometime a limiting belief is harder to break free of, in these occasions the role of doubt and openness may need to be cultivated.

Ask “What is it like to doubt a belief?”

Recall a time when you/the congregation doubted a former belief.

Ask yourself/the congregation to think about their old limiting belief while in this state of doubt.

Start to undermine the limiting belief by asking them:

- What are the drawbacks to this old belief?
- Does it really fit in with what is important to you/us?
- Has there ever been a time when the belief didn’t bear out?
- What was it like to believe this old belief?

At this point break this train of thought with a distraction: stand up, move around, tell a totally unrelated joke, etc. Then return to the conversation by asking: What is it like to be open to belief?

Ask yourself/the congregation to think of a time when they were open to a new belief.

Thinking about the new belief, ask these questions.

- How does it feel?
- How is it a better choice than the old belief?

How well does it meet the positive intention of the old belief?

- What would it be like to believe this?
- What difference would it make?
- What would you do that you cannot do currently?
- What would you stop doing that you currently do?

Ask yourself/the congregation to evaluate both the old and new beliefs.

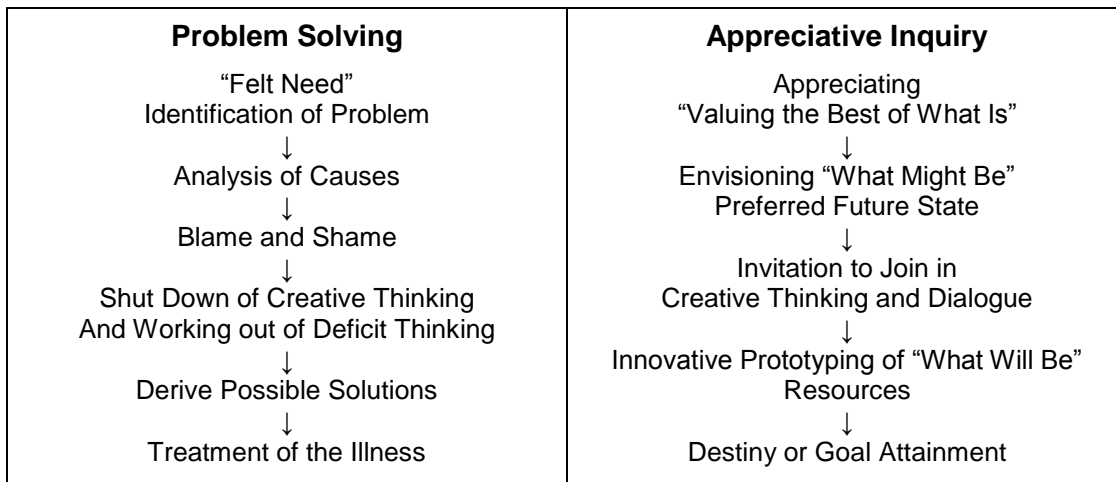
- Do they need to refine the new belief?
- Are there any “yes, buts”?
- How is the new belief more useful than the old belief?
- Ask yourself/the congregation to move the old belief to a “Museum of Old Beliefs” – where it is available, should it be needed.
- ACTION! What will you/the congregation do differently as a result of the new belief? Give yourself/them a task immediately, based upon this new belief being true for them now.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI)

What I enjoy about AI is that the process is designed with the goal of helping a group to see-together and to embody their *Preferred Future* in ways that are invitational. The heart of AI is storytelling so that which emerges is truly organic to the congregation and not something imposed from the outside.

Appreciative Inquiry is a strengths-based organizational change model which focuses on the positive qualities already existing in an organization and allows the **A to B** map to be trodden purposefully and intentionally. “Appreciate” means to value or admire highly; to recognize with gratitude. “Inquiry” means to search into, investigate; to seek for information by questioning. Put simply AI is the study of what works well. ***In religious terms, AI is the discernment (seeing-together) of where God is already at work in your congregation and how you might join that work.***

Traditionally we work with a deficit-based approach to problem solving of which the underlying assumption is that congregations are problems to be worked on. From the perspective of the strengths-based appreciative approach congregations are mysteries that should be embraced as centers of infinite imagination, infinite capacity, and infinite potential; that is living organisms.



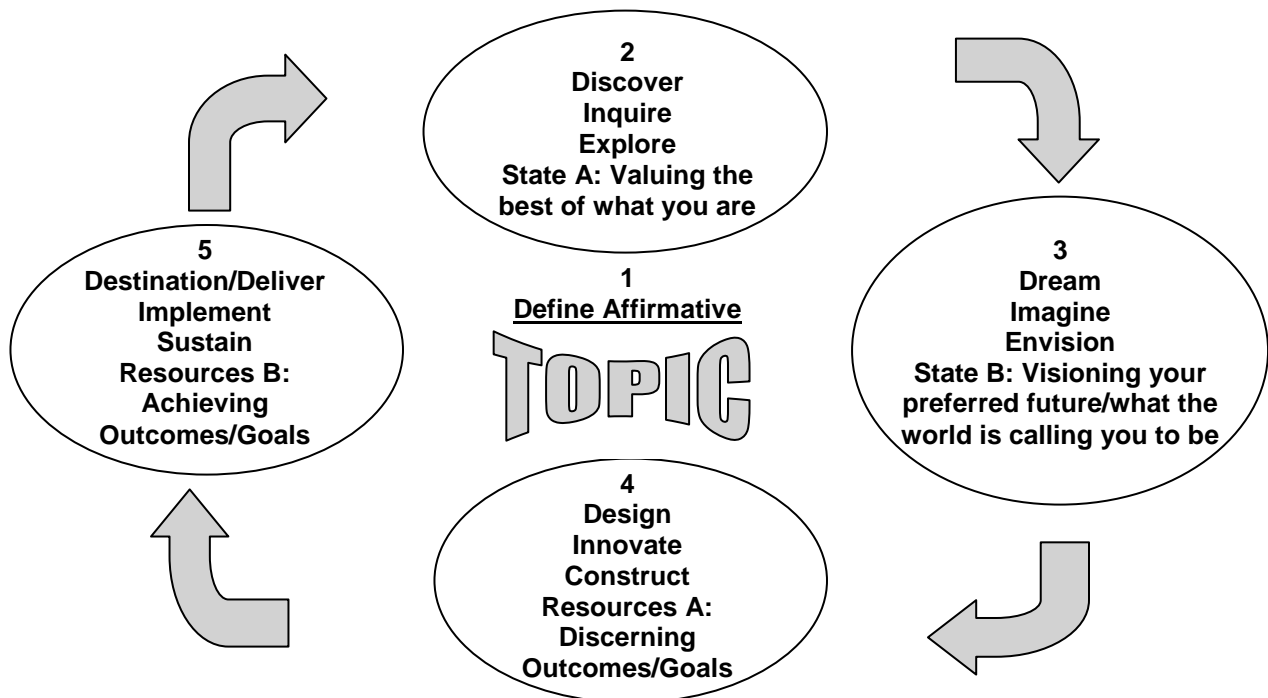
Appreciative Inquiry starts with the assumption that how we begin, how we first approach a topic - where we place our focus – will determine whether we grow more of what is working (*Toward*) or grow more of the problem (*Away From*). For example many fine organizations have given themselves to alleviating world poverty. Yet it is impossible to grow less poverty – what does it mean to have less of a negative? You can, however, grow economic bases and cottage industries. You can grow educational systems and medical care.

People are embolden when they are afforded the time to speak about their triumphs and victories. People shrink when they feel a microscope has been placed upon them to examine their weaknesses and failures. AI by placing the focus on strengths and capabilities allows congregations to tap into their own wisdom born of success and achievement. By providing for the celebration of what has been accomplished, not only does AI allow for strengths to be articulated and carried forward, but AI also allows for sheer joy to be turned into the positive energy that will carry the group through planning implementation and action.

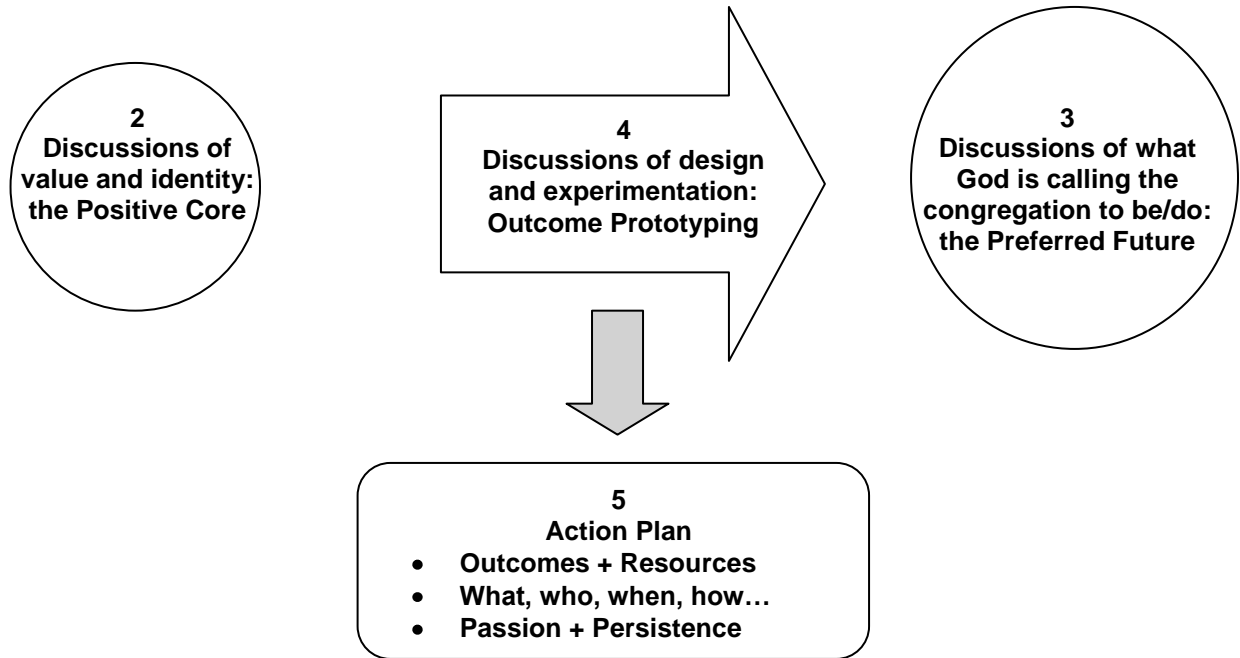
By employing generative inquiries which ask for people to share their stories with one another, AI naturally promotes collaboration: as people hear one another’s stories and begin to respond to them – first in small groups and then later in large groups – the magic of seeing-together occurs. Once a group begins to see-together the tendency is for even more collaborative sharing to take place.

You as a change-broker will want to ensure that the response being elicited is at the level of *Presencing*, as this is the level of substantive and sustainable transformation.

Five-D Appreciative Inquiry Cycle



THE FIVE PHASE AI MODEL OVERLAYED ON THE A → B CHANGE MAP*



*This schematic developed by Ed Leidel for the VIVA church renewal process

Emergent Reality

This guide opened with insights about substantive transformation by Otto Scharmer. Hopefully you have gained a sense of what it means to be a change-broker who understands times of transition as a collaboration of people seeing-together.

I would like to return to one more insight from Scharmer here at the end. It is his take on an axiom of Martin Heidegger. “Reality is not a ‘thing’ but a process of coming into being.” In other words, reality is what emerges between the past and the future.

Congregations in transition are suspended between two worlds the old one passing away governed by the dynamics of anti-emergence and destruction, and the new emerging world governed by dynamics of emergence and collective creativity. As change-brokers you help your congregation see-together their “turning point” between these two worlds. When successful you will hear your congregation declaring in the mode of Dag Hammarskjöld:

*For all that has been – Thanks!
To all that shall be - Yes!*

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