

## **Stamp Cashing**

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(Revised: 25. July 2002 by Clinton Callahan)

### **FORMAT:**

Whole group exercise. From 2-30 people.  
Duration: Requires about 90 minutes.

### **PURPOSE:**

Any organization will develop emotional psychic residue over time that begins to interfere with smooth communications and operations of the organization towards fulfilling its purpose. The STAMP CASHING process uses feedback in a unique and safe way to efficiently clean away the residue. Improvement in teamwork is noticed immediately.

Liberates attention and energy from potential Low Dramas before they happen. Establishes new beginnings and a new foundation for effectiveness within an organization. Heals incomplete communications and allows people to get into the present.

### **SETUP:**

Whole group sits in one big circle. Trainer sits in the circle also.

### **Precautions:**

Make certain that all power-players, invisibles and troublemakers are present to participate in the process. The Trainer is also a participant, even if he or she is not a member of the organization. If people Cash Stamps about the Trainer, it indicates a skilled Trainer.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Trainer says, "It used to be that if you shopped at certain grocery stores, for every 10 Euros of value that you purchased you would receive one "savings stamp." The idea was that you could collect your stamps by gluing them into a little book. People would get quite fanatic about saving these stamps. When you were ready, you could cash in your stamps for various prizes – the more stamps you had, the bigger the prizes."

"We still save Stamps. Only now the Stamps are personal. When something happens with someone and we do not talk with him or her about it, what we do is put a Stamp in our book about them. In our book we have a different page for each person. Whenever we feel like we have enough Stamps about someone, we Cash them in for the big "prize." We use our Stamps to prove that we are right and they are wrong, or to prove that we are victims and have been betrayed by them, or that they are stupid, or that we are superior. Any number of prizes await a good Stamp collector. In this

process we are going to Cash in our Stamps with each other in a safe way without collecting our usual prizes. You might begin liking these results better.”

### **INSTRUCTIONS / PROCEDURE:**

Trainer says, “The STAMP CASHING process works because of its very precise form. My job here is to ensure that we use this form. I will demonstrate the form we will use.” Trainer then chooses someone in the circle to demonstrate with. It is best to choose someone in a power position with whom the Trainer could be expected to have a Stamp. Choosing a “big” person to Cash Stamps with grants permission for everyone else to Cash Stamps with the “big” people too.

For example, the Trainer might say to the Vice President, “Norman, I have a Stamp about you. I feel angry (explain that here the word could be any one of the four feelings: angry, sad, glad, or scared) that last week you said you would arrange the logistics for this meeting and you delayed and then did a half-assed job with it and it turned into confusion.”

Trainer says, “Now this is what the other person says: ‘What I hear you say is,’ and then they repeat back what they heard you say. Go ahead Norman.”

Suppose Norman says, “What I heard you say is that I did not handle the logistics well enough for you.”

Trainer says, “In this case I see that Norman did not hear what I said. So I say, ‘No, that is not what I said. What I said is: I feel angry that last week you promised me that you would take care of the logistics with elegance and precision and you did not keep your promise. It turned into confusion for many people.’”

The Trainer looks expectantly at Norman, who says, “What I heard you say is that you feel angry about me not keeping my promise to handle the logistics for this meeting well, and that as a result many people got confused and you did not feel supported.”

The Trainer says, “Clearly this time Norman heard what I said, and so I say, ‘Thank you.’ That is the complete form.

We go one at a time. Anyone can speak in any order to anyone else. It will make a real difference for this organization if you take advantage of this opportunity to communicate by being ruthlessly honest about what you say. Are there any questions?”

### **Precautions:**

Be careful that perfectionists do not neurotically cycle through the repeating process too many times, or that people do not battle back and forth for revenge. Be careful that the Cashier does not keep adding new Stamps to the process. Ask them to use a separate Cashing for each Stamp. Try to get everyone to Cash at least one Stamp during the process.

**DEBRIEF:** (10 minutes)

STAMP CASHING usually follows a “bell curve” of intensity, like popping popcorn. It starts off slowly, picks up momentum to a sustained peak, then after awhile begins to diminish. When the process is 25% down from peak Trainer may want to ask the following question: “How many people are getting what is really going on here? Who can see what is the true communication behind each Stamp?” As people comment, Trainer keeps agreeing and coaching answers until it lands in the space that the only reason a person has a Stamp with someone is because they care about them. The true message behind every Stamp is: “I love you.” This should utterly reorder the space. Let people go on a little while longer so that they can see that this is true. Then take a break.