

Leadership-Circle Shift-Support Initiation

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(Revised: 28. June 2016 by Clinton Callahan)

(NOTE: Possibility Management is open code thoughtware. The copyleft notice affirms that this material cannot be copyrighted. The use limit is to assure that if an unqualified person tries to deliver this initiation and runs into problems, they alone are responsible. This is a powerful initiatory process that tends to catalyze expansion in personal consciousness. It needs to be delivered within a specifically held context by a person with a specific skill level, quality of consciousness, and intention.)

FORMAT:

This is a whole group sharing process, a nonlinear conversation between, for want of a better term, the *leadership circle*, and the rest of the people in the team or group. This conversation can take from 1 to 2 hours, and it should definitely not be provoked to come to an end before it is ready to.

PURPOSE:

If an organization or gameworld is to be alive as an organism, responding to the needs and pressures both from within its membership and from rapidly changing external circumstances, the way it runs itself will be evolving. Humans in groups want to understand their group, and there for do 2 things without thinking about it much. We project unconscious expectations onto those who are directed to spacehold and navigate the gameworld that they do what we want and not what we don't want, and we try to hold the organization solid and unchanging so we think that we understand how it is. Neither of these are very helpful, but they are difficult to stop, so the best thing to do is to periodically revisit these concerns in a safely held space and let the projections fall away and let the organizational structure reinvent itself so it can re-enter the present. The *Leadership-Circle Shift-Support Initiation* accomplishes both of these thing marvelously.

SETUP:

Chairs should be set up into a circle facing inwards. If the conversation is between one person and the whole group then that person can remain seated in the big circle. If the conversation is between a number of people and the group, the leadership circle should be set up as a smaller circle facing inwards in the center of the bigger circle. Tissue, towels and buckets should be distributed around both circles.

INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND:

After the second time running this process I decided it would probably be useful in other groups and I decided to write it up. The first time I delivered this process was in a spontaneous private session with about 25 participants from the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) for the evolving role (from European to more global activities) of Kosha Anja Joubert, recently president of GEN in December 2014 during the New Story Summit at Findhorn. The second time was for the evolving leadership circle at the nanonation ecovillage of Zegg near Berlin in Germany with about 45 participants during their June 2016 Intensive Time. Both times the results were satisfying to an unprecedented degree,

somehow dissolving huge insoluble conflicts before they could even take root, and moving the organizations to new level of connectedness and trust. The notes in this write-up come mostly from the more recent process at Zegg.

FOUNDER'S SYNDROME:

The next-culture researcher Diana Leafe Christian has, through years of lovingly working with communities, identified a profound and sticky problem faced by many group projects. She has named it *Founder's Syndrome*. It goes like this. Successful community projects (nanonations) are typically founded by a core group of 3 strong alpha-leader activists. This tiny team is able to pull people and resources together to densify a project so it crystallizes into existence and begins as a real project. Problems are valiantly faced, interested participants are gathered, systems are established, websites are programmed, land is purchased, crops are planted, legal structures are filed with local authorities and banks, a newsletter is regularly sent out to a growing mailing list, and work teams are formed and refined until they work. Without the focused energy and close-knit, loving, courageous teamwork of these 3 strong individuals the nanonation could not be born.

Then, after about a year of rapid design iterations, when things start to stabilize, it is crucial that these 3 founders leave behind their pioneering role and join the ordinary ranks of the community members so that group intelligence can mature and the community can learn to navigate itself.

However, this transition from extraordinary to ordinary is extremely difficult – nearly impossible – for the alpha-leader types. It can feel to them like dying.

The community needs to be strongly alert to the necessity of facilitating this transition or else the founders will unconsciously manipulate the entire further evolution from clandestine alpha-leadership roles and this will block new people from joining and eventually destroy the project, or at least degrade it from a community to a patriarchy or a monarchy by secretly retaining the strict hierarchy in decision making even if, for example, 6 step consensus decision making has been adopted. Consensus is completely manipulatable by the way decision questions are formulated, especially if the founders, or people already accepted as permanent members, retain any kind of veto position. For example: *“Shall we cut the tree down because it makes shade over the new solar panels on the roof?”* One veto leaves the tree standing. Versus: *“Shall we leave the tree standing?”* One veto gets the tree cut down.

In short, this Leadership Circle Shift process that you are navigating now may be part of the healing process that occurs as founders leave behind Founder's Syndrome and serve the community in some other more ordinary function. This is extremely important work for the ongoing health of the project.

CONTEXT SETTING:

Circular power structures have a very different functionality from hierarchical or pyramid power structures. Although you might be an edgeworker, most of your practical experience has probably derived from working in (or over, under, around, and through) the hierarchies of modern culture's capitalist patriarchal empire. Experience with next-culture toroidal, spiral, and galactical power structure comes from immediate experimentation, in other words, from trial and error. Finding anything that works is extremely useful for all next-

culture bridge builders and should, in my humble opinion, be spread as far and as wide and as quickly as possible. Leadership Circle Shift Initiation is one of these little successes.

INSTRUCTIONS / PROCEDURE:

As mentioned already, if the theme revolves around one person's role evolving have the person sit in a circle with everyone else. If the issues at hand revolve around a shift into or out of a so-called "leadership circle", then the affected people should sit in a smaller circle located in the middle of the outer circle. Try to have as many stakeholders as possible at this meeting. It is so important to get everyone's input during this process, and to be sure they see and experience what happens first hand.

(IMPORTANT NOTE: There are 2 PHASES in this process. Do NOT take a break between PHASE 1 and PHASE 2. Keep the flow going and do one phase directly after the other.)

PHASE 1: (NOTE 1: Whether a single person or an entire inner circle, this process is the same. It just takes longer with more people in the inner circle because they all need to speak and they all need to receive their personal communications from the outer circle.) (NOTE 2: If it is only one leadership person ask the whole circle to close their eyes. If there is a leadership circle, ask only the leadership circle to close their eyes. The outer circle keeps their eyes open.)

- ☺ Please click your Clicker and get your center.
- ☺ Now click your Clicker again and make your grounding cord to the center of the Earth.
- ☺ I will count to 3. At the count of 3 please say out-loud the color of your grounding cord. 1. 2. 3.
- ☺ Click your Clicker again and make your bubble of personal space.
- ☺ Now please click your Clicker again and let us all make the yellow framed energetic work space that we are all working in together today.
- ☺ Thank you.
- ☺ In this safe space, the outer circle of members are going to be profoundly listening in all 4 of their bodies.
- ☺ I ask the inner circle to please keep your eyes closed, and one after the other reach deep inside and be radically honest to report how it is for you right now with regards to the transitions happening in your role in the leadership circle. I am asking you to let your heart speak from its core. I am also asking you to say what you need in this transition time. Please be as complete and specific as you can. Please put your hand up if you would like to begin?
- ☺ Thank you. We will start with _____. (IMPORTANT HINT: Try to make sure this first speaker is not the main person concerned in this transition process. Also – and this is important – do not let the main person be the last to speak. Choose the speaker and go around in a circle with the main person speaking somewhere in the middle of the sharing.
- ☺ (IMPORTANT NOTE: It may be necessary for you as the spaceholder to coach the speakers several times to let their heart speak. They are usually so well defended and so expert at letting their intellect speak that getting their heart to reveal its innermost feelings may take several tries. If they are not feeling and expressing their fears, sadness, and frustrations (anger) they are not getting this process, and the process will be a waste of time. The outer circle needs to feel their authentic feelings and emotions about what has been, is, and will be going on.)
- ☺ After each of the inner circle has had time to share their authentic concerns, in particular what they need in this transition process, ask: *"Would any of you like to add or change anything you said?"* Usually there are significant additions to their

sharing now that the sharing has had time to deepen and is being listened to by the outer circle.

After the second round of sharing from the inner circle it is time for the outer circle to speak and the inner circle to listen, still keeping their eyes closed so the communications can go in past their minds. This is the end of PHASE 1 and the beginning of PHASE 2.

PHASE 2: (NOTE: It will be valuable to have a Scribe ready write onto a flip-chart paper the various individual and team commitments that are made in Phase 2 of this process.)

(NOTE: The inner circle keeps their eyes closed also during PHASE 2 of this process. With their eyes open there is automatically too much thinking and then communications do not land in all 4 of their bodies but only in the mind and both speakers and listeners are not touched or moved into greater connection.)

- ☺ The instructions for the outer circle are as follows: *“Now it is the outer circle’s time to share. Please repeat back what you have heard these people say.*
- ☺ *Please be clear and as specific as you can.*
- ☺ *Please remember the feelings they have shared and repeat them back also.*
- ☺ *Please also communicate whatever you are committed to provide or to do that addresses each person’s stated needs.*
- ☺ *The Scribe will document your commitments on the flip-chart paper. Please be responsible to make sure the Scribe writes down what you are committing to and also your name.*
- ☺ *In your commitments please start your sentences with: “I am committed to...” or “I am ready to...” or “I will...” Any questions?*
- ☺ *Please begin.”*

(NOTE: PHASE 2 continues until anyone who wishes to speak in the outer circle has spoken. It is up to you as spaceholder to make sure that communications are clear and complete, but that this does not degrade into an ordinary discussion.)

(IMPORTANT NOTE: There may be a space that arises in the middle of this conversation where resolutions or liquid states arise. Hold space for these elements. This is the nonlinear part that is so important and basically magical. Things are completed. Healings happen for long open wounds. New things are started that bring inspiration and excitement back to life in the organism. Make space for all this. If you hear any hint of these things, bring people’s attention to them by perhaps asking people to repeat what they said so all hear it. These are powerful transition moments, and perhaps even historically important moments in the life of the project. Let them be this big. **DO NOT MINIMIZE THESE TRANSITIONS** with jokes or small talk. Navigate the spaces with respect and big picture intelligence. These developments can positively influence the morphogenetic field of the human race and create possibilities that other projects can more easily follow. Yes, indeed they can.)

COMPLETION AND WRAP UP:

When the inner and outer circles have spoken and listened, make one last check to see if anyone still needs to say anything important. *“Is there anything else that needs to be said about this right now?”* Again, do not let the space be destroyed by jokes or distractions. If that is all, then ask the inner circle to still keep their eyes closed, and ask everyone to please take a deep breath.

Then ask everyone to please carefully stand up. Motion to the outer circle to remove the inner circle’s chairs, and also tell the inner circle that you have moved their chairs away so

they do not try to sit down. Then motion to the outer circle to come forward and gently but physically mash into the inner circle with hands on shoulders or a full group hug, whatever they feel comfortable with. Let this go on for a long enough time that the sensations of physical bonding can settle into the group.

Then ask the inner circle people to ever-so-slowly open their eyes and let it in. An entirely new level of connecting and felt-mutual-support can happen with the added eye contact. At the right moment you can speak this strong declaration: "*We are one team.*" Then take a break. (IMPORTANT NOTE: Stay present and attentive as the break begins in case anyone in a liquid state needs to come talk with you.)