

SPARK 001

DISTINCTION: You have a Box.

NOTES: Your 'Box' is your personal construct of reality. It is how you understand and interact with the world. You may call it a 'worldview,' a 'paradigm,' a 'belief system,' a 'psychological defense mechanism,' a 'survival strategy,' your 'comfort zone,' your 'ego,' or your 'personality,' but for the purposes of this conversation we will call it your Box.

The Box is woven together out of beliefs, stories, assumptions, expectations, reasons, opinions, preferences, attitudes, decisions, rules, conclusions, ideas and models. The Box answers for you the questions: "*Who am I?*" "*Who are those other people?*" And, "*What do I do in a place like this with people like them?*" The Box gives you an identity, which is a story about who you are that you can tell yourself and others.

Your Box is a fabrication of your own imagination. It is your finest and favorite artistic creation. You did not inherit your Box from your parents (although you may choose to copy some components from your parents), nor was your Box formed as a result of incidents or circumstances (although you may want to put the blame for how you are on your environment). You made your Box, one bit of thoughtware at a time.

Since the interior of your Box is more familiar to you than your living room – someone could move things around in your living room without you knowing it, but this could never happen in your box – your Box becomes indistinct. You forget the Box is there like fish forget the water in their fishbowl. You live in the soft, sweet, 'marshmallow zone' at the center of your Box because Box edges tend to be uncomfortable. You surround yourself with 'Box safe' people, work a 'Box safe' job, and find a 'Box safe' partner. This allows you to live in the illusion that there is no Box. (So sly are the Box's own defenses.)

The only Box that is invisible to you is your own. Everyone else's Box you can easily see. Everyone else can also see your Box. Some people's Boxes are congruent to your Box some of the time. You call these people your friends.

EXPERIMENT: Imagine that the room you are sitting in right now is your Box. Notice what you have put into your room that makes you feel comfortable and safe, that helps you to identify yourself as you (photos, mementos, favorite books, meaningful objects, inspirational art, and so on). Write these things down in your *Beep! Book* in a list called *Things That Make Me Feel Like Me*.

Then spend five minutes identifying and listing some of the structural components of your Box. You can do this by answering these questions: What do I like? What do I dislike? What makes me happy? What makes me angry? Write these in a list called *What My Box Is Made Of*.

After identifying the limits of your Box, imagine how big your Box is compared to the rest of the world. Which is bigger? Is your Box intended to keep the world out, or you in?

The moment you have the experience that your Box exists, you take on a new perspective. You get a glimpse of your Box from its exterior. This (shocking) new view permits you to give your Box a name: *The Box*. You can only call your Box a *Box* if you see it from the outside.

The insight that something is possible besides what is permitted by your Box can cause a significant change in your self-experience. It can shift the aim of your Box from defending your status quo to expanding your status quo. By experimenting with expansive intentions you can identify and question whatever keeps you locked into obeying the habits, stories, viewpoints, and rules of your Box. This is when you discover that indeed, your Box can expand!

As your Box expands you gain access to new ways of working with people and with situations because you see that it is the people (and their Boxes...) who create the situations! You can give your Box new jobs to do to help you transform what is possible.

Since your Box knows best how your Box works, it understands how other people work, because people mostly behave according to the dictates of their Box.

The study of the principles of how Boxes work is called Box Technology.

Spend a few minutes each day this week noticing in detail and appreciating the fascinating qualities of the Boxes that other people have created for themselves. In particular, notice the ways your Box reacts to their Box.

From one Box to another,

Clinton