



Dalar International Consultancy
...providing a holistic approach to business success

Birgitt Williams Biography



Birgitt Williams is an international management and organizational change consultant, keynote speaker and executive coach. Her business focus is to create inspiring work environments that are highly effective in achieving their purpose and fulfilling their vision. Birgitt provides a holistic approach to business success that works with the full potential of both tangible and intangible assets in the organization. She assists the organization recreate a foundation for optimal performance by finding health and balance in the organization and in the individual engaging the whole person at work including mind, body, spirit, and emotions. When health and balance in the organization and the individual is attended to, the full potential of the organization to get its work done has its greatest chance for success. Birgitt refers to these high performing inspired organizations as Conscious Open Space Organizations. Indeed, Birgitt is the creator of the concept of the Conscious Open Space Organization and is a true pioneer in this work in the world.

As a management and organizational change consultant Birgitt is a mentor, coach, facilitator, teacher, healer and workshop leader. She works with leaders and organizations to develop consciousness about working with Spirit, to achieve amazing tangible results. She works using 'Socratic questions' in her mentoring and teaching roles enabling executives to find the answers, often from deep within themselves and their organizations. Birgitt has international acclaim as a large group methods facilitator specializing in the methods Open Space Technology, Appreciative Inquiry, Word Café and Real Time Strategic Change. This specialty in large group methods is significant in her success as an organizational change consultant, in which she assists organizations to achieve the change they desire and then to sustain and grow from the new state. Through her work as facilitator and consultant, organizations find the answers for their challenges and opportunities, usually from deep within themselves, accessing inner wisdom and resources that they had not previously been conscious of. She teaches this work to consultants and leaders throughout the world.

Birgitt believes that individuals and organizations are whole, that they have within them the blueprint for their own perfect health. This worldview assumes strength rather than weakness or deficit thinking about individuals and organizations. When businesses and individuals are approached on the basis of their strengths, conditions are fostered for them to flourish. What is focused on increases and thus strengths increase.

Birgitt is co-founder and president of Dalar International Consultancy and a partner in New Health Works and Bright Future Holdings LLC. She and Ward Williams are life partners and business partners, and have their home base in Raleigh, North Carolina, USA. Birgitt has worked across Canada, Australia, the United States of America, Europe, Scandinavia, the

United Kingdom, and Russia with numerous individuals and organizations. With her partner Ward Williams, she developed the Genuine Contact program, a holistic approach to success in business and all types of organizations, that is now taught in a number of countries by Birgitt, Ward, and certified workshop leaders in their program. Birgitt prepared for this work for over three decades including her undergraduate and graduate level studies in psychology in Canada, and in learning intensives in Canada and the USA. She has a number of published articles and workbooks and has been cited in a number of books.

Birgitt is committed to working with leaders and organizations who want to work in a way that honors and respects all of creation and our Creator, leaving a legacy that our children and their children will benefit from and be proud of, while simultaneously achieving exceptional performance and results in their organizations. She teaches leaders and organizations how to work with constructive rather than destructive use of energy for the benefit of themselves, their businesses, others, and all of Creation.

Birgitt's consulting work is informed by her education, her life experiences including being a wife, mother to four children and step mother to four, a mother-in-law, a daughter and a grandmother. She maintains that raising her children taught her more about consulting work than all of her formal schooling did. She also maintains that she learned more about individual and organizational change, transformation, and transition from the healing arts than she did from her formal education in psychology and organizational behavior. Birgitt knew at the age of twenty-one that she wanted to be a consultant, working with systems. This awareness came to her during early days in her first job after university, when she worked in a child welfare agency. She discovered that families who wished to better themselves and do right by their children were frequently prevented from doing so by the systems around them. This was in the days before 'systems theory' was even talked about but Birgitt made a commitment that she would become a consultant and work with systems as her life's work. She spent the next two decades preparing for this work including taking post graduate work in a pilot program of Clinical Behavioral Sciences that taught her about individual, couples, family, and organizational behavior, what interventions worked, what didn't and why. During her two decades of preparation, she also took a number of intensives to learn about story telling and the power of stories, about various large group intervention methods and critical mass theory for organizations, and she studied a number of modalities in the healing arts, achieving mastery in some. But Birgitt did not want to be a consultant until she had the opportunity to lead an organization and to experience for herself whether all that she had learned about development, transformation, transition, and sustainability really worked when one was responsible and accountable for the performance of an organization. At the age of thirty-one, she had the good fortune to become the Chief Executive Officer of a multi-service social and health service organization. Her story about what she learned during that experience, and the development of the first intentional Conscious Open Space Organization is at <http://www.dalarinternational.com/articles/mystory.html>

In reading the article, you will note that all was not smooth sailing but Birgitt eventually found her way. This period honed Birgitt's knowledge and skills from a senior leadership position which has greatly and deeply enhanced what she brings to leaders, executives, and organizations in her consulting work. This period in her life more than any other also made Birgitt passionate about assisting women in leadership positions to explore and learn about women in leadership with all of its implications. Birgitt offers simple but highly effective, powerful means of solving complex challenges. She believes that it is impossible to solve complex situations with complex means and that only simple means allow that which is complex to be dealt with.

Birgitt's service in the world beyond her paid work has included service on many Boards of Directors, front line volunteer work in the social service sector, and she is currently primarily focused with the Harmony Project that was initiated by Birgitt and her partner Ward and as a healer using Reiki energy. She also provides leadership in the International Alliance for Mentoring, and the international networks of facilitators of Genuine Contact and Open Space Technology.

Awards and media/book attention

2000: Leadership of work of Birgitt Bolton (Williams) cited in book *The Change Handbook* edited by Peggy Holman and Tom Devane, Berrett-Koehler publishers, San Francisco.

2000: Leadership work of Birgitt Bolton (Williams) cited in book *The Spirit of Leadership* by Harrison Owen, Berrett-Koehler publishers, San Francisco

2000: Leadership work of Birgitt Bolton (Williams) cited in book *The Power of Spirit: how organizations transform* by Harrison Owen, Berrett-Koehler publishers, San Francisco

1999: Merit Award from American Society of Landscape Architects

1999: Australian Broadcasting Corporation, guest regarding *Facilitating Change in Organizations*

1997: Leadership work of Birgitt Bolton (Williams) cited in book *Expanding Our Now: the story of Open Space Technology* by Harrison Owen, Berrett-Koehler Publishing, San Francisco.

1996: Received recognition in the community as Hamilton Woman of the Year

1996: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, guest regarding the Future of Canada

1996: McLean's Magazine, guest regarding the Future of Canada

1996: Vision TV, featured in documentary focusing on Social Justice and the Church

1990-1996: interviewed extensively by newspapers, radio, and TV news regarding matters of social justice and problems faced in Canada's inner cities.

1995: Leadership work of Birgitt Bolton (Williams) cited in *Training Magazine Critical Mass Thinking: Putting Whole System Thinking into Practice* (September, 1995)

1995: Acknowledged for quote of the day in Canada's national newspaper

1995: Received the Mayor's Race Relations award for Organizational Excellence

1995: Received Pinnacle Award acknowledging excellence in Public Relations

1995: Founding member of the Open Space Institute of Canada

1994: Leadership work of Birgitt Bolton (Williams) cited in book *Millennium Organization* by Harrison Owen, Abbott Publishing, Potomac Maryland.

1994: Received the Zonta Club II of Hamilton award for their Woman of the Year in appreciation for "unfailing efforts to improve the legal and economic status of women and children"

1991: Certificate of appreciation from the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth "in recognition of services to the citizens of Hamilton-Wentworth"

Publications

2006: Publication of a chapter in *The Change Handbook*, 2nd edition (Berrett-Koehler). Chapter Title is *The Genuine Contact™* program

2006: Article in *InterTraining* (Russia) August issue *The Conscious Open Space Organization*

2004: Publication of an article coauthored with Debbie Morris and Sallie Lee in the November 2004 issue of the *Appreciative Inquiry Journal*.

2004: Publication of a chapter in *Expert Women Speak...Speak Out* (Alfonso and Glover Scott). Chapter title is *The Wellness (R)Evolution for Individuals and Organizations*

2002: Publication of excerpts from a discussion of the spirit of Open Space Technology in Open Space Technology: the non-guide edited by Chris Corrigan and Michael Herrman, published as an e-book.

2001: Achieving Organizational Health and Balance Workbook: diagnosis and regeneration, published by Musango Multi-Media, Calgary, Alberta, Canada

2001: Working with Open Space Technology Workbook (178 pages), published by Musango Multi-Media, Calgary, Alberta, Canada.. ISBN 0-9689576-0-9

2001: Whole Person Process Facilitation Workbook (116 pages) published by Musango Multi-Media, Calgary, Alberta, Canada. ISBN 0-9689576-2-5

2001: Cross Cultural Conflict Resolution Workbook (89 pages) published by Musango Multi-Media, Calgary, Alberta, Canada. ISBN 0-9689576-4-1

2001: Advanced Work with Open Space Technology Focusing on the Conscious Open Space Organization Workbook (200 pages). published by Musango Multi-Media, Calgary, Alberta, Canada. ISBN 0-9689576-6-8

1999: Publication of an article in Berrett-Koehler's At Work in its Jan-Feb issue. With Dr. Larry Peterson. Article entitled Benefits of Risk and Uncertainty.

1998: Publication of an article in Exchange Magazine. Article entitled Open Space Technology.

1998: Publication for the Open Space Institute of Canada, entitled Open Space Leadership and the Medicine Wheel.

1997: Publication of an article in Berrett-Koehler's At Work in its March-April issue. Article entitled From One Leader to Many Leaders.

1996: Publication of a chapter in Women's Work and Health, McMaster University Press.

1995: Publication of a chapter in Tales from Open Space (Owen). Chapter is entitled Open Space in a Social Service Setting: Keeping the Spirit Alive.

1995: Publication of a paper for the Open Space Institute of Canada, entitled After the Open Space Event: Managing the Organization in Ongoing Open Space (co-authored with Larry Peterson).

1995: Publication of a paper for the Open Space Institute of Canada, entitled Journeying to the Millennium Organization (co-authored with Michelle Cooper).

1991: Publication of an article in Mandate Magazine, entitled Women in Poverty.

Membership

Membership in the following associations enables me to continue to upgrade my personal and professional development

- Founding member of the International Alliance for Mentoring
- Member of the International Network of Genuine Contact facilitators
- Member of the International Network of Open Space facilitators
- Founding member of the Harmony Project
- Member of the Association of Consultants, Trainers, and Speakers
- Member of the Planetary Awakening Network
- Flame Keeper in the Order of St. Brigit
- Member of the Triangle Organizational Development Network
- Member of the Association for Training and Development
- Founding member of the Open Space Institute of Canada
- Member of the Organizational Development Network of the United States
- Member of the Urban Core Support Network, Canada
- Member of the Order of Michael

Volunteer Commitment and Community Involvement

From 1969 to present, Birgitt has held many volunteer positions as a Board member, Committee member, Task Force Member, or front line worker. It is a strong personal commitment to her to give back to the community in whatever way she can, to help make the world a better place. Currently, her volunteer commitment focuses within the organizations of which she is a member, in particular providing leadership in the Harmony Project, the International Alliance for Mentoring, the International Networks of Facilitators for Open Space and for Genuine Contact, and every twenty days attending to her duties as a flame keeper for St. Brigit.

Skills and Expertise

The combination of education, ongoing upgrading with both certificate and non-certificate training programs, and Birgitt's experience have culminated in the following combination of skills and expertise that those she works with can benefit from:

- Development of Conscious Open Space Organizations
- Organizational change facilitation
- Specialized organizational development knowledge and experience with whole system interventions
- Organizational transformation and sustainability
- Organizational and community leadership
- Community economic development
- Financial management
- Human resource management
- Resource development and public relations management
- Highly effective management and administrative skills including knowledge of pertinent legislation including employment standards, health and safety, pay equity, etc.
- Facilitation using Open Space Technology, Whole Person Process Facilitation
- Facilitation of conflict resolution
- Social and health research and policy development
- Policy governance expertise and training, including leadership training, community and board member training including training for consumers who want to be Board and Committee members
- Public sector, non-profit sector administration
- Outstanding interpersonal skills
- Excellent communication skills
- Sought after public speaker
- Competent in computer skills, knowledgeable about current systems and software, including navigation in cyberspace
- Specialized knowledge about issues facing communities including health, mental health, persons marginalized by society, newcomers to North America, children and the effects of children living in poverty, child abuse, domestic violence, women's issues, housing, cross cultural practices

Education

Certification

Large Group Intervention Practitioner, Advanced Level, Organizational Development, Texas, 1996

Large Group Intervention Practitioner, Organizational Development, Florida, 1996

Process Facilitation, Institute of Process Facilitation, Ontario, 1994-1995

Cross Cultural Practices, Esalen Institute, California, 1994

Story and Myth in Organizations, Storyshoppes, New York, 1992

Open Space Technology, H.H. Owen and Co., Washington, 1992

Volunteer Sector Leadership Development, Train the Trainer Institute, Ontario, 1991

Public relations and fundraising, Canadian Center for Philanthropy, 1985

Volunteer Management, Canadian Center for Philanthropy, 1984

Conflict Resolution and Negotiation, Woods-Gundy, Ontario, 1984

Union/Management Negotiations, Woods-Gundy, Ontario, 1983

Team Leadership and Quality Circles, Woods-Gundy, Ontario, 1983

Postgraduate:

Clinical Behavioural Sciences (Individual Behavior, Family Therapy, Group Therapy, and Organizational Behavior with a specialty in Organizational Behavior), McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. 1980-1983.

Certificate rather than degree is conferred in this three year post graduate program. The program brought theory together with practice; eligibility requiring one to be able to bring situations from the workplace into the classroom through audio and videotapes

Undergraduate:

Honors Bachelor of Arts, Magna Cum Laude, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. 1974-1977 to complete the four-year program. Double major in psychology and biology. Thesis 1977: An assessment of Cognitive Development in Learning Delayed Children.

Employment

President

DALAR INTERNATIONAL CONSULTANCY

ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS CONSULTANTS, RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA, USA

1999- PRESENT

Partner

NEW HEALTH WORKS

PROVIDING INFORMATION AND SALE OF PRODUCTS FOR HOLISTIC PERSONAL HEALTH AND BALANCE, RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA, USA

2001-PRESENT

Partner

NEW TECHNOLOGY WORKS

PROVIDING INFORMATION AND SALE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES FOR A BETTER WORLD, RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA, USA

2001-PRESENT

President

DALAR ASSOCIATES

ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS CONSULTANTS, ANCASTER, ONTARIO

1992 TO 2002

In this position I was responsible for all operations of a small business that worked in both the public and private sectors providing organizational development services. Clients range from small local organizations to national organizations, each with different needs based on their evolution and the environment in which they are striving to succeed.

Chief Executive Officer

WESLEY COMMUNITY HOMES, INC., HAMILTON, ONTARIO

1992 to 1996

In this position I was responsible for the inception, development, and operations of a non-profit housing corporation. During this time, I led an effort in which we were successful in achieving financing and developing an \$12 million housing project. Structure and process for carrying out a significant new organization in the community were designed and implemented.

Chief Executive Officer

WESLEY URBAN MINISTRIES, INC., HAMILTON, ONTARIO

1986 to 1996

In this position I was responsible for the operations and development of a large multi-service social and health service organization in the inner city. Budget of the organization was \$1.8 million. From this position, the initial work for Wesley Community Homes began in 1987, resulting in the success noted above. As well, another organization, the Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre, was created and developed and then "spun-off" as an independent organization with its own executive director and community based Board of Directors.

Director of Public Relations and Volunteer Administration

Children's Aid Society, Brantford, Ontario and Six Nations Reserve Office, 1981-1986.

Intake and Protection Social Worker

Children's Aid Society, Brantford, Ontario and Six Nations Reserve Office, 1977-1981

Comments about Birgitt Williams include:

- "The approach that Birgitt shares through Open Space Technology is inclusive to all concerned, resulting in a team-oriented workplace. Birgitt shows great attention to detail in her work, is reliable and thoughtful and it was a pleasure to have her as the key person to 'make it happen'". Lynn Storey, the Discovery Centre
- "Birgitt has been clear, direct, and forthright with me in advising that our service needs to move towards a community based philosophy, accountable to and responsible for all our citizens. I appreciate her candor and accept her suggestions". Robert Middaugh, Chief of Police
- "I have enjoyed the experience of Birgitt creating an environment that was supportive and challenging, providing opportunities that were unique in allowing individuals to achieve high levels of personal growth and professional development. In creating spaces where there can be true communication between peoples, Birgitt strengthened and empowered individuals, corporations and communities". Steve Buckle, Hamilton AIDS Network

- “Birgitt came to work with us in the Southam Newspaper Infolab so that we could share her understanding of corporate communications, vision creation, and effective meeting process. She was very valuable to us as we went through difficult times”. Wayne McPhail, Southam News
- “Birgitt lives her values and beliefs every day. Truth, integrity, social justice, spirit and compassion are evident in all she does. Birgitt’s first concern is successful outcome for the organization, project, or community rather than personal recognition”. Michelle Cooper, Director St. Elizabeth Visiting Nurses
- “In regards to training, I feel that it is the best money we ever spent.” Cynthia Squires, Achievement in Motion

Leadership in Conferences

Sustainable Open Space, June 2006, Warren Wilson College, Asheville, North Carolina

- Spirit in Business Conference, October 2004, Zurich, Switzerland
- International Alliance for Mentoring Conference, September 2003, Raleigh, North Carolina
- International Alliance for Mentoring Conference, September 2002, Raleigh, North Carolina
- International Alliance for Mentoring Conference, September 2001, Raleigh, North Carolina
- Environmental Protection Agency Organizational Development Conference, December 2001, Colorado, USA
- Future of Volunteerism Conference, November 2001, Ontario, Canada
- First International Alliance for Mentoring Conference, September 2001, North Carolina, USA
- Nursing Leadership Conference, April 2001, Ontario, Canada
- Conference for Quality of Life for Seniors, April 2000, Ontario, Canada
- Canadian Farm Business Managers, Feb 2000, Alberta, Canada
- Canadian Institute of Planners, June, 1999, Montreal, Quebec
- Fast Company Magazine, June, 1999, Toronto, Ontario
- Institute for International Research Conference, May, 1999, Toronto, Ontario
- Ontario Hospital Association Conference, May, 1999, Toronto, Ontario
- Nursing Leadership Network of Ontario, May, 1999, Toronto, Ontario
- The Emergent Role of Women Leaders for a Better World, Co-convenor. Seattle, Washington, May 16-18, 1998 (120 women in leadership from across North America)
- Good Neighbours Program, Ministry of Citizenship, Province of Ontario. Toronto, Ontario, November 16-17, 1997
- Open Space on Open Space. Open Space Institutes of Canada, USA and HH Owen & Co., October 25-27, 1997. Toronto, Ontario (100 Open Space Practitioners from around the world)
- Better Together, The Learning Partnership 4th Annual Conference. Toronto, Ontario, April, 1997, with Diane Blair and Larry Peterson (Three simultaneous Open Space Events with 600 Education and Business participants).
- First Canada/USA Breast Cancer Advocacy Conference. November 17-20, 1996, Geneva Park, Ontario. With Harrison Owen (160 participants from across North America)
- Prevention Congress VII: Prevention ClearingHouse, April 8-10, 1996. Ottawa, Ontario with Harrison Owen, Larry Peterson (400 social and health service organizations from across the Province of Ontario).