THE GENUINE CONTACT™ WAY OF WORKING

Introduction to Whole Person Process Facilitation[1]

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Whole Person Process Facilitation (WPPF) creates meetings that produce results by tapping into the creativity and collective genius of the participants in the meeting. WPPF works well with groups from 6 to 150 people and from 3 hours in length to several days.

WPPF accesses the greatest potential of the individual participants involved and of the group as a whole, thereby achieving maximum learning and results. WPPF achieves these outcomes by using a structure and exercises that engage the "whole brain" – the creative, intuitive, subjective "right brain" as well as the analytic, logical, objective "left brain"; and engage the "whole person" – the mind, body, heart and spirit.

Facilitating the learning of the whole brain/whole person involves carefully chosen activities that appeal to the multi-sensory human being and the following components:

Table 1: WPPF Components and Ways to Facilitate Them

[1] Based on the teachings about Whole Person Process Facilitation, as taught within the Genuine Contact™ Program by Birgitt Williams and Ward Williams of Dalar International Consultancy, Inc.

Component	What You Can Do
1. Creating a positive climate for learning.	Welcoming participants at the door Placing chairs in a circle with no tables in between, to encourage communication without barriers Providing nutritious food and drinks to enhance and not disrupt involvement in learning activities, good lighting, air circulation and sufficient room. Behaviors that foster an accepting, rather than a defensive, climate (see Table 2 below)
2. Engaging the "whole brain" and the "whole person" in learning	Participant introductions that stress authenticity (i.e., are directly related to the purpose of the meeting and not arbitrarily chosen; allow participants time to individually reflect about a particular subject; involve the heart, voice, careful listening, and speaking to the group) Transfer In and Closing Circle exercises that allow for reflection, sharing of feelings and learnings, and respectful listening, and that tap into both the brain and the heart "Hopes and Fears" exercise to develop objectives and to acknowledge that it's OK to have emotions, concerns and expectations about the meeting/workshop Using exercises that appeal to the left and right brain. Examples: • Left brain: case studies, skills demonstration, worksheets, action planning, presentations • Right brain: brainstorming, storytelling, relaxation exercises, visualization exercises • Both left and right: transfer-in, role playing, "hopes and fears", problem-solving exercises with no right or wrong "way"
3. Create opportunities for intuitive knowledge to be expressed	Allowing for maximum choice and freedom. For example, participants are allowed to: • choose who to do an activity with • choose to speak or not to speak during activities • volunteer to participate in a particular activity (e.g., role play) • say what they need to say in group discussions or transfer-in/closing circle • experiment with ideas and activities • share their learnings, insights, "Ah-ha's", "Oh-no's"
4. Maximizing the energy of the group	Using and sequencing a variety of group configurations: singularly, in pairs, triads, fours, whole group. For example, starting with individual work, then pairs, then larger group builds energy and safety for participation.

Component	What You Can Do
	Timing activities to pay attention to the energy level and attention of the participants. For example: • using active pairs or group exercises when the group energy is low • keeping content delivery (e.g., lecturettes) brief, followed by opportunity to apply the new content Adequacy of time to complete the learning tasks
5. Appealing to a variety of adult learning style preferences	Designing/selecting learning exercises so that over the course of the meeting/workshop, participants are involved in feeling/experiencing, watching/reflecting, thinking, and doing (see How Adults Learn)
6. Being conscious of the implications of actions and behaviors of the facilitator	Preparing the content of the meeting as well as self-preparation of the facilitator Varying the levels the facilitator works on: in front of group, with group, apart from group. Behaviors that foster an accepting, rather than a defensive, climate (see Table 2 below)
7. Feedback and evaluation that are useful and part of ongoing learning	Using the last 30 minutes of the day for reflection either by participants filling out brief evaluation forms or by individuals saying whatever they wish to say in the Closing Circle Taking corrective action if necessary, based on feedback received from evaluation forms or Closing Circle comments Re-visiting hopes and fears to assess how the group is doing Asking participants to make personal commitments to themselves based on their learning (e.g., letter to myself: Dear myself, I'm going to start . . I'm going to stop . . . I'm going to continue . . . Love, Me)

Table 2: Fostering an Accepting, Rather Than Defensive Climate for Learning

These kinds of behaviors	Produce this kind of climate	Which results in these kinds of responses
Controlling Punishing Regulating	Life Depleting	Conforming Depending Avoiding initiative

Telling Shaming Guilt-producing Judging Rationalizing Rewarding inappropriately		Hiding Depression Apathy Deception Judging Victim behavior
Listening Understanding Trusting Sharing Clarifying Rewarding appropriately Focusing on process rather than outcome	Life Nourishing	Experimenting Creating Exposing Autonomy Participating Producing Effectiveness Efficiency

Transfer In

WPPF meetings begin with a Transfer In exercise. This is not an “icebreaker” exercise as they are traditionally done. The Transfer In exercise is directly related to the purpose of the meeting and is not arbitrarily chosen. It generally takes about 30 minutes to do a Transfer In exercise. Taking this time to do a Transfer In exercise will actually assist a very full agenda to go more quickly, reducing conflict and other dynamics that cause time not to be used as efficiently.

The first part of a Transfer In exercise is a right brain, creative thinking activity in which the facilitator asks the participants to reflect individually about a given topic. Then participants are paired up to have a discussion about their individual reflections, followed by coming back into the whole group to share their discussions. During the paired discussions and whole group sharing, the left brain is engaged as the individuals use their voices to express their reflections and their partners listen carefully, knowing that they will be asked to share with the whole group what their partner has given them permission to share. Transfer In exercises engage both right and left brain, thereby bringing the whole brain into the meeting in a respectful and unforced, voluntary way.

This is the group’s time to enter the meeting and to feel safe, not a time for the facilitators to showcase themselves. The facilitator(s) must be very “centered” to do this, because they usually have a lot of nervous energy at this time, hoping the group will like them and that the day will go well.

Comments from participants about what they learned by doing a Transfer In exercise:

- Allows you to pick up from the unconscious - you pick up that which you need to learn for yourself, without even asking that as a question. It heightens personal awareness about learning needs and learning intention
- Gets away from "my position, my title"
- Caused me to reveal more about myself than I normally would and to bring my real self to the group very early in our time together
- Helped me to reflect why I am here
- Challenged me to take that which I recognize intuitively and try to express it. I found this hard and recognize that it is something that I need to practice so I can do it
- Helped me be in touch with my intuition
- Fascinating in the way this breaks through group tension in a more real way by bringing acknowledgement to ourselves as people
- Introduction by another is a respectful way of acknowledging another or having myself acknowledged
- When we introduce someone else, we attend to it more carefully
- As a listener we learn to listen
- I was quickly jolted out of my pre-meeting anxiety
- A way of understanding that we are unique
- Gets us focused on who we are now and who we want to become

Below are samples of Transfer In activities. If you stay with the intent of the exercise which includes bringing the whole brain—creativity, analysis, intuition—into the room, in a respectful and unforced way, the sky is the limit in terms of the variations on the samples that you can use. Keep them simple.

Transfer In Sample One

Place a bowl or basket of stones in the center of the circle on the floor. Ask participants to select a stone. At this point do not give any further intro or further instructions. When all seated, ask them to stay in silence and to write down what that stone tells them about "... filling in something here that is in keeping with the theme of the day..." Participants then share their observations in pairs, and then can report out back to the whole group only that which they wish to share. There is never any order that is required, nor any requirement to speak. Keep it safe for participants. There is no right and wrong. Another variation on this exercise and the ones below are for the report back to be done with each person introducing the person they paired with, by name and telling some of that person's observations, that the person has agreed that they may share with the rest of the group. This is a great way to create a connection with one other person and to introduce everyone in such a way that names start to get remembered.

You can do this same exercise using:

- colorful magic markers, pencil crayons, or crayons
- a circle of photos, cartoons, greeting card covers, or cards with quotations or single words
- a collection of objects from nature

Transfer In Sample Two

Have participants wander around the building you are in, inside or outside, and to bring back an object that appeals to them. Then to come back and return to the circle with the object. When all seated, ask them to stay in silence and to write down what that object tells them about "... filling in something here that is in keeping with the theme of the day..." Participants then share their observations in pairs, and then can report out back to the

whole group only that which they wish to share. There is never any order that is required, nor any requirement to speak. Keep it safe for participants. There is no right and wrong.

Transfer In Sample Three

Ask people to think of an animal. Then ask them to stay in silence and to write down what that animal tells them about "... filling in something here that is in keeping with the theme of the day..." They then share their observations in pairs, and then can report out back to the whole group only that which they wish to share. There is never any order that is required, nor any requirement to speak. Keep it safe for participants. There is no right and wrong.

You can do this same exercise by asking participants to think of a color.

Transfer In Sample Four

Ask people to look at their hands. Ask them to stay in silence and to write down what their hands are telling them about who they are, where they've been, or what they've done. They then share their observations in pairs, and then can report out back to the whole group only that which they wish to share. There is never any order that is required, nor any requirement to speak. Keep it safe for participants. There is no right and wrong.

Transfer In Sample Five

This exercise is appropriate for a multi-day meeting after the first day. Place an object in the center of the circle and invite people to share any reflections about the previous day's work, thoughts about the day ahead, any news pertaining to the meeting, or anything at all that is in their minds which they wish to share with the group. To share their thoughts, they may individually come forward, pick up the object, and either stand in the circle or return to their chair. When they are finished, they return the object to the center of the circle. While the individual has the object, they are the speaker and the rest of the group members are respectful listeners. There is never any order that is required, nor any requirement to speak.

Hopes and Fears

Total time: 30 minutes

The next thing we do is to determine what the objectives of the group members are, in having come together. We could of course, in the interest of time in a shorter meeting, simply do a "brainstorming and flipcharting" exercise here or a presentation of meeting objectives. This has its limitations in that it does not address the emotional realm of what is really going on in the room. These are full human beings we are dealing with, not machines. So, in any meeting that is longer than 2 hours, we take the time to determine group objectives by doing an exercise of exploring their hopes and fears for our time together. The invitation to the meeting should have been clear about what the meeting was about, whether the agenda was pre-determined or to be created at the meeting.

Break into groups of two-three and take about 20 minutes to put on flipchart the participants' hopes and fears--one page for each group to list fears and another to list hopes. This much time is important to really allow the group's discussion to go more deeply and for people to connect with feelings.

Have group reconvene in the circle, post pages up on wall and leave on the wall throughout the meeting. Have people highlight from their lists items to share with the larger group. This takes about 10 minutes. Talk about trying to bring hopes to fruition and recognize that some

of the fears may also be realized. Promise that we will go back to this at the end of the process to see how we did. And don't forget to do that at the end of your process. When your process involves several meetings extending over a period of weeks/months, it is wise to pull these hopes and fears out from time to time as a check to see how people are doing.

Comments from participants about their experience with the hopes and fears exercise include:

- This helps the facilitator know the objectives of individuals so they can be worked with through the process
- Helps the group members know each other on a deeper level
- Helps one focus on one's own goals
- Helps to foster safety and inclusiveness
- Meeting in dyads takes the fear out of failure and the arrogance out of success
- One person has one idea and another has another idea and the ideas we come up with in the conversation between the two persons adds yet more ideas that we wouldn't have had otherwise
- If one can name the feelings one can handle them better
- Builds a sense of acceptance one with another
- The exchanges involved in developing the lists of hopes and fears helps us to create the group
- Expectation-setting happens
- Takes the heat off of the facilitator because we now have group goals and a sense of group responsibility to achieve the goals
- This look at hopes and fears helps us express our expectations and worries early in the meeting so that we can move forward.

Outline of the Day

Sometimes the agenda has been predetermined and sent out in the announcement of the meeting. Or it has been predetermined and is being announced at the meeting. In either case, this is the time to outline the agenda.

If possible, exercise flexibility with the agenda based on the hopes and fears of the participants.

Facilitating Learning of the Content

We now come to working with the content that we wanted people to learn about, and possibly to problem-solve about. This is the workshop or meeting content.

When we take the time do the exercises above, the "content or business" pieces go much more quickly than ever thought possible and are much more successful.

In working with the workshop or meeting content, it is important to pay attention to the following in your lesson/meeting design so that learning is facilitated.

1. Meeting the needs of all learners and their different preferences for how they learn with a good mix of learning methods (see Table 1)
2. Ensuring that you are bringing the whole brain into the room, right and left and exercising the transfer between the two.

3. Working with the energy of the people in the room and trying to keep energy high by how you sequence, where and how people are sitting, mixes of groupings in 2's, 3's, 4's, or whole group including mixes of how to have groups flow from one to the other. The build up of energy to create with every exercise also attends to individual energy, then combining energy with one other person, and then combining energy back together again as a group.
4. Setting a safe and accepting climate throughout, not just in the welcoming.
5. In every decision you make about process, ask yourself "WHOSE PRIORITY?" Are you falling into a trap of making the decision to meet your needs or are you consistent with attending to the need of the group?
6. Bridging or transitioning between different content exercises.
7. Varying the levels the facilitator works on - in front of group, with group, apart from group.

Closing, Evaluation, and Feedback

15 minutes if the time together was short

30 minutes at the end of a day in a multi-day session

up to an hour if the time together was for a day or more

If the time together was short, and no matter how short, before parting, gather the group into a circle and beginning to one side of you, ask that each participant say a few words that they would like to say in parting. Say that it is not a time for speech-making, but a time for checking in. Give people the option of saying nothing if they so wish. And be sure that you speak last to tie up anything that needs to be said. This process both allows for reflection and brings feelings and learnings to group consciousness.

If this is a multi-day session, use the last 30 minutes of every day to gather in a circle. You may want to hand out evaluation forms for quick filling out and handing to you to do ongoing evaluation so that you can take corrective action if needed for your other day(s). This should only take a few minutes. And then invite participants to say anything they would like about the day or about what they would like to say at this time. You could go from one to the next around the circle, but at this time it is best to invite people to speak as they feel moved to do so. Do not cut this time off prematurely. Keep your own personal track of who has spoken so that you are aware of who is left. Not everyone must speak, but you need to be mindful of not cutting things off if someone still wants to say something. This process both allows for reflection, and brings feelings and learnings to group consciousness.

If this is the end of a workshop or meeting that was for a day or more, again gather everyone in a circle. Have evaluation forms for people to fill out in the first minutes. This gives them a chance to start processing this type of thinking through reflection. Then, using an object such as a shell or rock, introduce the process—used by indigenous peoples around the world—of passing the object to the person to the left and the person with the object is to say what he/she wishes or they may be silent and just pass the object on. Whoever does not have the object is the respectful listener, including the facilitator. And the object keeps getting passed until it is back to the facilitator for closing words. It is best to remind people that this is not a time for speech-making, and it is a time when they can look at the hopes and fears that they posted at the beginning of the process and remark on them also if they so wish. And of course, when the object comes back to you, the facilitator, you have the final words. This process both allows for reflection and brings feelings and learnings to group consciousness.