

CREATIVE ACTION METHODS, TO HELP REASSEMBLE OUR FRACTURED SELVES

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I was invited by the CEO of a multinational pharmaceutical company in India to facilitate a 'crucial conversation' between him and his direct reportees, numbering six persons.

Realizing the sensitivity involved in such a process, I wished to tread gently, tentatively, and with the hope and faith that what I offered as facilitation would yield the desired outcome.

To warm the group up to a possible process of engaging deeply, I invited the seven persons, that is, the six reportees and the CEO, to share, as follows:

- My first prompt invited each of them to think and briefly talk about a person who they believed made a positive difference to their lives.
- My next prompt was to invite them to talk about what they were proud of about themselves as people.
- My third prompt, after I sensed comfort in sharing, was to invite each of them to share a 'lie', even if only innocuous, that they were shy of talking about.
- My next prompt was to invite them to talk about their first 'crush' or love, or when their heart first fluttered on seeing a person.

All these prompts as they sequentially played out seemed to feel 'warm and fuzzy', and there was a lot of laughter and light banter.

This encouraged me to invite them to go deeper, which they agreed to.



I invited one of them, whoever was comfortable, to offer himself to receive 'data-based' feedback from the group.

The CEO offered to receive feedback, without hesitation.

Each of the 6 reportees then shared how they experienced the CEO and provided bits and pieces of data to substantiate the 'opinion' they had formed of the CEO.

I recognized that each of the six reportees had a completely different experience/view of the CEO, and so after they had shared, I invited the CEO to share how he felt.

The CEO acknowledged that he was surprised by the feedback and wondered how he was perceived differently by each individual.

I sensed that the CEO may be experiencing some kind of 'fracturing' in his personality, as he was coming across to his reportees?

I recalled an Indian play/drama titled '**Aadhe Adhure**' by a famous Hindustani playwright Mohan Rakesh, which talks about an identity crisis and breakdown of communication, the protagonist experiences when she desires different aspects of a man who is part of her life.



The play 'Aadhe Adhure' translated roughly in English as 'Half House,' involves the protagonist's husband who takes on many roles and appears before the woman who then notices the challenge she is experiencing in relating with each of them.

Drawing on this understanding of the play, I invited the CEO, if comfortable, to place six empty chairs in the room, each chair representing one of his direct reportees.

Next, I invited each direct reportee to stand in front of a chair, requesting the CEO to sit on a chair one at a time, and tell the CEO how he was being experienced.

The CEO moved from one chair to another and the process of sharing by all six reportees was completed.

Thereafter I invited the CEO to share how he may be experiencing what he has heard from each of his reportees and also share at 3 levels, namely, 'how and what he experienced somatically, in the here and now'; 'what thoughts were coursing through his mind?' and 'what feelings he was experiencing?'

The CEO described a feeling of vulnerability and a deep sense of gratitude at honest admission and sharing.

I then asked the CEO how he might like to integrate the various personalities he seemed to have demonstrated to his direct reportees.

On the prompt, I suggested that he might like to consider, if comfortable, bringing the chairs together and then perhaps sitting on each chair, one after the other, and offer a statement therefrom.

Mobilized by the suggestion the CEO aligned all the chairs together such that one chair was in physical contact with another and shared, what I experienced as an 'Aha!' moment, surely for me, when he said, sitting on each chair, and I quote "I am this and I am also that kind of person". The joy I experienced was the ability of the CEO to realize that he had many personalities, as he came across to each individual. Yet, there was consistency and constancy in who he was.

The reportees were also moved, and with no specific invitation, formed a circle around the CEO, with him in the middle, and offered their thanks for his magnanimity in receiving their feedback without reacting.

As closure, I invited the CEO to attempt a 'trust fall' within the circle which he readily agreed to and the workshop closed with a sense of calm, gratitude and immense warmth in the manner the 7 of them began relating in the 'here and now.'

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