

The Transformational Change Simulation and Leadership Workshop *“Different by Design”*

Chapter Twelve “The Way”

The group was silent and it was exciting to see how ready some people were to experience the third day of the workshop. Others were obviously anxious for it to be over as I could see cell phones in the “ready” positions.

At this point, I am always reminded that *“when the student is ready, the instructor will appear.”* It is really difficult for people who see training programs as “fix the factory” events to “focus” on the agenda of “creating the future”--- but it can happen in an instant when the context shifts from “fixing” to the release of their own potential.

I began, “The purpose of today is to “help you” become as much as you can be --- to reveal to you the “potential” of Phase Three /Four for your life and your companies and make a conscious choice as to how to create the future you want in the most economical way.”

I quickly reviewed the flip charts as to what “Today is About” and what “Today is NOT About” in order to reinforce the orientation to “discovery learning” and once again suggest that “Anything is Possible.”

“We must be clear about what Cherion said a moment ago that something changed for him as a result of playing the MONEY GAME -- - and he is still not sure why he did what he did when he got involved --- that it “just happened.”

I paused to put emphasis on the next point and said, “Significant things “just happen” in our lives --- typically when we get involved. Recall for a moment when you “got involved” in serving customers during the Simulation. Sam’s example of getting out of her chair to help Debbie is a great example.”

“Staying involved” in Phase One / Two companies is very difficult because many “functionalized” jobs lack a sense of purpose. Getting involved in creating a Phase Three / Four company must therefore

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begin with a “conscious choice” to create “alignment” and defining how that “process” works is what we are going to do today.”

I paused for almost ten seconds and said with some humility, “There is nothing contained in our work today that is the “right way” or the “wrong way” --- what we are going to do today is just “a way” --- it may be very different from “your way” --- and if you are clear about “the way” you’ve always done it --- and want to continue running your life and company “that way” --- please feel free to leave at any time without embarrassment or incrimination ---- for we will ask everyone to “get involved” with trying a “different way.”

Ron raised his hand and said, “It sounds like the “*my way or the highway*” approach of a prior boss I worked for.”

I chuckled and said, “Ron --- I worked for two of those people in the past and in both cases chose the “highway.” How to make that choice is a legitimate concern for everyone in this room.”

“We’re going to experience the TOTAL GROUP WAY of creating any business --- one company called it the CUSTOMER CENTRIC WAY --- another considered it The NEW CULTURE WAY --- and when we do the homework assignment, we have a clue as to “the way” any business is designed to work.”

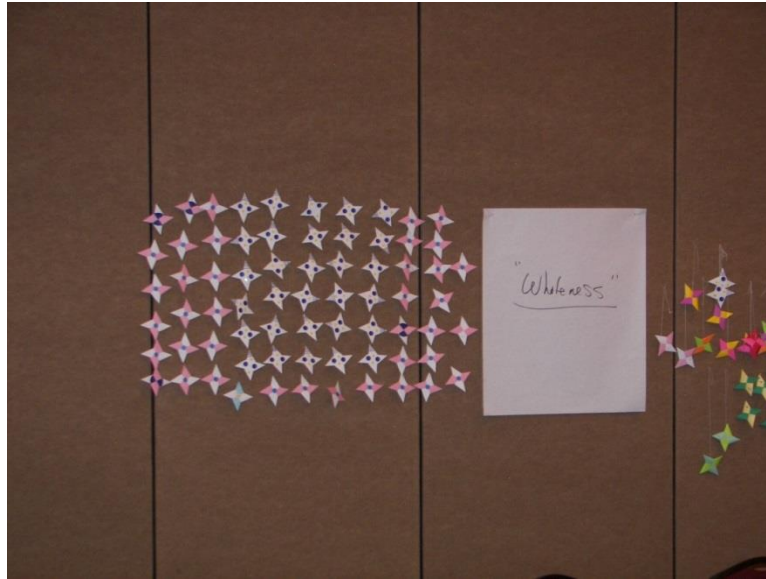
After a description of one horrifying “highway” example, I interrupted and said, “Every company protects “its way” --- and tells many customers they can’t make it “their way” because that is not “the way” we make it --- so take “the highway” ---- and new business development is very limited to “their way.”

I raised my hand and said, “How many of you like to go to a store to buy something that you can buy “the way” Amazon sells it?”

I said, “Look at that wall and you will see how limited the Phase One / Two “way” was before the Core Capability called “wholeness” was created.”

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I said with some humor, “Let’s be very careful not to criticize any one or any business for “the way” they do business today. Simply recall “the way” your GROUP played the MONEY GAME and whether it was a TOTAL GROUP WAY or one to maximize “Your Column.”

The MONEY GAME reference lightened up the conversation as Jim was once again confronted for not negotiating and keeping “His Way” safe from attack from the outside.

I laughed when one person joked that Jim ought to leave and keep “His Way” going and wished him “well on the highway to hell.”

Jim pointed at Curt and was about to “pass-the-blame” when I interrupted and said, “Remember we all “passed-the-trash” during Phase One and Two of the Simulation so let’s be clear that we are here to merely understand that we all have a “game” for which many people wish us “harm” --- and we all have a “game” that we ourselves would like to “purge” from our lives ---- and the only question for today is “the way” to allow a “new game” to enter our lives and be the basis of “design” for the future of our businesses.”

Knowing that a quick example of how a client created a “new game” I describe the situation we encountered at Carowinds Theme Park -- - and since it was long gone in the context of Paramount, I showed them the following letter:

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February 6, 2001

Tom,

My biggest concern about responding to your request to explain what “wholeness” has done for Paramount’s Carowinds is that my words will not do justice to the process that you have been leading us through. Please know that my offer still stands to meet face to face with the leadership of CTC.

At Paramount’s Carowinds, “wholeness” has become the cornerstone of our culture. Its impact can now be seen in the everyday work habits of our staff. As the word implies, our staff functions as a unified team working toward the same goal. We understand that everyone’s role is important if we are to be financially successful and remain the “Best Choice for Fun.”

There was a time when our divisions and/or departments were internally focused. The short-term goals of one group often conflicted with those of others. With “wholeness,” our energy is expanded in the same direction and toward the same goal. This has led to higher morale, greater productivity and some amazing collective creativity. I might also add that staffing the park’s 2500+ positions has become much easier due to the reduction in turnover.

Tom, one of my greatest concerns with giving our “Fun Techs” this much decision-making authority was, “What will happen to expenses?” Controlling costs while keeping our product fresh is our greatest challenge. It has been a real learning experience for me to see that when our staff is aligned on purpose and they know what we are trying to accomplish, they make good decisions. Resources are shared knowing that the end result will bring better “Fun Tech” performance and higher guest satisfaction. I might add that our operating costs have remained flat for the past four years while achieving the highest guest satisfaction rating among the six Paramount Parks.

Everyone at Paramount’s Carowinds now understands that it is this approach that brings increased EBITDA. EBITDA is our corporate report card, and for the past five years we have experienced record growth. To be exact, 105.1% EBITDA growth since 1996.

Tom, I hope this information is helpful for CTC. Please don’t hesitate to call if I can be of more assistance.

Watt

I quickly told the story of how there were 40,000 people in the park on the 4th of July to ride the new coaster Top Gun and by noon the ride had been shut down for maintenance. Within an hour the announcement was made that the ride was not going to be

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functional the rest of the day ---- and by 2:00 pm nearly half of the guests had gone home --- significantly disappointed about leaving before the fireworks celebration later that evening.

Zac raised his hand and said in a very somber way, “I was there --- I was ten --- and my dad said we would never go back --- do you know why it was not working?”

Carefully I said, “It was the MONEY GAME in action --- the Operations and Maintenance Managers were in their “columns” ---- actually being driven by the “column” of the CFO and the guests took the “highway” home.”

I quickly told the story about how Smokey --- a Ride Technician --- became a “Fun Technician” to live into his “potential.”

I said, “Zac ---for today --- be like Smokey and recall your contribution to helping customers --- and what was your potential when you were released from your functional job.”



I paused as Zac gave Brian a rather “cold” look.

“Let’s take a look at another example that turned out positive as a result of the Simulation and homework experience.”

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Tom Wentz
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May 11, 2004

Hello Tom,

It is almost 4 months since our class together at the factory. Debbie, Marty and I were talking about the impact your class had on all of us and we thought we would take a moment and share where we have gone since January.

It all started with class but specifically on our first homework assignment to go ask someone in the restaurant business what was his or her purpose. As you know, we went to one of our local McDonald's restaurant and received a positive answer. Since that moment, we started asking ourselves, what should they be saying? Well... Our service team was looking to create an incentive for our restaurant teams and a program was outlined. We call it the "if if ili" program. *I'm fast, I'm friendly and I'm lovin' it program.*

Our objective was to get 35,000 people to use this phrase and focus on service to our customers. We even had a logo designed and other tchotchkes were sent or given away as prizes. Debbie had the best idea of the team. We created buttons for the crew to wear saying "ask me about if if ili" to support this concept. The customers and crew have had a great fun discussing their purpose at the front counter & in drive-thru. Everyone keeps asking, what is "if if ili"? It is hard to say without smiling! We even went as far as to put it on the backs of our convention shirts for a recent meeting and received recognition from Larry Light our Chief Global Marketing Officer.

As teachers, we don't always know how our students do when they leave the classroom. We thought you might enjoy our post class story and have some fun with it. Thanks for everything from the class to the books and the focus on PURPOSE.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Nicholas".

Michael Nicholas,
Human Resources Manager
McDonald's Corporation

P.S. The Max & Erma server in Chicago nailed the purpose first try!

I said, "The details of all of these examples can help us be clear that we have choices to make today that can have a significant impact on "the way" we want to "BE" --- as a person and as a business starting tomorrow."

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Debbie from the bank raised her hand and without hesitation said, “It was this letter that prompted me to ask that “stupid” question of that server that night.”

She paused and added, “I called and asked to talk to Debbie --- she was not available but I did talk to Michael. He told me the story of the little girl --- pardon me the young lady --- that handed Debbie the bag from the drive through window and answered the “purpose” questions with “*I’m Fast – I’m Friendly – and I’m Lovin it.*”

She raised her hand and with obvious emotion in her voice said, “It was from that homework experience that I finally realized how the financial success of any company can originate from the “bottom” of the company when the “purpose” is accurately defined and people are allowed to use their creative potential to execute it.”

There was silence as I waited to be sure Debbie was finished.

She said, “What is leadership other than behaving a “purpose?”

“Thank you Debbie --- it is that contextual shift that can instantly change everything for many people --- thank you again.”

I turned my attention to the total group and asked, “Are there additional homework experiences you want to share?”

Robin and Aaron and Curt simultaneously raised their hands.

“Robin?”

“We went to Mitchell’s Steak House -- I was volunteered to ask the question --- the waitress said without hesitation to create “raving fans” of all guests. When I asked how she knew that, she pulled this little red book from her apron and showed us their mission statement and told us to read the milkshake story and excused herself as she said her favorite “raving fan” needed her help. When she came back, she asked if we had read it and whether we had a “purpose” in our business.”

Curt said, “The shoe was quickly on our foot!”

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Aaron interrupted, “It was almost a “religion” for her – that the Owner comes in often and recognizes everyone for their commitment to creating raving fans.”

He paused, “I asked her how the Owner knows that they did that --- she said they are asked to submit their most significant “raving fan” story to him every week and he posts all of them from all of his restaurants every week --- so that everyone can learn from the “many ways” of creating raving fans.”

Curt said, “It didn’t stop there --- the manager came by and I asked him the purpose of his job and he said, “sustain the fertile soil” so the associates can create “raving fans.”

Robin jumped in and said, “They even let us keep The Little Raving Fan Book.”



Curt asked, “Do you know this guy?”

I said, “Yes --- I’ll see if he is in town and able to come and talk to you about how he “puts his associates first” at lunch today.”

For the next twenty minutes there were many answers to the “purpose” question ranging from “to serve you” to “pay my bills” to “orchestrate a great dining experience” to “I just work here.”

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In every case I asked them how they felt asking that question. In almost all cases everyone felt a little nervous based on stories of the ways confrontational diners are treated.

I said, “Put yourself in the shoes of the server ---- think about how it must be “different” when they are working as “Just a Server” or as “A Raving Fan Creator?” In which “role” will they be suspicious of your motives --- thinking that you may be a “shopper” and will tell their boss --- and contrast that with the willingness of the “Raving Fan” person who was confident that her message would fit any occasion.”

I paused as that question opened the reflections of many people.

I said, “And --- most important let’s just suppose it is your restaurant --- it is your passion for having your own business that is at stake ----in “what way” would you want your people to behave? Would you leave it to chance? What would you do to guarantee that no one acts to spoil your reputation as a great place to dine? How would you guarantee that when you go home for the evening that everyone would behave “the way” of your MONEY GAME?”

I paused again and said, “Everything we are going to do today and suggest as an approach to be implemented after this workshop is based on the “truth” that we are all customers --- and “*we love to buy and we hate to be sold.*” If that is true for you, then we will reveal “the way” to design any organization and in any part of the world to serve customers.”

Craig said, “I see how this applies to a restaurant – but I work for a Rep Firm and the main manufacturer we represent does not think this way --- they’re all about market share --- how can this be true when they control our fate?”

I looked at Craig and said, “Craig that is true for almost every Rep Firm until ---- “

I paused and asked everyone in the room to say “until.”

“Until.”

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“Until --- we make the choice to be different.”

Henry said, “We are a Rep Firm --- the manufacturers don’t control our fate. Our leader gave everyone a book called *The Energy Bus* --- all employees are required to read Chapter 9 --- “Drive with Purpose” --- once a month ---- discuss it in their TOOT Groups --- add anything new from the past 30 days to our Framework and forward it to him for inclusion in the Framework for the TOTAL COMPANY WAY.”

He paused, “We even have a Purpose Room where all the workout machines are located --- we all had to “jog-one-step” and “start” a personal “on purpose” routine of our choice.”



He paused, “Our leader is very clear that we can only control what we can control and that is to be “on purpose” with ourselves internally and with our customers at all times.”

He looked at me and said, “The name of the workout room was changed from the “Solution” room to the “Purpose” room after Tom was out there last year – right?”

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I said, “Your company is a great example of how being “on purpose” is a conscious choice to “design” the business to function how you want it to “behave” regardless of how others make choices.”

We were nearing a break so I concluded the stories with the purpose of the homework assignment, “I hope you can see that the answer to the “purpose” question is your clue as to whether any business is “consciously designed” to serve you.”

Curt said, “After that “raving fan” experience, we stayed for another hour to talk about what our “purpose” should be in our company --- we really liked the “raving fan” thing but it is a little “corny” for our type of customers.”

I looked at Debbie and said in an inaudible way, “Breakthrough!”

She nodded her head and I could see the emotion it brought to her eyes.

“Let’s take a break and be back in ten minutes.”

The cell phones appeared and almost everyone evaporated into the hall way and toward the coffee bar. A voice behind me said, “That was “tough love.”

It was Don. He said, “My meeting was cancelled and I came in and heard most of the conversation about the servers. Last night at the

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Chamber Event I asked Jeff the “purpose” of his job and all he said was “Tell Tom I said hello.”

He asked, “How does he know you?”

I laughed and said, “He’s a great friend --- has attended the Simulation and my sales workshop and knows the origin of the homework question.”

He asked, “Do you have an extra workbook --- I had to leave yesterday before they were distributed.”

Bill gave him one and said, “Swing to Balance is “the way” to playing good golf.”

Zac was waiting to talk. I asked, “What’s going well?”

With a smile on his face he said, “I think you got through to Brian with the Fun Tech story about Smokey --- he now thinks we should all be Masters of Real Time.”

I said, “I noticed his behavior change --- but it came when you gave him that “cold” stare --- he’s very “self-deceived” and that stare reversed his polarity --- that’s a clue that he needs to change “the way” he runs his business in order to survive but he is not willing to admit it in public.”

Zac just looked at me and asked, “Are we going to cover this today?”

I said, “It is in the section about “when the going gets tough – the tough are helpless.” Just be clear that the “highway” beyond “his way” is an open road for you.”

He shook my hand and said, “Thanks.”

Jennifer was waiting and I asked “What’s going well?”

She said, “I worked at McDonald’s years ago and there was a book that said that Larry Light, Chief Global Marketing Officer invented the phrase “I’m-Lovin-It” over in Germany in 2006. That letter seems to contradict what he did.”

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I said, “I saw that book and respectfully --- there are many creative ideas and concepts that come from operative people when their potential is released --- and how those ideas get promulgated to become a corporate “slogan” or “mantra” by someone in marketing is often legitimate and proprietary.”

She said, “I now know the truth from that letter and ----.”

I stopped her and said, “It’s Mr. Light’s problem not yours or mine.”

I paused and said, “I’ll cover this issue soon as we talk about the shift from “problem solving” to “creating.”

She looked at me and said, “Thanks.”

I sounded the harmonica --- gave the two minute announcement and focused for two minutes on the “highway” ahead for many people.