



Toolbox for Change

Reclaiming Purpose, Joy, and Commitment
in the Helping Profession

David Pitonyak

(V. 08 May 2009)

i m a g i n e

David Pitonyak
3694 Mt. Tabor Road
Blacksburg, VA 24060

540-552-5629 VOICE

**For additional information, visit the
Imagine web site:**
www.dimage.com

Reproducing *Toolbox for Change*

Please remember that a great deal of the material in this handout is replicated from other people's work. If you choose to replicate this handout or any portion of the handout please be sure to give credit where credit is due.

Printing Suggestions

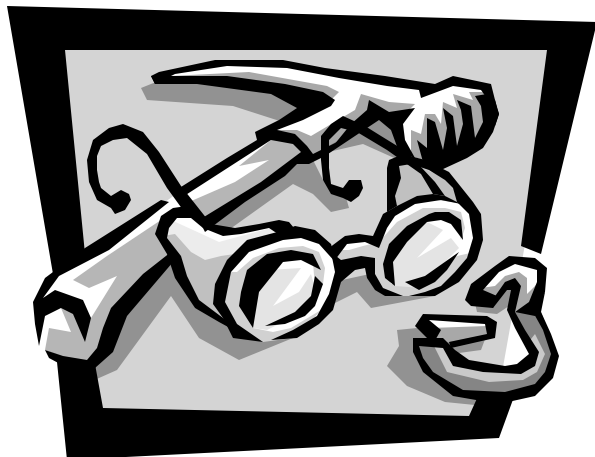
Toolbox for Change is designed to be printed front and back. Please, when replicating, save paper by using both sides.



toolbox for change

Introduction	4 – 5
First Tool: It's about relationships	6 – 9
Second Tool: Wake up to the people right next to you.	10 - 14
Third Tool: Drive fear from the workplace	15 – 19
Fourth Tool: Make joy a goal	20 – 24
Fifth Tool: Develop a VISION	25 – 26
Sixth Tool: Get organized/stay organized	27 – 36
Seventh Tool: Listen, learn, help, lead.	37 - 39
Eighth Tool: Tell stories	40 – 43
References and additional resources	44 – 45

Introduction



I recently bought a new toolbox. A big one, with lots of drawers and bins for...well, you name it.

After I purchased the thing, I went through my old tool box and began sorting through my "stuff" to its new home, getting rid of useless things like a 8 1/2" x 11" piece of flat rubber I bought for a job that required a 1" x 1" strip. I kept the good stuff, like the wrench for my chain saw and a screw from the bottom drawer of my filing cabinet.

Tool boxes, if there any good at all, are full of stuff you need, organized so that you can find what you want when you need it.

I decided to build another kind of tool box — this one with tools for helping organizations to restore purpose, joy, and commitment to the workplace. I went searching through my computer and bookshelves and found tools that I

consider invaluable.

You can borrow the tools if you think they will be helpful. I'll leave the toolbox at my web site (www.dimage.com) and you can download the most recent version whenever you wish. Maybe the tools will help you like they have helped me. If you come across tools that have been useful to you, let me know. I am always looking for new ideas.

So borrow what you will. And share what you will. I only ask one thing: Since a number of my tools are borrowed from the work of others, like Steven Covey, Peter Senge, Bruce and Gina Anderson, John Graham, and John O'Brien, I ask that you give credit where credit is due should you choose to share the tools with others.

As a starting point for using this handout, you might want to consider the questions in Table 1. What kind of organization do you work for? Is it the kind of organization that makes you proud? Or, does your organization require change, perhaps fundamental change, in the way it operates? Whatever the case, pick and use each tool carefully. A good tool always depends on the skill and intention of its master.

Good luck!

Table 1

What kind of organization do you work for?

Yes/No	<i>Are the supports you provide consumer and family-driven?</i>	Yes/No	<i>How are decisions made? - continued</i>
	Do people have control over their own budgets?		Is there a rationale decision-making process?
	Do people choose where and with whom they live?		What kinds of information do you collect to let you know you are on track?
	Do people choose what they do during the day?		Are managers skilled at consensus building?
	Do people choose personal goals for the future? Are these goals honored by the organization?		<i>Do people care about one another?</i>
	Do people participate in community life in valued ways?		Do people know one another in a meaningful sense?
	Do people have friends and regular contact with family?		Does management treat staff in valued ways?
	Do people have the opportunity to exercise their constitutional rights (e.g., do they vote, is their privacy respected, etc.)		Are the policies and procedures of the organization consistent with and friendly to the demographics of the work place?
	<i>Does your organization have a vision for the future?</i>		<i>How does the organization assure excellence?</i>
	Does your organization have a vision for the future? If so, were the people you support involved in the development of that vision?		Does the organization offer regular opportunities for staff to improve their skills (e.g., person-centered planning)?
	Do the people you support, as well as staff, understand the vision?		Do the people served by the organization have an active role in evaluating their services?
	Do individuals and individual program teams have vision statements that are in alignment with the overall vision?		<i>Is the workplace joyful?</i>
	<i>How are decisions made?</i>		Is the workplace a fun place to be?
	Are decisions reached by your teams generally consistent with the overall vision?		Are there regular opportunities for celebration?

Many of the questions on this table are taken directly from Lawrence Miller's (1990) *The New American Spirit* and The Accreditation Council's (1997) *Personal Outcome Measures*.

First Tool

**Stop focusing on
coverage and interventions.**



**It's about
relationships.**

Karen Edna Wallstein, Campbell Village U.S.A., Copake, NY, Photograph by Matthew Swarts,
New York Times Magazine, September 10, 2000

Loneliness is the only real disability*

- Beth Mount

I'll say it in the most straight-forward way I can: most of the people supported by our human services organizations are *lonely*. Profoundly lonely. And most of what we do in human services is secondary to helping people form and maintain meaningful relationships.

There. I've said it. The cat is out of the bag. I don't think our industry — and that's what it is, an industry — is paying enough attention to the impact of loneliness in the lives of people who experience disabilities.

I'll go further. I think *most* (though not all) of our paperwork, rules, regulations, professional standards, buildings, cell phones, pagers, computer systems, medicines, expertise, science — *most* (not all) of it is a waste of time and resources. *Most* (not all) is a physical manifestation of our inability to come to grips with the central issue in peoples' lives — loneliness.

Look around you. Take the rest of the day to spend time with the people you serve. Just hang out. Try to relax. My bet is that you will be with lonely people, people who don't have many friends, or family; people who are almost entirely dependent upon paid professionals for support.

My bet is that someone will grab your hand during the day and won't let go. My bet is that someone will treat you like a long lost friend, though you barely know each other. My bet is that people will tell you, if they can, about

their "people." Hardly anyone will ask you about Medicaid, or evaluations, or the new management information software. Take time to look into each person's eyes. What do you see? Do you see people who have love — *real* love — in their lives? Or do you see people who are lonely to the core of their being?

I think loneliness is the only real disability. As far as I am concerned, when you have people in your life who love you, you can get through anything you have to get through. Do you experience seizures? Don't worry. The people who love you, the people you love, will help you to get up when you fall down. They will help you to find the medicine you need. Do you have a difficult time learning? Don't worry. Your "people" will help you figure out what you need to figure out. Whatever the "disability" happens to be, you will be fine, if you have authentic relationships with others. But if you are lonely, you are in trouble. As Willard Gaylin put it, "To be vulnerable is not to be in jeopardy. To be vulnerable and isolated is the matrix of disaster."

It's not about coverage

I met a man once who was very much alone in the world. His family had sent him to an institution and pretty much abandoned him since he was a young boy. He had troubling behavior that I believe was the result of loneliness and the trauma of having been institutionalized. When I mentioned this, one of his staff said, "He's not lonely. He has one-

*I thought, for the longest time, that I had invented the phrase *Loneliness is the Only Real Disability* — and then someone said they heard it from Judith Snow first. I asked Judith if she had coined it and she said, "I wish I had." Years later, someone else told me that Beth Mount said it first and I wrote to Beth to see if it was true. She wrote back, "Use it and don't worry about making it mine--so much of what we all say and do has been borrowed from our network...don't worry about crediting me with that which we all know, the power of relationships to heal and make whole." How graceful can a person be? Looks to me like Beth deserves the nod.

to-one coverage.”

You can, of course, have ten-to-one coverage and be terribly alone. It’s not about the number of people right next to you, it’s about *who* the people are right next to you.

One way I like to explain the difference between coverage and relationships is to ask people to imagine that I am returning home from a business trip. I pull up in my driveway, and discover that my wife Cyndi is not home. But in her place is another woman. I ask, “Where’s Cyndi?” and she replies “Cyndi is not here. But don’t worry. We have you covered.”

People generally laugh at this scenario. It’s silly. Preposterous, really. But it is exactly what happens to people who experience our services time and time again. The very fact that we laugh at the idea of another woman taking Cyndi’s place says that we know, in our heart of hearts, that there is a huge difference between coverage and relationships.

It’s not about interventions

Think about the last few work meetings you have attended. What did people talk about? Did loneliness, or the central importance of relationships even come up in the discussion? Or did you talk about coverage and interventions? Or was it funding streams? Or the new policy? Meds? Did you talk about the next doctor’s appointment? Or was it the faulty burner on the stove?

All of these things may be important topics of discussion from time to time. There are times when fixing the stove or getting the medicine right is exactly what needs our attention. My point is that rarely in our conversations are we discussing loneliness and the importance of relationships. More often than not, it doesn’t even come up. We’re too busy with the stove, or our interventions and strategies.

I know a man named George. George is a difficult guy to understand sometimes. People say he has autism and he probably does (whatever that means). I think that because George does not have a reliable way to let the world know what he is thinking or feeling, he gets upset and angry at times. He gets very upset. Sometimes he throws things and hits people.

George used to have a caregiver named Steven. He loved Steven and Steven loved him back. Whenever Steven was around, George was generally calm and happy. There was something magical between them. They were soul brothers, friends, fellow travelers. Steven just seemed to “get” George and George just seemed to “get” Steven. I don’t know quite how to “operationalize” what made their relationship work. It just did.

Well, the story gets much more interesting. You might say it has an oddly “familiar” quality.

Steven hated paperwork. And he hated the “system.” He thought it was all bull shit and would say so to anyone who would listen. His supervisors fussed at him about his “lack of professionalism” all the time. You know. Don’t cuss. The paperwork is important. We have standards. All of that.

Well, you know how the rest of the story goes, don’t you? It is an archetypal story in our field.

The agency fired Steven. His lack of professionalism did him in.

And you know what happened next, don’t you?

George fell apart. The next thing you know he is trashing his apartment and hitting anyone

**Margaret Wheatley's "What I believe..." from
*Turning to One Another: Simple Conversations to
Restore Hope to the Future***

People are the solution to the problems that confront us. Technology is not the solution, although it can help. We are the solution -- we as generous, open-hearted people who want to use our creativity and caring on behalf of other human beings and all life.

Relationships are all there is. Everything in the universe only exists because it is in relationship to everything else. Nothing exists in isolation. We have to stop pretending we are individuals who can go it alone.

We humans want to be together. We only isolate ourselves when we're hurt by others, but alone is not our natural state. Today, we live in an unnatural state -- separating ourselves rather than being together.

We become hopeful when somebody tells the truth. I don't know why this is, but I experience it often.

Truly connecting with another human gives us joy. The circumstances that create this connection don't matter. Even those who work side by side in the worst natural disaster or crisis recall that experience as memorable. They are surprised to feel joy in the midst of tragedy, but they always do.

We have to slow down. Nothing will change for the better until we do. We need time to think, to learn, to get to know each other. We are losing these great human capacities in the speed-up of modern life, and it is killing us.

The cure for despair is not hope. It is discovering what we want to do about something we care about.

Wheatley, M. (2002). *Turning to one another: Simple conversations to restore hope to the future* (p. 19). San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publications, Inc.

within reach. The emergency SWAT team arrives in the middle of the night and has him hospitalized. There he is restrained and medicated and everyone seems confused by his sudden downturn. Someone suggests that seizures are the culprit. Someone else says it could be medication toxicity. Hypotheses are debated and debated further. Finally, after weeks of little progress, George is given high doses of medicines that essentially override his central nervous system and turn him into a zombie. He is so stoned he can't tell his left foot from his right. He returns to his apartment, and none of the staff who had been with him before his hospitalization are with him any longer. They have all taken new positions within the agency. His "coverage" now is made up of strangers.

Sound familiar?

There's more. You know what comes next, don't you? It is, after all, an archetypal story.

They brought out the old intervention books. Someone says, "George used to like to go swimming with Steven. Let's resurrect his swimming "program." And now George, who is so stoned he can't tell his left foot from his right, is off to the YMCA to do his swimming "program" with a new caregiver he barely knows.

And you know what happened next, I'm almost sure of it...Steven gets very upset in the pool and...well, you know. You've heard a story like this one before.

We all know it in our heart of hearts. We just keep forgetting. It's not about swimming. It's about swimming with Steven.

Finding purpose, joy, commitment

I believe the primary goal of our service system should be to help people to maintain

and broaden their social network. Our work should be to help people stay connected to their families and communities. We need social policy that supports families to raise their children at home. We need schools that accept children in their doors and take pride in creating places that are for all children. When people grow up, they need to live in homes that are indistinguishable from your home or mine. They need valued roles in the community, including real jobs for real wages. They need good health care — to experience well-being, not just the absence of illness. In short, people need real lives.

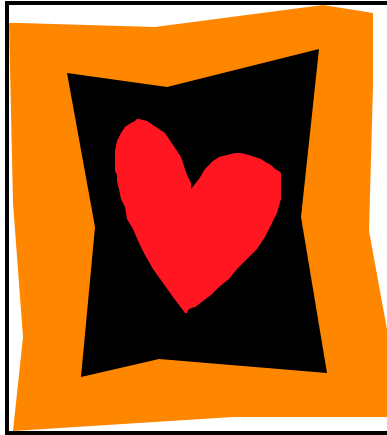
We need to create ways of organizing human services that promote relationships. Part of what is exhausting so many care givers these days is that our work is addressing the primary need of the people we serve — to be in meaningful relationship with others.

Things You Can Do

- ◆ Learn about person- and family-centered principles. Use one or more of the planning tools to help you think about one person you support.
- ◆ Make a commitment to one person. Spend time with the person throughout the year in an effort to know them better and for them to know you better. Ask, What is it that our organization does that helps, and what are the things we do that get in the way. Invite others to enter into similar partnerships. Sit down often in conversation to describe what you are learning.
- ◆ Go home to the people you love (see next tool). You will learn more about the importance of relationships from paying attention to your own, then you will ever learn from reading books or attending workshops.

Second Tool

**Wake up to the people
right next to you.**



**Make friends with
yourself.**



A person's needs are best met by people whose needs are met

I BELIEVE THAT ONE OF THE MOST fundamental reasons why professionals have lost touch with the importance of relationships in the lives of people with disabilities, is that they have lost touch with the importance of relationships in their personal lives.

Consider how well you know your fellow workers. Do you know anything about their families? Do you know how it is that they have come to this work?

It is often the case that we do not know each other in any meaningful sense. And, having failed to know one another deeply, we then try to come together and solve complex human problems. It makes no sense!

Things You Can Do

- ◆ Find regular time to pause and reflect with your fellow employees.
- ◆ Explore questions such as these, adapted from Margaret Wheatley's (2002) *Turning to one another*:

How did I come to this work?
Do I feel that my vocation is truly right for me?
What is my faith in the future?
What do I believe about others?
What am I willing to notice in my world?
When have I experienced good listening?
Am I willing to reclaim time to think?
What is the relationship I want with the earth?
What is my unique contribution to the whole?
When have I experienced working for the common good?
When have I experienced the sacred?

IT IS ALSO TRUE THAT THE PEOPLE doing our work have also lost touch with their families and friends. I encourage people to "go home" to the people who are most important in their lives.

Things You Can Do

- ◆ Go home right now and hug your sweetheart like you used to (when her/his hands were too hot to touch).
- ◆ Make a regular date with your partner to spend time with each other (alone). It doesn't have to be complicated. Get Chinese takeout and rent a movie to watch together.
- ◆ Spend time playing with your children. Put aside your worries and To Do lists. Play the "Mousetrap" game like it is the most important thing there is.
- ◆ Go visit your Mom and Dad. Share with them stories of good things they did for you when you were a little boy or little girl.
- ◆ Contact your siblings. Make a plan to get together somewhere fun to "reconnect."
- ◆ Call a friend you have lost touch with over the years. You both need to hear from one another.

Make Friends With Yourself

Finally, consider making friends with yourself. Many of us have become strangers to ourselves. We are always taking care of others and forgetting what we need. Some of us

have become our own worst enemy. We are always running ourselves down for something we haven't accomplished, or for something we did wrong.

Ask yourself, Do I treat myself as well as I would treat a guest in my house?

The answer, sadly, is no. Many of us are far more generous with others than we are with our own selves. We are obsessed with self-improvement strategies — things to help us be better.

I like what the Buddhist nun, Pema Chodron says. She says that “every act of self-improvement is an act of aggression towards the self.” The basic idea of self-improvement, after all, is that once you improve, then you will be lovable.

Buddhism teaches us that we must make friends with our entire being. Not just that stuff we are proud of, but that “smelly stuff” too. Pema Chodron encourages us to invite our smelly selves in for tea. Learn to be gentle with those parts of ourselves that we have historically scorned.

Can you do it? Or does it seem too difficult? You might be reading this now, thinking “Goodness. David is right. I am really hard on myself.” And now you're being hard on yourself for being hard on yourself.

For many of us, the practice of running ourselves down is like an overly-developed muscle. We do it so easily, we forget that it takes effort.

Things You Can Do

- ◆ Read Pema Chodron's *The Wisdom of No Escape And The Path of Loving Kindness*. A most practical book for people in the helping profession.
- ◆ Another interesting take on the subject of 'self hate' comes from Cheri Huber's *There is Nothing Wrong With You: Going Beyond Self-Hate*. Easy to follow, the book examines some of our most common traps in trying to 'self-improve.'
- ◆ Make a list of those things that bring you joy, those things you never seem to have time for anymore. Grant yourself permission to enjoy yourself. Lighten up. The suffering of others will be waiting for you when you return.

Simple exercise

Think of a time when you felt extremely challenged.

How did you feel when you were first aware of this challenge? What was your first reaction?

Who was available to you? What resources were available to you?

Did you feel judged? Who did the judging? (you? Others? Both?)

What did you do to resolve the conflict?

Consider any challenge that might confront you in the future. Are there ways in which you will treat yourself better as a result of this experience?

[Adapted from Catford and Ray, 1991, pp.23-24]

And remember...There is always a lot of space.

HAVE YOU EVER LOOKED AT SOMETHING AS BIG AND BEAUTIFUL AS THE Grand Canyon, or the Atlantic Ocean? There it is, in front of you, bigger than anything you have ever seen before. Your mind opens. You breathe in the air and take in all of the space around you. You realize that the world is full of possibilities, full of potential. But if you stand there long enough, chances are you will begin to worry. Then you take another breath and begin to worry. Something pops into your mind and it seems that everything is closing down around you. Perhaps you begin to worry about your time (how little you have). Or your diet. Will you have a hamburger and fries for lunch, or try to eat healthy. You take in another breath and begin to worry about your retirement account or the upcoming election. Your view narrows, the space all around you collapses, and the next thing you know, you are searching for your car keys and rushing off to take care of “business.” Life is suddenly no longer full of possibilities and potential. It is a chore, a big worry.

Perhaps your view of the person who engages in difficult behaviors was once wide and spacious, full of hope and optimism, possibilities and potential, but now it has become narrow and pessimistic. You have been struggling and worrying for so long. You’re tired. It’s understandable. The smartest, wisest, most patient, most helpful people in the world struggle *all the time* to find the spaciousness of things, the possibilities and potential present in every situation.

But that’s the work of it -- finding the potential in the person you are supporting, even when you are tired to the bone. Regardless of our willingness or ability to see it, the space -- the potential -- is there. Whether we notice it or not, there is always a lot of space around us.





I am asking you to come back home

-Jo Carson

I am asking you to come back home
before you lose the chance of seein' me alive
You already missed your Daddy
You already missed your Uncle Howard
You missed Luciel.
I kept them and I buried them.
You showed up for the funerals.
Funerals are the easy part.

You even missed that dog you left.
I dug him a hole and put him in it.
It was a Sunday morning, but dead animals
don't wait no better than dead people.

My mamma used to say she could feel herself
runnin' short of the breath of life. So can I.
And I am blessed tired of burying the things I love.
Sombdy else can do that job to me.
You'll be back then; you come for funerals.

I'd rather you came back now and got my stories.
I've got whole lives of stories that belong to you.
I could fill you up with stories;
stories I aint told nobody yet,
stories with your name, your blood in them.
Aint nobody gonna hear them if you don't
and you aint gonna hear them unless you get back
home.

When I am dead, it will not matter
how hard you press your ear to the ground.

From *The Rag and Bone Shop of the Heart: A Poetry Anthology*
(1993), edited by Robert Bly, James Hillman, and Michael
Meade.

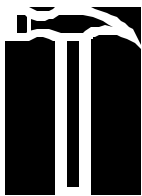
Third Tool

Drive fear from the
workplace.



Retribution is a serious sign
of weakness.

The title of this section is derived from Kathleen Ryan and Daniel Ostrom's *Driving Fear from the Workplace: How to Overcome the Invisible Barriers to Quality, Productivity, and Innovation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.



Is fear a dominant part of your workplace?

AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY, the strategic resource for corporations in America was size. The bigger the corporation, the more machines it had at its disposal to produce products (e.g., automobiles). The more products it could produce at a low cost, the better its standing in the marketplace.

With the dawn of the information age, the strategic resource for America's corporations is creativity. An idea can literally transform an industry overnight (e.g., the micro chip).

Traditionally, corporations have been managed with fear-based strategies. Corporations have been shaped like pyramids, with leadership at the top, middle managers in the middle, and the assembly line workers at the bottom. Rules were established for all to follow, and anyone breaking the rules was simply replaced, like a broken part in a machine. At times, managers had little regard for the personal lives of their employees, expecting them to work long and unfriendly hours. Input into the decision-making process was rare or unheard of.

Managers of corporations in the information age know that a creative and productive workforce needs a different style of management. Managers must attend to the personal needs of employees and involve them in the decision-making process. Joy in the workplace is a necessity.

What does all of this have to do with human services?

I believe that human services has entered a new age. It is the age of self-determination and person-centered planning. The degree to which a provider organization can respond to

the unique needs and dreams of individuals is the degree to which it will succeed or fail in the "new marketplace."

To succeed, provider organizations will need a workforce that *listens* to individuals who experience disabilities and *responds* to their needs in innovative and creative ways. Sadly, many human service organizations are inflexible and unresponsive. Layers and layers are often needed for even the most simple of transactions. And people are afraid of getting in trouble should they step outside of the "way we do things" and try something innovative. Fear is a dominant part of the human services landscape.

Kathleen Ryan and Daniel Ostreich, in their book, *Driving Fear Out of the Workplace: How to Overcome the Invisible Barriers to Quality, Productivity, and Innovation*, describe symptoms of fear-based organizations. I have incorporated these symptoms with a few of my own in a checklist called, *Symptoms of In-Human Human Services* (Table 2).

Read through the list. Check off the symptoms that "fit" your organization. Remember that the presence of one or two of these symptoms does not mean that your organization is fear-based. But when several of these symptoms appear again and again, it is highly symptomatic that fear is a dominant part of the workplace

Strategies for "driving fear from the workplace"

If, after reading the list, you are concerned about the presence of fear in your

Table 2

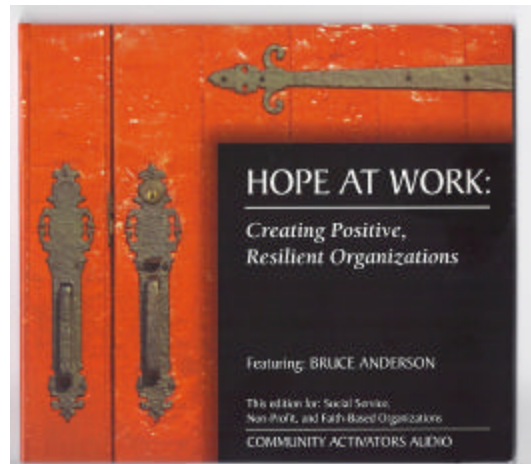
Symptoms of *In-Human* Human Services

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Over-attribution of the organization's troubles to people with challenging behaviors. ◆ Development of behavior plans without input from the person or the people who know the person best. ◆ Development of policies and procedures without input from the people most directly affected by the policies and procedures. ◆ Resignation of high-quality performers and creative thinkers. ◆ "Us" versus "Them" talk. ◆ Complaining after a meeting is over. ◆ Expensive training programs aimed to "fix" employee performance. ◆ Meetings where no one asks questions or no problems are solved. ◆ Recurrent absenteeism and tardiness problems. ◆ "Could care less" approach to work. ◆ Stressful work conditions or relationships. ◆ Lawsuits against the organization. ◆ Widespread dissatisfaction with promotions, assignments, and terminations; labor unrest; strikes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Threatening behavior by supervisors, managers, or employees. ◆ Lack of suggestions for improvement. ◆ Issues of race and gender are not openly discussed; if they are discussed, no real change in hiring, promotions, etc. take place. ◆ Many layers of approval for simple transactions. ◆ Loss of customers who complain about poor service. ◆ Resistance to performance appraisals. ◆ People feeling they get no feedback. ◆ An overly large number of personnel policies; an enforcement approach to rules; arguments about the rules. ◆ Instances of unethical behavior ◆ Negative feelings about the organization; lack of pride; cynicism. ◆ A very active rumor mill. <p style="margin-top: 20px;">Adapted from Kathleen Ryan and Daniel Ostreich's <i>Driving Fear from the Workplace: How to Overcome the Invisible Barriers to Quality, Productivity, and Innovation</i>. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.</p> |
|---|--|

workplace, do not despair. Many work cultures, once ruled by fear, have learned new ways to approach the management of people and work. Consider these strategies adapted Ryan and Ostreich's helpful book:

- ◆ **Change your assumptions and expectations about each other.** Managers must see employees as people who will do a good job if given support and permission. Employees must see managers as sensitive people who are open to feedback and responsive to change (see Table 3).
- ◆ **Pay attention to interpersonal conduct.** It is important that people critically examine their interpersonal conduct and alter fear-inducing behaviors (e.g., public criticism, demanding tone of voice, etc.).
- ◆ **Create an organization that learns from its mistakes.** Mistakes are a fact of life. While mistakes that hurt people must be avoided, we must find ways to examine our errors and find solutions that are enduring.
- ◆ **Discuss the undiscussables.** There are many topics that people avoid discussing (e.g., race and gender issues, pay scale disparities). It is important for the leadership of the organization to create an atmosphere where people can say what they need to say, including a refusal to participate in retribution.
- ◆ **Collaborate on decisions.** Empowering people to collaborate in decision-making reduces fear and suspicion *if* the process is clear to those involved, and *if* the process results in meaningful change (see Issue/ Action Planning, page 25-30).

- ◆ **Develop a reading group to explore Ryan and Ostreich's *Driving Fear From the Workplace* in depth.** *Not* talking about fear in the workplace exaggerates fear. A simple, but profound, tool for transforming a problem into opportunity is conversation. Use Ryan and Ostreich's book as a structure for a conversation about fear.



I love the CD from my friend Bruce Anderson. Really helpful, down-to-earth information about transforming organizational cultures. Order yours online: www.communityactivators.com

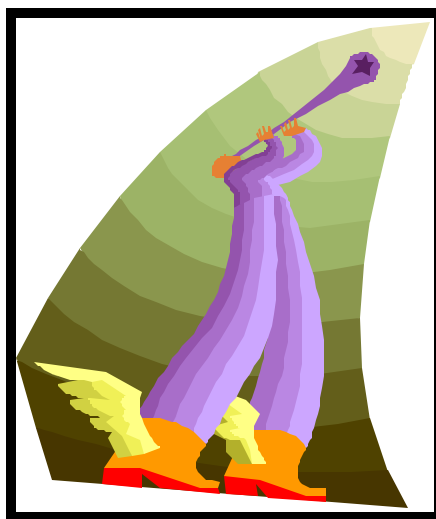
Table 3
New Assumptions

Imagine that employers made these assumptions about employees:	Imagine that employees made these assumptions about managers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Want to take responsibility for their work and want to do a good job. ◆ Care about their work beyond the money they get to perform it. ◆ Can consider the “big picture” ◆ Are willing to take responsibility for their mistakes. ◆ Are capable of establishing their own structures in order to maintain focus. ◆ Want to contribute freely. ◆ Are fully capable of understanding budgetary and political realities. ◆ Do not just focus on entitlements and rights. ◆ Are intrinsically honest and trustworthy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Are sensitive to the personal issues and interests of employees. ◆ Enjoy open, participative, problem-solving. ◆ Want the workload to be fair and reasonable. ◆ Work to find solutions that are both technically and politically sound. ◆ Pride themselves on working fairly and objectively. ◆ Want input on decisions. ◆ Are willing to put the success of the organization, welfare of employees, and service to consumers before private interests. ◆ Do not think that they are better than their employees. ◆ Are honest and would consider retaliation a serious sign of weakness.

Table adapted from Kathleen Ryan and Daniel Oestreich (1991) : Driving Fear from the Workplace: How to Overcome the Invisible Barriers to Quality, Productivity, and Innovation. San Francisco: Jossey Bass

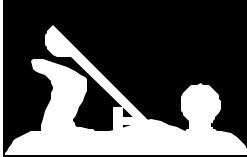
Fourth Tool

Make joy a goal.



When was the last time someone got on top of the conference room table and danced?*

* I will be forever thankful to Gerald Provencal for posing this question in his wonderful chapter, *Culturing Commitment*.



This is the work — celebrate more often.

I LIKE TO TELL PEOPLE THE STORY of my work with Upper Valley Services in Vermont. I go there occasionally, and each time I go I feel completely *welcomed*.

There is always good food, good stories, and sometimes even live music. We sit in the dining area of a beautiful home that has been converted to office space. There are spacious windows that overlook a beautiful, green meadow. The people here with me are the people who receive support and the people who provide support. They move naturally between one another. They seem to genuinely care about one another.

At some point in the day, I wonder when the time will come when I will be asked to do a presentation, or provide some kind of “consultation.” But the time never comes. We share more stories, laugh, and continue to eat. It is a celebration between friends.

As the day wears on, I become increasingly guilty, knowing that I will later be billing the organization for my time. I ask if I should do some kind of presentation. They laugh. We tell more stories and continue to eat.

I whisper to Al Vecchione, the organization’s clinical psychologist, “I feel like I should be working.” He whispers back, “This is the work.”

I know of very few organizations that I would personally want support from if I were disabled and needed support (this is a very sad thing to say, but my guess is that most professionals would agree). Upper Valley Services, however, is one organization that I know I could count on. They would help me to live a

life that makes sense *to me*. I say this with confidence because when I meet the people they serve, I meet people who are living joyful and meaningful lives. It doesn’t get any better than that.

Make no mistake about it, the folks at Upper Valley Services work very hard. They are among the best clinicians I know anywhere. But what they know is that we are all longing to be known. A powerful way to get to know one another is to eat together, to share stories, to laugh and listen to live music. It *is* the work.

So take the time to celebrate together. I believe that a great many of our struggles would be easier to resolve if we would just take the time for joy.

Ideas:

- ◆ Bring live music to the workplace. Chances are good that there are people working for your organization, or served by your organization, who are musically gifted. Invite them to perform at a retreat, or regular brown bag lunches.
- ◆ Create family celebrations, where the family members of those employed and served by the organization gather for good food, music, and storytelling.
- ◆ Form a book group with fellow workers and explore the ideas presented by George Manning, Kent Curtis and Steve McMillen in their 1996 book, *Building the Human Side of Work Community*.

Stamp out dead end IEP/IHP/IPP* goals.

Make joy the goal (it's brain friendly)

The human brain works better when its owner is having fun. It's a fact. A scientific fact.

A problem for many people who experience disabilities is that their teachers or caregivers have often forgotten the importance of fun in their instruction and interactions. Our stated goals and objectives are often uninteresting and, well, dreadfully boring (picture a person taking the caps off film canisters and putting them back together all day and you'll get the picture).

We call it "habilitation." It's not. It's a waste of time. In 1998, the Commonwealth of Virginia (my home state), spent \$42 million dollars to teach people dumb stuff in day activity programs and sheltered workshops, while spending less than \$6 million for supported employment supports. Ninety-seven percent of our children attended separate classrooms last years where they received a "special education" that was neither "special" or "educational." And it all cost millions of dollars!

The first question you should ask is "Does the person I care about want to be habilitated?" Many people are tired of our attempts to "fix"

them. They may want help finding a new house to live in, or they may need a lift to the pool, but they don't want anyone to teach them anything. Some states are giving people the opportunity to opt out of the "habilitation model" without having to sacrifice their funding. They can choose to get support from a personal assistant, no "habilitation" strings attached, who helps them to do things they want to do. People can also choose to get help learning things if they want that kind of help. It's their choice.

Imagine that.

Assuming that the person you are teaching is a child attending school (teaching skills is the point of our educational system), or perhaps an adult living in one of those states that insists on habilitation goals (get over it, reform is slow in some places), the second question to ask is "How does this skill help the person now and/or will it enhance his/her opportunities in the future?"

If you, and the person, come to the conclusion that the skill is useful, or will be useful, it's probably worth your time (and the state's resources) to get busy. But if it leads

Remember that joy is brain friendly.

nowhere, abandon it. Find something to bill the state for that leads somewhere.

Lou Brown used to say that teaching dumb stuff to people who have a hard time learning is more than a waste of time, it is a monumental waste of time, since each of us only a finite number of hours to learn, and to learn dumb stuff is to whittle away precious hours.

Examples of dumb habilitation goals:

- ◆ Good sitting.
- ◆ Good hands.
- ◆ Disney puzzles (all Disney puzzles).
- ◆ Using card board money (or card board buses).
- ◆ Taking turns with twenty people at the bowling ally.
- ◆ Brushing your teeth at a sheltered workshop.
- ◆ Walking around a mall with no money, accompanied by five-ten other people who have no money.
- ◆ Putting caps on film canisters.
- ◆ Taking caps off from film canisters.

One way to increase the chance that there is joy and meaning in a person's day while attention is still paid to his/her IEP/IHP/IPP goals, is to start with the question, "What makes for a meaningful and joyful day for this person?" Next, ask, "In the context of this meaningful and joyful day, when is the best time to teach the IEP/IHP/IPP objective?"

Developing an Instructional Matrix — Starting with a Meaningful and Joyful Day

An easy way to meet the instructional objectives mandated by your organization,

school, state, the Feds, etc., and not lose sight of helping the person to find meaning and joy, is to use the matrix provided on the next page.

In the boxes down the left side of the page, write down a meaningful, joyful schedule (teachers in inclusive schools can use the "typical" school day). On the horizontal axis, list the IPP/IEP objectives that everyone has agreed are important.

In the context of a meaningful day spent in the kinds of community places most people enjoy (like school, downtown, the beach), provide instruction and support.

Remember: Make Joy a Goal!

A Matrix for Instruction – Starting with a Meaningful and Joyful Day

Time of Day and Activity (e.g., 9 AM Coffee)	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 4	Objective 5	Objective 6

Fifth Tool

Forget mission statements.



Establish a **VISION**
you can touch, smell,
taste and hear.



The Vision Thing

Note: Portions of this text are taken directly from my paper "Issue/Action Planning: Promoting Responsive Human Services."

It is critical that the organization develop a clear idea of where it wants to go and what kind of organization it wants to be. An organization without a clearly defined purpose is destined to get exactly where it is going.

I have found the following exercise to be a helpful tool for creating a vision. The idea is suggested by John Graham (1991) in his book *Stick Your Neck Out: The Giraffe Project Handbook*. The Giraffe Project is an organization that is devoted to supporting people who "stick their necks out for the common good" A vision, says Graham, is different than a mission statement. A vision is "clear and concrete." It is steeped in detail to a point where you can almost "smell it." A vision is full in scope, it is the big picture. Unlike a mission statement which tells you what your organization will accomplish in your small part of the world, a vision statement describes something about the way your efforts will affect the larger community. It is "big enough" but it does not "lose the focus and commitment to the local challenge." It is a description of "changed attitudes as well as a changed physical situation" and it describes how individuals will take action to see that the vision is accomplished (Graham, 1991, pp. 26-27).

Here's how it works.

Sit down with colleagues in a comfortable environment free of distractions and imagine that you are getting together for a reunion of sorts. Imagine that it is two or perhaps five years in the future. You now work for your "dream organization." It is person-centered and staff-centered. It is an organization that

has blazed new ground and influenced the way other people provide services. It is an organization that is fun to work for. You feel challenged and energized. You love your job! Take a few moments to write what it looks and feels like to work for the organization. Be sure to write down what you will be doing but also write down what it feels like too. As Graham says, "Be so clear and concrete you can see it in detail, smell it, taste it."

After you have constructed your vision, say to yourself, "Obviously it was not easy creating this wonderful organization. It took a lot of hard work and there were obstacles in the way. What were the major obstacles you faced? Write them down.

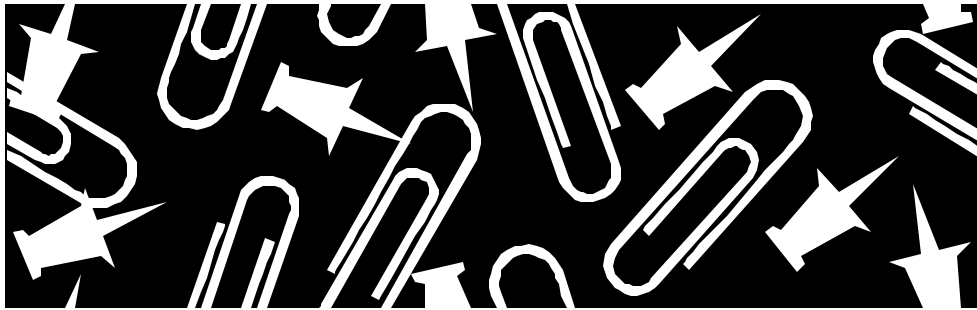
Next, develop at least three action steps that you took to overcome these obstacles. Remember, you are developing this list of obstacles in the future. You have overcome the obstacles already; you are simply recapping the ones that took the most work to overcome.

Once a vision is developed, and specific action steps have been established to overcome the obstacles, you can develop mission statements which outline the overall purpose and direction of the organization, as well as specific program-by-program and individual-by-individual mission statements. It is critical that these mission statements be consistent throughout the organization; consistent mission statements, says Stephen Covey, are in "alignment" with one another (in short, the mission statements of individuals or site-specific programs do not contradict the overall mission of the organization).

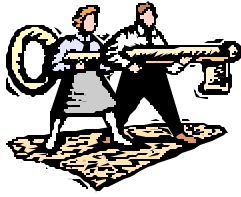
Your next challenge will be to put your plans into action.

Sixth Tool

**Action speaks louder
than words.**



**Get organized.
Stay organized.**



Good intentions plus no results equals no results.

- Werner Ehrhard

Note: Portions of this text are taken directly from my paper "Issue/Action Planning: Promoting Responsive Human Services."

Talk is cheap.

Even well articulated vision and mission statements will fall to pieces if no action is taken. If no one makes a personal commitment to make the vision a reality, the dream will end up as another piece of paper in a file drawer. *Wanting* change and *making it happen* are two different things.

Issue/Action planning is a way of making the organizational vision a reality. It is a process for uncovering and solving the real problems that face staff who want to provide more responsive services. It is a process for teaching people that real growth can occur when we act upon what we have heard. In short, Issue/Action planning is about *listening*

Issue/Action planning is based upon five assumptions: (1) creating responsive organizations depends upon our willingness and ability to listen to the needs of staff; (2) adult learners learn best through modeling and imitation (listen to people and they will learn to listen; support people and they will learn to be supportive); (3) organizations which empower staff at every level to make decisions and take action will be far more empowering of individuals with disabilities than organizations which are run in a top-down, autocratic style; (4) problems facing staff are often far more complex than they first appear. Many of the dilemmas facing staff result from a lack of emotional support and encouragement rather than a lack of technical information; and (5) true innovation results

from "a series of small decisions and actions sequenced over time" (Mintzberg, 1990) rather than grand proclamations about better values or "new ways of doing things."

What follows is a description of Issue/Action planning, beginning with a description of the ground rules for initial and follow-up meetings. A form for recording specific issues, obstacles and action steps is attached.

The Initial Meeting

An Issue/Action meeting can be held with an individual staff member or a group of staff. The primary focus of the meeting is to identify issues that impact negatively upon job performance. Thus, to the extent possible, it makes sense to keep the focus of the meeting as individual-specific or program-specific as possible. Large meetings where disparate interests converge are usually not helpful.

A vision of what the individual or group would like to accomplish is the first task. Action without vision is a dangerous path to take. The chances of getting nowhere are great.

As mentioned in the previous section, it is helpful if the individual or group understands and has helped to create a vision statement for the organization. Their vision statement should be in alignment with the organization's overall purpose. Once completed, the group should list specific obstacles and action steps to overcome the obstacles and address the issue (see Table 4). Plenty of time should be allowed for gathering everyone's input. A ground rule for all meetings is: *everyone's point of view is valid. When someone is speaking, everyone else*

Issue/Action Planning

should be listening.

The focus of an Issue/Action meeting need not necessarily be the "big picture." These meetings can answer more immediate, short-term issues such as "what do you need to have more fun at work *this week*?" or "how can we help you to feel safer when Roger is aggressive?" The point is: the people working within the program should set the agenda to the extent possible.

Consider using the form in Table 4. A facilitator asks people to clarify points that seem confusing or unclear (it is important to describe the vision/obstacles/action steps as *concisely* as possible). At the end of this process, the group is asked to assign priority to the action steps and people are asked to take individual responsibility to see that things get done. This does not mean that an individual has to get it done by himself or herself. It means someone must take responsibility for monitoring its progress.

An important point here is that Issue/Action planning should help to relieve the stress that people are feeling day to day. If the process "heaps" more work on people who already feel overwhelmed, it is no longer useful. At the same time, being organized is a habit and habits take time to develop. You might establish an arbitrary time to practice Issue/Action planning before deciding if the process works for you. Consider using the Meeting Checklist (Table 5) as a means of getting organized prior to, during, and at the conclusion of each meeting.

Follow-up Meetings

Follow-up meetings should be held as often as necessary. The length of the meeting should

be determined ahead of time (45 minutes - 1 1/2 hours is best). At the end of this time period, the facilitator should see to it that the meeting ends. Issues that have not been addressed or have not been resolved should be, if possible, tabled until the next meeting (human services workers spend too much time in meetings and they need to focus and act).

Previous issues and their status should be discussed first. Issues that have been successfully resolved can be "highlighted" to indicate completion. Issues/Actions that need follow-up or further planning should be addressed before new issues are discussed, unless the group decides that the new issue is a priority. The participants should submit new issues for each meeting *prior* to the meeting.

A minimum amount of time should be spent *defining* issues in follow-up meetings. Issues should be identified prior to the meeting when possible. Talking about an issue over and over again does not resolve anything. The point of the meetings is to *decide what is needed, schedule action, and make sure the team is accountable.*

As my wife Cyndi is fond of saying, "Meetings are not the work. Meetings are to figure out what the work *is*."

Stay Committed to the Process

Issue/Action planning is a process. It does not run by itself. It requires a personal commitment from the people involved to maintain a proactive stance regarding support. It will not work if its only purpose is to relieve the occasional guilt we all feel when we have been too reactive. If support is on-going, if listening is an important part of the agency's rituals, than staff will likely be supportive and listen. It's that simple.

**Table 4
Issue/Action Worksheet**

The Issue:

What is the issue that concerns me/us? What is the problem (1-2 sentences)?

Your Vision:

What it will look like when I/we have successfully resolved the issue/solved the problem (2-3 sentences)?

Obstacle #1: <i>standing in the way of achieving the Vision.</i>	Action/Person Responsible: <i>Steps we will take to overcome Obstacle #1. Who will do it.</i>	Needed Support: <i>To complete this action step, I/we will need:</i>
	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
Obstacle #2: <i>standing in the way of achieving the Vision.</i>	Action/Person Responsible: <i>Steps we will take to overcome Obstacle #2. Who will do it.</i>	Needed Support: <i>To complete this action step, I/we will need:</i>
	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
Obstacle #3: <i>standing in the way of achieving the Vision.</i>	Action/Person Responsible: <i>Steps we will take to overcome Obstacle #3. Who will do it.</i>	Needed Support: <i>To complete this action step, I/we will need:</i>
	1.	1.
	2.	2.
	3.	3.
Evaluation: <i>What measures will we use to assure ourselves the Vision has been reached?</i>		



Date: _____

Description: _____

Table 5
Meeting Checklist

BEFORE the meeting begins:	
I have prepared myself by getting clear about what I would like to accomplish during our time together.	
	Role Clarification
	I need clarity about my role in the organization and would like to use the group's time to figure out what is expected of me.
	I need clarity about how I might make a contribution to the group.
	Problem Clarification
	I am not exactly sure what I need or what the problem is. I would like to use some of the group's time to figure it out.
	Validation
	I have a pretty good idea of what the problem is and what I need to do. During the meeting, I/we need to:
	◆ Briefly describe my idea and see if it makes sense.
	◆ Describe the obstacles standing in the way.
	◆ Spend the bulk of our time figuring out the action steps.
	◆ Figure out how to evaluate
	Information Sharing
	I simply want to update the group about my work.
	I have news to share and/or a deadline to remind people about
	I simply want to listen and contribute where I can.
	I cannot make a commitment to be at the meeting today because of other obligations

Special thanks to the following folks from the Person-Centered Planning Project of the Oregon Technical Assistance Corporation, for helping me to develop the Meeting Checklist: Sherrie Anderson, Barrie Brewer, Yvonne Bowling, Janet Conklin, Cheri Goss, and Carol Wright.

Table 5
Meeting Checklist *continued*

During the meeting:	
I will take personal responsibility at the very beginning of the meeting to make sure:	
	An orderly process is in place
	The group is clear about who is facilitating the meeting, taking notes, and keeping time.
	I will honor the people conducting the meeting, knowing they may do things differently than I would do them.
	I know that we all lose the plot occasionally. I will help to keep us on track by staying on track.
	I will keep all of my comments as brief as possible so that everyone gets a chance to contribute.
	I will be sure that my question or issue is really something that the entire group needs to discuss.
I know that, from time to time, I will disagree with other members of the team. When I do, I will say the following kinds of things Senge et al.'s (1994) "Balancing Advocacy and Inquiry":	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>What do we know for a fact?</i> ◆ <i>What do we sense is true, but have no data for yet?</i> ◆ <i>What don't we know?</i> ◆ <i>What is unknowable?</i> ◆ <i>Are we starting from two very different sets of assumptions here? Where do they come from?</i> ◆ <i>What, then, would have to happen, before you consider the alternative.</i>
I know that we will sometimes reach an impasse (because we are passionate about our work). I will take responsibility for saying the following kinds of things (also from Senge et al., 1994):	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>It feels like we are getting into an impasse and I am afraid we will walk away without a better understanding of what to do. Have you got any ideas that will help clarify our thinking? Or help resolve the issue?</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ I can let go of my idea as long as we can objectively test out the alternatives and see what happens.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ I will promise not to squelch my feelings because I don't want to go through the trouble of explaining my views. If I do, I know that I am responsible for not being heard.

Table 5
Meeting Checklist *continued*

At the very end of the meeting, I will:	
	Tie up loose ends
	I will make sure that a next meeting time is established if necessary.
	Make sure that no one on the team has been neglected; I will make sure they have been asked if they would like time on the next agenda
	Acknowledge my fellow team members
	I will make sure I have acknowledged each team member by saying "I'm glad you were here with me today."

Covey, Merrill & Merrill's Time Management Matrix

HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED HOW ORGANIZED you have gotten over the years, yet somehow you seem to have less time to do the things that matter most? Steven Covey, Roger Merrill and Rebecca Merrill, in their 1994 book *Putting First Things First*, say this is because we have not applied principles to our time management. In short, we do more and more, but don't take the time to do what matters most.

Covey, Merrill, and Merrill say we are driven by "urgency." We have long lists of things we think we must do, and we do them, but at the end of each day, we have little time left over for doing what matters most.

Consider the quadrant in Table 6 from *Putting First Things First*.

"Quadrant I represents things that are both 'urgent' and 'important.'" Here's where we handle a crisis, meet a deadline for Medicaid, have our abscessed tooth pulled, help our child who has fallen from her bicycle. "This is where we manage, where we produce, where we bring our experience and judgement to bear in responding to many needs and challenges. If we ignore it, we become buried alive. But we also need to realize that many important activities become urgent through procrastination, or because we don't do enough prevention and planning.

"Quadrant II includes activities that are 'important, but not urgent.' This is the Quadrant of Quality. Here's where we do our long-range planning, anticipate and prevent problems, empower others,

NOTE: I have changed the text from Covey, Merrill and Merrill's work slightly so that the examples better fit human service work. The author's work is in quotations.



Yes, the
paperwork is a
problem.

But the paperwork
is not *the* problem.

The problem is
staying focused on
what has meaning.
As Steven Covey et
al. put it, "The main
thing is to keep the
main thing the main
thing."

From *Putting First Things First* (1994).

Covey, Merrill, & Merrill (1994) *continued*-

broaden our minds and increase our skills through reading and continuous professional development, envision how we're going to help a struggling son or daughter, prepare for important meetings and presentations, or invest in relationships through deep, honest listening. Increasing time spent in this quadrant *increases our ability to do*. Ignoring this quadrant feeds and enlarges Quadrant I, creating stress, burnout, and deeper crises for the person consumed by it. On the other hand, investing in this quadrant shrinks Quadrant I. Planning, preparation, and prevention keep many things from becoming urgent. Quadrant II does not act on us; we must act on it. This is the Quadrant of personal leadership.

"Quadrant III is almost the phantom of Quadrant I. It includes things that are 'urgent, but not important.' This is the Quadrant of Deception. The noise of urgency creates the illusion of importance. But the actual activities, if they are important at all, are only important to someone else. Many phone calls, meetings, and drop-in visitors fall into this category. We spend a lot of time in Quadrant III meeting other people's priorities and expectations, thinking we are really in Quadrant I.

"Quadrant IV is reserved for those activities that are 'not urgent, and not important. This is the Quadrant of Waste. Of course, we really shouldn't be there at all. But we get so battle-scarred from being tossed around in Quadrants I, II, and III that we often 'escape' to Quadrant IV for survival. What kinds of things are in Quadrant IV? Not necessarily recreational things, because recreation in the true sense of re-creation is a valuable Quadrant II activity. But reading addictive light novels, habitually watching 'mindless'

television shows, or gossiping around the water fountain at the office would qualify as Quadrant IV time wasters. Quadrant IV is not survival; it's deterioration. It may have an initial cotton candy feel, but we quickly find there is nothing there.

"We'd like to suggest now that you look at the Time Management Matrix [Table 4] and think back over the past week of your life. If you were to place each of your last week's activities in one of these quadrants, where would you say you spent the majority of your time?

"...If you are like most people we work with, you spent the majority of your time in Quadrants I and III. And what's the cost? If urgency is driving you, what important things — maybe even 'first things' — are not receiving your time and attention (pp. 37-39).

How do you figure out what your Quadrant IV activities might be?

Consider these two questions from *Putting First Things First*: (p. 39):

*What is the one activity that you **know** if you did superbly well and consistently would have significant positive results in your personal life?*

*What is the one activity that you **know** if you did superbly well and consistently would have significant positive results in your work life?*

What most commonly shows up?

1. Improving communication with people.
2. Better preparation.
3. Better planning and organizing.
4. Taking better care of self.
5. Seizing new opportunities.
6. Personal development.
7. Empowerment.

Table 6
Time Management Matrix

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Crisis ◆ Pressing problems ◆ Deadline-driven projects, meetings, preparations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Preparation ◆ Prevention ◆ Values clarification ◆ Planning ◆ Relationship building ◆ True re-creation ◆ Empowerment
Not Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Interruptions, some phone calls ◆ Some mail, some reports ◆ Some meetings ◆ Many proximate, pressing matters ◆ Many popular activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Trivia, busy work ◆ Junk mail ◆ Some phone calls ◆ Time wasters ◆ "Escape" activities.

©1994 Covey Leadership Center, Inc.

Seventh Tool

Listen, learn, help...



LEAD.

Leaders Must Lead

Note: Much of this section first appeared in my paper, "Issue/Action Planning: Creating Responsive Human Services."

The first job of the leader is to create an atmosphere conducive to the building of an agency vision. To do so, the leader must solicit the input of people who receive services, their families, and each and every staff member. If there is a problem within or outside of the agency that inhibits movement towards the vision, the leader must solicit input so that the problem can be dealt with forthrightly. It is always true that some issues are beyond our control, but a good leader will help staff to focus on what can be done rather than worry about problems that are out of anyone's reach. Blaming the organization's troubles on external factors is a way of denying the true responsibility we all have to make things better.

As Gerald Provencal (1987) stated so well in *Culturing Commitment*

"It is the leader's job to lead. This requires that she or he accept the stewardship for seeing to it that a productively charged atmosphere exists in the organization. Whether it is the director or someone else who is the cheerleader, the person in charge has no more fundamental duty than to see to it that the agency energy level is high enough to move the organization forward to meet its objectives. The agency personality that takes shape during this process is one the director has no choice but to take responsibility for, whether the organization emerges as robust and ambitious or whiny and aimless. Staff, whether burned out or spirited, trace their performance lineage to their leaders" (p. 68). Thus, leaders who fail to maintain their commitments to change should expect a work

force that cannot sustain its commitments. Leaders who fail to be supportive should expect a work force that is not supportive. A leader should model his or her expectations; only then can a work force reflect the values he or she espouses.

True leadership, writes Jay Donald Walters, is an art, not a position. True leaders support staff. There is no room for coercion or fear and it is the leader's responsibility to see that such tactics are abolished.

Leaders Must Empower Staff

Leadership requires listening. I believe that one of the most dis-empowering things one person can do to another is to ignore them.

Leaders must create a culture in which everyone's point of view is respected and heard. This does not mean that everyone's point of view is instantaneously supreme. But everyone must be heard, and it is the leader's job to model listening, even if he or she disagrees with what is being said. Indeed, leaders should not expect that everything they hear will come in a palatable form. It is my experience that people who have not been listened to rarely find polite ways to say what they have been thinking. It is important to let people discharge their negative feelings and to avoid over-personalization of their message. Inside their harsh words there is usually important information that can lead to constructive change.

Leaders must model the importance of listening to individuals with disabilities by insisting that person-centered plans be honored as the focal point of the organization's mission. This does not mean that everything a person with disabilities

dreams about must become a reality tomorrow. But it does mean that the creative and intellectual energies of the entire organization must be focused on helping the person to make real his or her vision. My experience is that people who receive our services do not want shuttle trips to the moon. They want simple things that most of us take for granted: places to live with people they choose to live with, real jobs, real educational opportunities, etc. If the leadership of an agency does not make it clear that people's dreams are of tantamount importance, the organization will not be truly person-centered.

Similarly, leaders must listen (regularly) to the needs of staff and allow them to formulate their own solutions to problems. When an organization moves from traditional service delivery to person-centered planning, problems are inevitable. A leader must honor and respect the emotional as well as intellectual taxation such change requires. It is important to remember that innovation often represents displacement for workers. If leaders provide on-going support to workers, they will gain the confidence necessary to change old habits into new.

Issue/Action planning (pages 27-33) encourages all members of an organization to participate in the decision making process. Some managers may feel uncomfortable delegating difficult decisions to staff. But leaders must be pragmatic. When you consider the complexity of most human services organizations these days (the sheer volume of decisions that must be made each day), it makes little sense to micro-manage. To borrow a popular phrase, "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime."

The degree to which any manager can permit staff the freedom to solve their own problems is dependent upon several variables.

Tannenbaum & Schmidt (1973) have identified several "essential conditions" that must be present: "(a) staff have a relatively high need for decision making, (b) staff are "ready" to take on the responsibility, (c) they have a relatively high tolerance for ambiguity, (d) they are interested in the problem and feel that it is important, (e) they identify with the mission of the organization, and (f) they have learned to expect to participate in decision making" (p. 142).

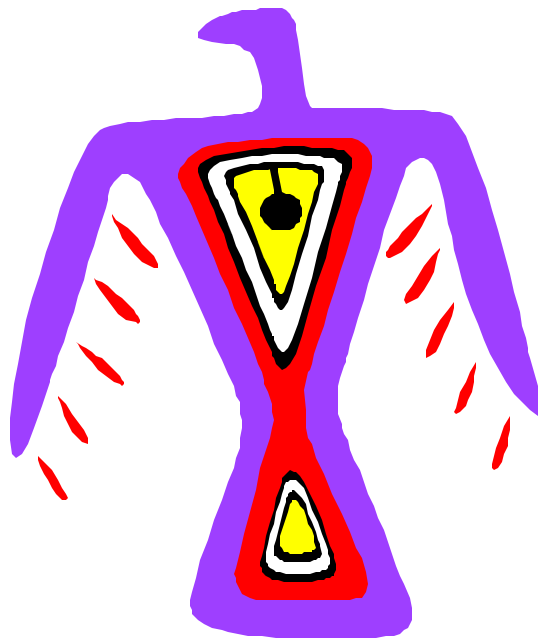
Leaders Must Create Celebration

The third role of the leader is to celebrate the accomplishments of the organization. We do not have enough fun in human services. We are usually overwhelmed by self-doubt and the enormous tasks before us. But an organization that does not celebrate its accomplishments is subjecting itself to a kind of extinction schedule. Without a regular dose of reinforcement for what is good, there is a good chance that good will disappear. Just as it is important to focus on a person's gifts and capacities, so it is important to focus on an organization's accomplishments and true heroes. Leaders should insist that people take time to reflect (even brag a little) about their accomplishments. Invite board members or other interested people to join your celebration.

Insist on fun. It is a powerful tool for change.

Eighth Tool

Tell stories.



Often.

Stories as a way of knowing and organizing

I LOVE A GOOD STORY. . My father was a story teller. A good one. He used to tell me stories about impossible things, like giant fish that dragged him up the Dog River, and diamonds falling from the sky. In all of his stories, there were lessons. One way or another I learned something, even if I didn't realize it at the time.

I like what John O'Brien says. He says stories can be a powerful way of knowing and organizing. They can be a powerful tool for creating change.

My friends Bruce and Gina Anderson use story-telling all the time in their work with community groups and organizations that are embarking on change. I have learned a great deal from them about the "mechanics" of story telling and would like to offer some of their wisdom here.

Three things are needed for a story:

- ◆ a storyteller,
- ◆ a person to listen to the story, and
- ◆ a crucible (or place for the story to be told).

Most good stories:

- ◆ are about a place of origin, about leaving the place of origin, and returning home.

Stories are important because:

- ◆ stories are connected to your spirit...by telling your story you stay connected to the deepest parts of yourself.

- ◆ stories have a quality of "evocation" to them. They evoke a community response by creating a shared suspension of time and listening.
- ◆ stories have an inner rhythm (like music) that creates a unison of people in a room and builds a shared sense of community through that un-spoken rhythm.
- ◆ stories help us to stop separating our lives between "logic" and "emotion". Stories blend all the different parts of ourselves and keep us whole.
- ◆ stories keep us in touch with our life's circle. They tell us when we are fragmented and leaving our home, and when we have come home and reclaimed our wholeness.
- ◆ stories are often about loss...they help us to prepare for those events in our lives.
- ◆ stories, when really listened to, allow us to release parts of ourselves and move forward in our life.
- ◆ stories, by ritualizing beginnings and endings, allow us to celebrate. We all could use a little more celebration!
- ◆ stories help us to leave things behind in a way that those things are still parts of our lives and are not forgotten. Whether painful or joyful, stories honor our experience.
- ◆ stories help us to look at our perceptions of our lives. In telling comes a clearness

If you are interested in knowing more about Bruce and Gina Anderson's work, you can contact them at Community Activators, PO Box 328, Vashon Island, WA 98070 Voice: 206) 463-3666. Check out their great web site: www.communityactivators.com

about how we see ourselves.

- ◆ stories are attached to our soul, and give us a way to symbolize what has happened to us. When we don't know or don't care to tell our stories anymore, we have lost parts of our soul.
- ◆ stories can create a shared "as if." They allow us to create a communal picture of the way things could be.
- ◆ stories keep you connected to your spirit and help you to balance the giving and receiving in a professional's life.
- ◆ Stories keep you in touch with what you need and want from your work.
- ◆ Stories help you to build a bridge between the story teller and the listener; in a sense, telling a story and having people hold on to it helps the story teller to move forward.
- ◆ a story can evoke powerful feelings in the listener...the feelings of a story stay with you a long time.
- ◆ they say something about the way you see the truth; they are more than a logical sequence of events, they also say something very powerful about our feelings and how we see the world.

Group Exercise Suggested By Bruce and Gina Anderson:

Remember: Any time you are exercising with people, let them go with their feelings. While it is important to give the exercise structure, do not give it so much that people feel confined. Tell people that the exercise is not intended to be therapy. It is intended to help us understand our life better. Do not go any further than you feel comfortable going. Ask people to talk about what they need to talk about...what area of their life they need to work on.

1. Tell people a story that is about a place of origin, leaving the place of origin, and returning to the place of origin.
2. On big pieces of paper, have key words or phrases listed (e.g., courage, wisdom, confidence, belonging, being left out, surrender, a time when someone held your hand).
3. Tell people to pay attention to their feelings while the story is being told. Tell them to pay attention to any images that might come to mind, but not to worry...they do not have to have an image, it might just be a feeling. Tell them it might be weeks before the feeling makes any sense to them.
4. After telling the story, refer to the keywords and tell people how the story might relate to the key words.

5. Ask people to pair off into groups of

three. Ask them to talk with their group about any feelings or images that came to mind while they were listening to the story.

6. Give each participant 10 minutes to tell his or her story. Have someone watch a clock closely and tell people to switch when their 10 minutes are up.
7. Sometimes our energy, our spirits, the reasons we came to this work in the first place don't leave us, they get *compressed*; the way our organizations are set up make it difficult to remember the reasons why we are here, we can get so compressed, we can't think with the spirit and the heart...if we don't do something to loosen up the armor, we get *compressed*...the smile on the face, our cynicism...we believe that before we can have a meaningful discussion about what we can do together, then we have got to think with that energy, to get back to that way of our work, nothing will happen...spend the morning trying to crack open the shells and see what it all means...in the afternoon we can think about where we want to be....
8. After each person has had a chance, ask:
 - ◆ *In telling your story, clarify what helped you to feel safe? What did the listeners do to help you feel safe? What gestures? Body language? Things that they said?*
 - ◆ *As a listener, what conditions help you to be fully present as a listener (in body/mind/and spirit, in the physical room)?*
 - ◆ *As tellers and listeners, what did you learn from the tellers about the five or six words/phrases? What did the exercise do for your spirit?*

References

- Arrien, A. (1993). *The four-fold way: Walking the paths of the warrior, teacher, healer, and visionary*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco.
- Carson, J. (1993). I am asking you to come back home. In R. Bly, J. Hillman, & M. Meade (Eds.) *The rag and bone shop of the heart: A poetry anthology*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Catford, L. & Ray, M. (1991). *The path of the everyday hero: Drawing on the power of myth to meet life's most important challenges*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.
- Chodron, P. (2001) *The places that scare you: A guide to fearlessness in difficult times*. Boston: Shambhala.
- Chodron, P. (1997). *When things fall apart: Heart advice for difficult times*. Boston: Shambhala.
- Chodron, P. (1994). *Start where you are: A guide to compassionate living*. Boston: Shambhala.
- Chodron, P. (1991). *The wisdom of no escape and the path of loving-kindness*. Boston: Shambhala.
- Covey, S., Merrill, A.R., & Merrill, R.R. (1994). *First things first*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Covey, S. (1991). *Principle-centered leadership*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Fullen, M. (1993). *Change forces: Probing the depths of educational reform*. New York: The Falmer Press.
- Graham, J. (1991). *Stick your neck out: The Giraffe Project handbook*. Langley, WA: Author.
- Greenleaf, R.K. (1977). *Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power and greatness*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.
- Huber, C. (2001). *There is nothing wrong with you: Going beyond self-hate A compassionate process for learning to accept yourself exactly as you are*. Murpheys, CA: Keep It Simple Books.
- Johnson, S. (1998). *Who moved my cheese?* New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.
- Lundin, S.C., Paul, H., & Christensen, J. (2000). *Fish! A remarkable way to boost morale and improve results*. New York: Hyperion
- Manning, G., Curtis, & McMillen, S. (1996). *Building the human side of work community*. Cincinnati, OH: Thomas Executive Press.
- Miller, L. (1991). *American spirit: Visions of a new corporate culture*. New York: William Morrow Company.
- Mintzberg, H. (1990). The manager's job: Folklore and Fact. *Harvard Business Review* (March -April), 163-176.
- O'Brien, J. & Lyle-O'Brien, C. (1998) (Eds.) *A little book about person centered planning*. Toronto: Inclusion Press.
- Provencal, G. (1987). *Culturing commitment*.
- Ryan, K. and Ostreich, D. (1991). *Driving fear out of the workplace: How to overcome the invisible barriers to quality, productivity, and innovation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Senge, P., Ross, R., Smith, B., Roberts, C., Kleiner, A. (1994). *The fifth discipline fieldbook: Strategies and tools for building a learning organization*. New York: Doubleday.

Smylie, M. (1888). The enhancement function of staff development: Organizational and psychological antecedents in individual teacher change. *American Educational Research Journal*. Vol. 25 (1) (1-30).

Wheatley, M.J. (2002). *Turning to one another: Simple conversations to restore hope to the future*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Welwood, J. (Ed.) (1985). *East/West approaches to psychotherapy and the healing relationship*. Boston: Shambhala

Other Helpful Resources

Block, P. (1996). *Stewardship: Choosing service over self-interest*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Boleman, L.G. & Deal, T.E. (1995). *Leading with soul: An uncommon journey of spirit*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Cohen, A. R. & Bradford, D.L. (1991). *Influence without authority*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated.

Jennings, J. (2005). *Think big act small: How America's best performing companies keep the start-up spirit alive*. New York: Penguin Publishing.

Langer, E. J. (1989). *Mindfulness*. New York: Merloyd Lawrence Books.

Lowe, P. (1993). *Care pooling: How to get the help you need to care for the ones you love*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Senge, P. M. (1990). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. New York: Doubleday.

Snow, K. (2001). *Disability is natural: Revolutionary common sense for raising successful children with disabilities*. Woodland Park, CO: Brave Heart Press.

Wheatley, M.J. & Kellner-Rogers, M. (1996). *A simpler way*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Wheatley, M.J. (1994). Leadership and the new science: *Learning about organization from an orderly universe*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Whitmyer, C. (Ed.) (1994). *Minfulness and meaningful work: Explorations in right livelihood*. Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press.