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Capacity Building Workshop Notes for Sept 28, 2012

The conversation began with a recap of what happened last week, allowing people to think about their disposition regarding the possible change from quarters to semesters. The topic of trust emerges.

Sema talked about trust in terms of a force based vs. a co-creating decision making paradigm. She explained how you might define trust as people who would go along with your decisions and that maybe trust is related to control. Roger suggests that perhaps trust is overrated. Can we suspend our distrust?

The structures determine the behavior. If trust is at the transactional level, not the contextual level, then trust assumes separate individuals. Think of the interconnectedness of all things and then contemplate trust again. You get a different answer.

That brings us to the discussion again of systems and wholes. Roger remembers we have talked in the past about our inability to perceive a whole, and how unfortunately, we can’t verify interconnectedness or see all sides of a sphere simultaneously, for that matter. Luckily you can assume primacy of the whole even if you can’t understand it. Interconnectedness assumes primacy of the whole.

Which brings up the ancient question of “which came first, the lotus flower or the seed?” They co-arise. All you have to do is remove the time constraint and then interconnectedness looks different. You might access it at the level of feeling. Nina asks if there is a word for trust in terms of feeling? We can’t think of one.

If we accept that we all view our incomplete version of the whole, shouldn’t we expect to see different choices? It comes down to whether we view others as having integrity in their choices or if we see them being self serving. To trust or not to trust, that is the question.

Or not. Think about the formal vs. the pre-formal. We all have an attachment to form of some kind, our attachment to specificity of a formal outcome. For
example, in intimate relationships with other people, we have a specific form that we trust. That form consists of time and space. Fundamentally, trust may not be that way. Many forms to come and go during a lifetime, but we don’t necessarily see it that way. You are not the same person at 30 and 60, but the ‘form’ of your long term relationships may be the same.

Consider the pre-formal as a disposition about my preferences. Perhaps I’m in an intimate relationship and I am angry. The behavior does not match my expectation. My initial feeling is anger, but that is always on top of something else. The anger covers over something else, which might be pre-formal.

The formal is the set of agreements you make in your relationship. One might be monogamy. In the background you have a model and a perception about monogamy. The other person violates your “trust” at the level of form. We try to control the formal into permanence, however the pre-formal could be a loving, interconnected relatedness about which you have no expectation. The pre-formal could be the pre existing environment that gives rise to form. Is it possible to be loving, without any verb or object? Is it possible that you might get your hotel room upgraded with this loving disposition as long as you’re not trying?

Pete tries to keep in mind the helpful mantra of “is that how I want to be? How am I being right now?”

Yin-yang is a type of duality as a function of participation in form, in which one does not exist without the other. For example, think love and hate, dark and light. Dianne postulated that if one of these were pre-formal, then the other had to be too. Roger disagreed.

Perhaps freedom is pre-formal, freedom from something. Perhaps freedom expressed as a profound acceptance of the conditioned nature of your state. Consciousness could be pre-formal, source as context. Curiosity could be pre-formal.

Think about institutional change with a disposition of positive intent. Does the positive intent drift in the enactment, ie do we screw up?

Where are you attached to form and why? What do we want to conserve?

In change processes, lots of discussion occurs about what needs to change, not nearly as much occurs about what needs to be conserved. Apply this principal to the potential conversion from quarters to semesters…

Time and space are both formal and a function of your point of view. Pre-formal is before time and space. In a change process you can possibly get to the pre-formal by going to the end of the formal, the end of the change process, and then waiting.
Perhaps we should all consider reading “Flatland”, which is about not being able to appreciate the last dimension, which for us is time. Consider that if you concentrate on a point, and then dissolve the point, you can become aware of the expansiveness of time, like when you are in a car accident and time suddenly slows way down. We need to think about time in a different way to understand the pre-formal better.

For homework pick a pre-formal and be observational about your disposition to it. Identify something that you are doing and put it in a form. Observe what you do as a conscious form. Look at the form and note how it affects your disposition. Create your form, then do it as art. Try not to hurt yourself in the process, we would like to see you again on Friday to hear about your experiences. See you then, Dianne