

**Joy, fear, vulnerability and trust in groups that lead:
A storied account and call to action**

by

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Abstract

This first-person, narrative and autobiographical-based study is intended to contribute to better understanding of building trust in groups that lead in service sector organizations. The groups in question include committees, teams, task forces, and executive groups. Success in building trust comes when a group cycles through six elements of a systems model. The model emerged from evidence I gathered from a population of fifty-seven research participants, most of whom dedicated at least eight hours to this work. The first three elements in the model are: planning and initiating trust, undertaking activities to earn trust, and creating a trust space. The trust space is created through the internalization of openness, deep listening, common passion and purpose, and shared responsibility. The pivotal fourth element involves an individual group member making a 'leap of faith'. The leap of faith requires exposure to vulnerability, risk-taking and uncertainty. The leap results in successful trust-building only where the group in question embraces the leap, thereby shifting vulnerability from the individual to the group. Groups that achieve group trust have 'fields' or auras radiating amongst group members: group identity, group bond and psychological safety. They also evidence the states of group success, cooperation and connection. Thus group members can go from the fear associated with vulnerability to the joy and release that come with success. With success, there is also an increased likelihood of group members participating in peak group experiences: generative dialogue, synergy, high performance, fusion of horizons, flow and common consciousness. The functions and roles taken on by trusting groups that lead include: performing leadership functions, contributing to a climate of trust in a larger organization, and providing individual leaders with support. I contemplate the model potentially applying to any type of service sector group that leads while noting that the model is not exclusive; there may well be other models and approaches to building trust in groups. The limitations in my study's research population mean that the only groups that I can directly postulate from the research as likely to build trust through the leap of faith are groups made up of knowledge workers.

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Dedication

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Intended Audience

A moment in time from my doctoral studies at UBC: "So, how direct were you?" Those were my wife Gail's anxious first words when I called her immediately after the Monday morning doctoral student group meeting. The group in question was a project group in a research course in the program of which this dissertation is the culmination.

"Well", I said, "I was the first person to speak out about us possibly moving too fast and I did push a bit. But it was Jean who specifically took the lead in telling Doug that his full-blown production might not work for us. So this time I didn't have to do the conflict stuff all by myself..."

While this moment may not sound very auspicious, the group referred to above became a highly trusting group. The story of how that trust developed is woven throughout this chapter in italic type.

The purpose of this study is to contribute to a better understanding of how we can build trust in groups that lead in service sector organizations. The groups in question include committees, teams, task forces, executive groups and other forward-looking, deliberative, information-sharing or problem-solving groups in organizations.

Investing in building group trust can result in group achievement of three group states: cooperation, success and connection. These group states contribute to the increased likelihood of group members personally participating in peak group experiences. Peak group experiences include generative dialogue, synergy, high performance, fusion of horizons, flow, and common consciousness. Such peak experiences make it more likely that the organizations which contain these groups can sustain, continually improve and re-create themselves. Through these peak group experiences, groups can contribute in positive, memorable ways to our organizations and our lives.

Group trust-building is a process that hinges on our demonstrating and embracing one or more leaps of faith. Any such leaps of faith expose those of us who make the initial leap to personal vulnerability, uncertainty and risk. One way to make these leaps likely to occur and to 'take' is to internalize key group practices or ways of being with each other, such as

shared responsibility. This creates a group 'trust space'. Various and sundry forms of procedural justice can assist groups in establishing the trust space.

Webster's Online says a group is "a number of individuals assembled together or having some unifying relationship."¹ Robbins calls a group "two or more individuals, interacting and interdependent, who come together to achieve particular objectives" (Robbins, 1991, p. 274). For the purposes of this dissertation, a group is two or more people with some reason for gathering collectively. Groups can lead through performing leadership-related functions, through modeling a climate of trust and through providing support to leaders. Groups that lead through this type of performance, modeling or support contribute to direction-setting, empowerment, coaching and front line connection in our organizations.

I have three primary audiences for this work, all within the service sector or service industry. The service sector is "that part of the economy that creates services rather than tangible objects"². One of my primary service sector audiences is an academic and professional audience. This audience includes those people who populate the many groups that make critical leadership decisions in postsecondary academic institutions: the tenure, recruiting, admission, curriculum, ethical and other committees that will help determine the future of our knowledge and information-related organizations. It also includes the technical experts who make up committees tasked with leadership functions in professional organizations. These people include many whose main problem in team building is that, "as a profession... they don't view people skills as relevant" (Goleman, 1998, p. 230).

My second primary audience is organizational professionals who, like me, work with and study groups for a living. For Peter Block, consulting professionals working in organizations "are constantly bombarded with pressure to be clever and indirect and ignore what we are feeling at the moment". Block added that the "desire to be successful can lead us into playing roles and adopting behaviors that are internally alien and represent some loss of ourselves" (Block, 2000, p. 11).

¹ "group" in Merriam-Webster Online, last viewed December 15, 2004.

² "service industry" in Britannica Online, last viewed December 15, 2004

A relatively small population in the service sector is my third primary audience. These are people with long experience at, a high degree of sophistication about, and deep interest in, group process and concepts. These service sector members have an interest in these processes and concepts being constructively applied in their organizations. The latter group would include the focus group members who contributed in such an outstanding way to this study and who could be exemplars of the leadership from within that is vital to the future of service sector organizations.

The service sector is now the dominant one in North American society:

... in the United States and other highly industrialized nations, the service sector of the economy became the chief employer in the 20th century. By the 1950s the number of people engaged in service occupations in the United States exceeded the number of those employed in industry, and the proportion increased thereafter... Work in the service sector is highly diverse, including everything from cleaning workers to business consultants, from truck drivers to financiers, from fast-food waiters to maitres d'hôtel, from office clerks to advertising executives, from kindergarten teachers to university professors, from nurses' aides to surgeons, and government employees...³

That sector, particularly the information component of it, will continue to evolve in ways that we can only speculate on at this juncture:

The next society will be a knowledge society. Knowledge will be its key resource and knowledge workers will be the dominant group in its workforce. Its three main characteristics will be borderlessness... upward mobility... (and the) potential for failure as well as success. Anyone can acquire the

³“work, history of the organization of” in Britannica Online, last viewed December 15, 2004

means of production, i.e. the knowledge required for the job, but not everyone can win. (Drucker, 2002, p. 237-8)

Thus, we are at an important confluence between the opportunity and the need for trusting groups in the service sector in North America.

1.2 Personal Significance, Passion and Privilege

My reasons for undertaking this dissertation go far beyond an academic purpose, intended audiences and the future of the service sector. The subject matter of this dissertation has deep significance for me personally. First, it represents the intersection of my personal passion and my personal privilege. Second, through this dissertation, I explain and defend my deeply held moral belief in the importance and value of people simply because they are human beings. Thirdly, this dissertation provides me with the opportunity to take a personal leap of faith. This leap of faith involves me demonstrating some of the very vulnerability, risk-taking and uncertainty that I am examining.

Back to the moment in time from my doctoral studies at UBC: The Monday morning group meeting and subsequent conversation with Gail came after I had spent the better part of a weekend doing something quite different from what is typically described in the handbooks that are meant to prepare us for graduate school. What was I doing that weekend? I was dedicating substantial time and considerable emotional energy to stewing about the state of the group in question. In so doing, I kept coming back time and time again to my high degree of frustration with myself and with the group. At the group level my frustration was about a group struggling with the completion of a major assignment in a mandatory course in my doctoral program. At that same group level my frustration was also about being a member of such a talented high-potential group and thus being partly responsible for the group possibly wasting that talent and that potential by not really involving everyone in our work together. I was sure we would be wasting ourselves if we fell prey to "premature task focus" in the group.

At another level altogether my frustration was deeply personal and all about not feeling heard. That was the level and source of frustration that was hard to acknowledge as a supposedly mature adult. Why? Well, one result of my not feeling heard was that I had allowed myself to essentially return to being a small boy. Returning to our small selves is so easy when we experience negative emotion. In my case, the small self I returned to was the childhood self which was devastated to see his family of origin torn apart by alcoholism, a victim mentality, rage, failed dreams and unresolved conflict. The small self I returned to

was also the lonely boy who sat on the outside looking at groups at play in my elementary school playground. As a child deeply battered by emotional abuse at home, and held back by shyness, awkwardness, shame about what went on in my home, and a sense of being a 'boffin' and 'different', I felt very much left out in those days.

Thus I spent my early years with my family group and school mate groups as someone "on the outside looking in". I did so in what were for me two separate worlds: the ugly abusive battleground at home and the playground I just didn't seem to fit in to at the elementary school.

There was still another side to my deep personal frustration. This was the side that reflected my life of privilege. Since my early teenage years in a largely white, Anglo-Saxon middle class community in Montreal, I had been privileged to gradually assume positions of leadership in orderly, well-supported school and community groups. The shy, awkward child grew into a tall man with a deep voice who naturally led others and who won a Rhodes Scholarship. I won the Scholarship in significant measure based on my exceptional leadership of, creativity within, and success with groups. Later I became an internationally-called upon consultant who provided coaching advice to corporate CEO's and government executives on how to work with their executive teams and other groups. I also became a university instructor who filled classrooms with students energized by the combination of my ideas, my passion, my belief in people and my capacity to structure positive group learning experiences. I was now accustomed to being heard. It felt odd and 'wrong' to feel discounted.

The highly emotional state that I was in that weekend, right in the midst of learning many of the specific research skills that have informed this dissertation, reflected the profound ongoing impact of those early life and later group experiences. My letting go, acknowledging, recognizing and giving in to that raw, heartfelt emotion also, in the end, contributed to the development of a high degree of trust in that group...

Passion, privilege, and morality are central concepts that require brief elaboration.

"Passion" is what motivates, excites and drives me. My passion goes far beyond mere interest and involves real commitment, deep curiosity and a desire to make the world a better place in which to live, be, and work. I try to live my life consistent with the statement in a recent prominent business best seller: "We should only do those things that we can get passionate about" (Collins, 2001, p.109). Thus my passion is my most fundamental driving force.

"Privilege" can be defined as "a right or immunity granted as a particular benefit, advantage or favor" (Webster, 1971, p. 677). Privilege is a word that I have come to relate to myself relatively late in life, owing in significant measure to the influence of my colleagues Jennifer

Rodrigues, Jeanie Cockell and Joan McArthur-Blair in the EdD cohort. In my youth it was easy for me to label and condemn certain behaviors of others as unearned privilege. It has been harder to acknowledge my unearned privileges growing up as a white middle class male. I am conscious that my privileged status is in stark contrast with the destructive and abused parts of my life and constitutes one of the paradoxes of my life.

The “moral” part of “morality” is synonymous with “ethical, virtuous, righteous and noble” (Webster, 1971, p. 550). “Moral judgments attribute moral value to something in pronouncing it morally right or wrong... We commonly designate as moral those values that we believe ought to take priority over other considerations in guiding action” (Vokey, 2001, p. 2). What values should take priority over others in guiding actions is, of course, a much-debated matter and varies according to our personal points of view.

My base of passion, my position of privilege and my moral judgment combine with my experience of deeply felt personal hurt and my belief in taking action. From the interaction of these forces, I derive my belief in people: it is right and good, in and of itself, to improve the way we treat and work with others in groups. My belief in people is well expressed by the Peter Finch character, Howard Beale, in the movie *Network* (Gottfried and Lumet, 1976). The charismatic Beale cries out over the TV airwaves that we are “human beings, God damn it!” and evokes a heart-felt, even fevered, response from audience members who feel ignored as people.

People in organizational and group settings are capable of more than many of them are experiencing:

Many organizations are a puzzle put together in a darkened room. Each piece is clumsily squeezed into place and then the edges are ground down so that they feel well positioned.... Eight out of ten employees feel they are miscast. Eight out of ten employees never have the chance to reveal the best of themselves. They suffer for it, their organization suffers, and their customers

suffer. Their health, their friends and their family suffer. (Buckingham and Clifton, 2001, p. 245).

Our ability to build trust in groups in organizations will affect everything from organizational survival to public support and success of service sector organizations to personal health⁴ and esteem. Having trust in groups will enable members of those groups to keep returning to work day after day. This is because members of trusting groups can have sustainable learning, personal development and networking experiences (Senge et al., 1999).

The process, people, conflict-related, and task aspects of group development are ultimately connected, intertwined and interactive. In other words, they are a connected system. Seeing the system requires that we see the “wholeness” and stop dividing “the perceived world into separate objects” (Capra, 1996, p. 294). This means that the right focus on process, people and conflict can provide a way of getting a task done much better than it typically is done before we have this focus. The development of trust and the associated displays of personal vulnerability do have practical payoffs. Trusting groups will be increasingly cooperative and thence effective (Korsgaard et al., 2003). However, understanding trust in groups requires that we shift our attention “from objects to relationships” (Capra, 1996, p. 37).

The part where we focus on task completion gives us a sharpness, an edge relating to the “willingness to make tough decisions” (Tichy, 1997, p. 153). Task completion also provides another purpose to the development of process, the treatment of people and the values-based resolution of conflict. Absent a task focus, group process could drift and become self-serving, as in the ‘country club management style’ (low concern for the task, high concern for the people, see Blanchard et al., 1986) that can be totally ineffective if people have not previously been led to develop a sufficient focus on task. While I will not fully agree that

⁴ The health issues associated with certain group and organizational practices are very real. More research will emerge on this in coming years, I suspect. vanOyen Witvliet et al. (2001), for example, reported on health issues associated with “social relationships marred by interpersonal offences” (p. 117). In results dovetailing with what they referred to as the psychophysiology literature and focusing on blood pressure, among other things, harboring grudges (“chronic unforgiving responses”) was shown to increase physiological stress. On the other hand, forgiving thoughts “prompted greater perceived control and comparatively lower physiological stress responses” (p. 117).

the sole primary objective of a work-team is the performance challenge the group is assigned (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993, p. 12), I will suggest as part of the belief in people that we cannot abandon a task focus in our groups—that a task focus, properly guided through appropriate group process, is exactly what you need to fully engage people in group process. Moreover, in a practical sense, a task focus is needed to make group processes sustainable economically.

Back to the doctoral studies group. The four of us in the group had playfully initially called ourselves the "leftover group". The three other groups set up in the research class had been based on a common area of interest (e.g., in narrative or in a particular research process). What our group had in common was two levels of difference. The superficial difference was in our immediate research interests: Jeanie in exploration of her story, Doug and Jean in doing interviews and myself in the observation function. The more profound differences were in the juxtaposition of our talents and our mental states as we undertook our work together. Doug is brilliant, witty and articulate. He is also someone who is quick at finding and taking advantage of creative outlets. He was also falling behind in some of his doctoral work. Jeanie is energetic, fun and extraordinary with groups. However, she was preoccupied with being the subject of the interview process that was central to our project and with a much-anticipated and needed break she was taking that weekend. Jean had both logic and voice going for her. My observation was that she had 'sparked' in an incredibly positive way with Jeanie in their part of the one on one interview processes we set up. However, Jean was from another cohort in the program and was thus still finding her way with a fairly cohesive group of strangers in this cohort. For my part, I had become totally engrossed in my observer role and in trying to figure out what had happened in the research interviews. For that reason, I had difficulty moving out of the observer function and coming back into the group. As well, under task-related pressure, I can too quickly agree to things that, upon later self reflection, I realize are problematic. What I didn't realize was the extent to which I was allowing the hothouse environment of an intense five days a week three week course to act on me. Sure, I intellectually understood and could rationally describe at great length the reasons why our group process went askew, but mostly I was an emotionally frustrated group member. As such, I was acting in just the way any of us can act when frustrated with a group that doesn't appear to be working for us.

As a group our task was reasonably straightforward, to make a group presentation on what we learned about conducting research through two separate interviews by Doug and Jean. The interviews were with Jeanie and were about Jeanie's life and career. I was to act as a silent observer, sitting back and apart from the interviews.

However, our group dynamics were anything but straightforward. The dynamics were skewed, in my mind, by our allowing the task to jump prematurely to the forefront over group process and everyone being heard. This happened when, after all of one meeting where we discussed the results and the experience of the interviews, Doug jumped right to the task of making the presentation. Doug's focus was understandable—with the

presentation in six days and a weekend pending and eating up two of those days, the task loomed very, very large. We were still too raw and too much in the experience to be ready for agreeing on and moving to task, in my opinion. We needed agreement on what it was that we had concluded. The presentation, even with that looming deadline, should have been subordinate to that agreement rather than leading it. My uneasiness was further compounded by Doug's preoccupation with the Aboriginal interpretation of the subject matter of the interview. To me, with the twin advantages of being a silent observer and of knowing Jeanie better than Doug, Jeanie had clearly presented herself as a feminist, teacher and learner. She had cherished Aboriginal experiences, granted, but that was not at the core of the self that I had heard Jeanie presenting. Doug for his part appeared to be actively working through a moving childhood experience with Aboriginal people as the class progressed. I could see how he could potentially have been preoccupied by that process. Moreover, Doug's talents and natural assumption of the responsibilities of leadership had enabled him in previous cohort classes and activities to brilliantly contrive and deliver truly clever plays that had been enormously entertaining, fun and on point with the readings. However, for this group at this time, I felt that a play would work only if the fundamental premises on which it was based were agreed to by group members...

My earlier-mentioned passion leads me to want to challenge all of us who work with groups in the service sector in North America to build trust by including in our group processes those "outsiders" and "others" who have something profound and valuable to offer that we might otherwise ignore. Those outsiders and others include the many people with a creative bent who suffer the same fate as the Tom Hanks character endures at the hands of the John Heard character in the movie *Big* (Spielberg and Ross, 1988) while presenting a different perspective on future sales of toys. That fate is putdowns in aggressive language such as: "What exactly don't you get?... If you had read your industry breakdown... What?!?". The inclusiveness that I am promoting would involve us making better use of and expressing more appreciation for the talented but often underutilized people already present in our organizations. As the personal story I have interwoven into this chapter explains, I allowed myself for a time to become one of these "others" in my doctoral class group.

As someone who has finally come to understand how in the past I limited myself (or as the cartoon character Pogo famously said "We have met the enemy and he is us"⁵), I wish to see more people develop for themselves a combination of trust-enhancing abilities and experiences. One is a situational confidence in the way they conduct themselves in groups. A second is an understanding of some of the many tools they can use to be effective in

⁵ www.igopogo.com/final_authority.htm; last viewed January 18, 2005

groups. The third is an understanding of the reasons that their lives would be enhanced if they took advantage of future opportunities to contribute more of themselves and thereby of their trust to groups. The joy I experience regularly in groups arises from experiencing support and accomplishing extraordinary things in group settings. I am fortunate enough to regularly work and play with groups which share triumphs and difficulties and which consistently come up with creative and quality answers to daunting questions about how to solve difficult organizational, social, marketplace, public and political problems.

Returning to the doctoral studies group. When the group met on the Monday morning, we took a while and several leaps of faith to untangle the mess we had created together. I started by voicing disquietude about Friday's process when Doug and I were the first two at our meeting. We then did the normal group thing when all of us convened: we heard Doug out in the mandate we had given him. At that moment we experienced the first and most important leap of faith, which came from Jean. Thoughtfully, but firmly, Jean said that what Doug was proposing wasn't quite what she had in mind. The group, Doug included, responded positively to this overture, thoroughly engaging in addressing what had just happened, our individual and collective responsibility for our process, and where we had gone wrong. Through honest conversation flowing out of that first leap of faith we discovered that our positionality, task focus, time pressures and personal identity all emerged as features of our problems with our process. We turned our attention to really listening and working jointly together. We did so with a real sense of common purpose derived from our personal interests. Our group skills kicked in and it felt incredibly safe as we talked. Our leadership was shared and dynamic, flowing in, amongst and through us. Through our open and energetic response to Jean's leap of faith we changed our orientation, recognized, acknowledged and put aside agendas and introduced a whole new level of hearing each other as part of our group process. We were thus able to create something novel together. We went on to do a compelling group presentation, where we highlighted our process and our results. The new 'creation' was something that none of us could have done on our own or could even have contemplated before the group met on the Monday. We experienced a shift from positional discussion to contemplative and open dialogue. As the surprising ideas and revelations poured out in our group process, what struck me most was the level of honesty, both intellectually and emotionally, to what was coming forth. We were incredibly curious about each other and what we could accomplish together where not so long before we had been very closed. There was an enormous sense of trust. Months before I was to chose the specific focus of this dissertation on group trust, I was living group trust.

The fear I have regarding group dynamics is that we can far too easily be overwhelmed, discouraged or distracted by the challenge of 'getting people to play nicely together in the same sandbox'. I expect in future to lament, as I have in the past lamented, the waste of people resources, personal and organizational energy, money and time that come through

failed groups. And yet, there I am in the story intertwined in this chapter, a teacher of group process for so many years, initially being overwhelmed, discouraged and distracted in the way our group foiled ourselves. At some level, our group experienced for a short while many things that can either be a catalyst to a leap of faith that contributes to trust or a sentence to group frustration. They are: conflict avoidance, task preoccupation, a rush to conclusion and judgment, and cyclical, superficial politeness and camaraderie. Our group ultimately made a catalyst out of them, but only through exceptional efforts.

Significant contributors to group members foiling themselves are a failure by group members to truly listen to and understand themselves and one another because of the interference of preconceptions, biases, prejudices and mental models. These failures and interference factors are some of the very things that prevent us from reaching dialogue, one of the topics I will explore. We humans far too easily move or climb from what we see and hear to generalizations and premature conclusions based on our life experience (Senge et al., 1994, p. 242). The most potent root cause is a fear of the vulnerability that goes with trusting others in a group and all of the self-esteem and ego issues we bring to group process. I agree with Blanchard and Waghorn, who labeled “human ego” as the most serious addictive problem in the world today (Blanchard and Waghorn, 1997, p. 171). They note that there are two types of “ego-centeredness: self-doubt and false pride” (Blanchard and Waghorn, Ibid). I have lived the self doubt and battered psyche that came from my abused past, from the addictive behaviors of my parents, and from the realization that I co-created with my ex-wife for my own children some of the same negatives I experienced as a child. Thus, I know personally the perils of vulnerability and the hole left by the absence of esteem. Particularly when I am under negative stress, I can easily fall in that hole, as I did with the doctoral class group. In doing so I am behaving similarly to the Bill Murray character in the movie *Groundhog Day* (Albert and Ramis, 1993), who, until he learns better, keeps stepping in the same puddle. However, I can now also quickly recognize when I have allowed myself to fall and find constructive ways to climb out and build trust out of what could have been a negative.

Returning again to the doctoral studies group. So there's the rub. No matter how healed and evolved I become I know that I can oh so easily return to my past. There will always be

an element of who I am that reacts as the abused boy as well as reacting as the privileged teen and adult. I was, as the forty-nine year old man who stewed for so many hours that weekend right in the midst of the research course, someone who was going back to hurts experienced by the child that went before. As Miller suggests, the damaged child has "a central need to express yourself" (Miller, 1981, p. 81). I was experiencing that same need as an adult.

1.3 My Perspective and My Pain

My perspective throughout this thesis is that of the post-positivist, combining the post-structuralist and post-modernist position, that "any gaze (including mine) is always filtered" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p. 19). I hope to exemplify the "critical hermeneutical tradition" that "in qualitative research, there is only interpretation... the facts (do not) speak for themselves" (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2000, p. 285). I may, through the stories I tell, reach the heights or excesses of what Denzin and Lincoln call the "post" post-period, that of "messy, uncertain, multivoiced texts" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p. 23-24).

The above-noted messiness will, in part, come through my attempts "to keep the pain alive" (Maxine Green in Te Hennepe, 1993, p. 231). I want to use both the positives of my privilege and the negatives of my family of origin pain to assist in my own self-learning and in the learning of others as all of us strive to understand what it will take for us to build trust in groups. Part of keeping my pain alive is keeping a pledge I made after the death of the second of my parents in 1998. That pledge was to talk and write openly as a practitioner about overcoming shame, abuse⁶, low self-esteem and embarrassment on the way to building more effective groups and leading a more fulfilling life. My passion for ending the negatives of isolation, oppression and avoidance in groups informs my moral position.

I hope to exemplify in what I write Gadamer's statement that "understanding is not a procedure... but a very condition of being human" (Gadamer quoted in Schwandt, 2000,

⁶ Note that I am using abuse here and elsewhere in the same sense that it is defined in the Encyclopedia Britannica Online: "The spectrum of child abuse is wide. It includes not only children who have suffered physical abuse... but also those who have experienced emotional abuse..." (see www.britannica.com; last viewed on November 24, 2004). The British Medical Association adds: "Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development" (see www.bma.org.uk last viewed on November 24, 2004).

p.194). This leads me back to Finch and to the idea that we are “human beings, God damn it!” I intend to explore and test my moral position on groups, that we should and can live life in groups in more positive ways. I want to test my belief in people specifically as it applies to groups in post-secondary and adult learning situations and potentially as it applies to groups generally in service-sector organizations in North America. The latter groups include all of the many committees, task forces, executives and ad hoc groupings that make up such a big part of North American organizational life today. This applies to the business, education, government and not-for-profit sectors.

1.4 Where to From Here

Where have I just come from and where do I go from here? In this first chapter I set out to explain a purpose for this research and in general terms why and how that purpose matters to me. I have also interspersed into the text of this chapter the first of many stories that I will tell. The next chapter focuses on methodology. As the italicized and the personal portions of this first chapter foreshadow, I attempt to bring a highly reflective first-person autobiographical point of view to this work. The first thing I will do in chapter two is explain my reasoning for my point of view and for other parts of my method, including my extensive use of narrative. Secondly, I will acknowledge and attempt to explain my subjectivity in doing this work. Finally, I will explain and issue a disclaimer about my limiting my research participants mostly to learners associated with Royal Roads University while stating my belief that the contribution of those participants to this work was outstanding.

I am building on the work of giants in the fields of philosophy, organizational behavior, sociology and systems thinking. I want to make clear both my debt to those giants and how those giants provide the foundation for my work. Thus, the third chapter looks at the literature on dialogue, groups and related matters. In the literature review I examine the relational issues, impediments and possible outcomes involved in putting time and energy into trust and other outcomes of group process. I also refer to the models which most influenced the development of the six element model for building group trust.

There follow four chapters where I summarize my key findings, the stories I heard, relived and lived for the first time in the process of preparing this dissertation, and my interpretations of those findings and stories. In chapter four, I focus on my general findings regarding such things as trust practices and the development of layers of trust. Chapter five illustrates through narrative what it means in real terms to develop group trust in a wide variety of organizational and group settings. It also contains a warning about the impossibility of developing group trust where one or more very specifically described destructive people are active members of the group. In chapter six, I explain and illustrate the six element model that I developed as part of this work. Chapter seven examines how I and others in two groups have tried to live learning about groups and trust.

Finally, in chapter eight I summarize my research findings, my interpretation of my contribution to the research and my suggestions for further research work.

My quest is to “write meaningfully and evocatively” about a topic “that matter(s) and may make a difference” (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 742). I hope through my writing and other work to contribute to a tipping point. A tipping point is a “social epidemic... driven by the efforts of a handful of exceptional people” (Gladwell, 2000, p. 21) or a “critical mass” of people needed in order to effect change. My endeavor throughout this dissertation will be to contribute to making our time and life in groups more meaningful to us and our organizations, more supportive and challenging, more sustainable and ultimately more productive and satisfying than it is today.

A final and very personal reflection on the doctoral studies group: I am left out no more!

I reflect on my youth. I am left out in my family. The firstborn of an angry red slash of a man who wanted no children. The firstborn of a self-absorbed, victimized mother who had no room in her life for others. I am left out in the schoolyard. A brainy four eyes. I am left out in the picking of teams. An awkward obesity. I knew no choices. I had no trust.

Forty-plus years pass. I am in a different place. I am a different person. I am in my milieu, the academy. I am a trusted professional. What! I am left out again. Left out in interest. A lone observer. Left out among class groups. Part of the lone group defined by no common topic. A leftover.

But left out is no longer a permanent condition nor is it a condemnation. Left out can be a deeply hued celebration of rich diversity, an opportunity for multi-faceted exploration of places we too seldom go in our exalted ivory towers. I and we can choose differently. Will we choose trust?

A week passes. Our group is in a different place and yet I am in the same place. Left out again. Left out by a hurried decision. I'm not convinced. Left out by insight. Jeanie the person and Jeanie the feminist call out to me for recognition. But, left out is neither a permanent condition nor a condemnation. Left out can bring forth the shining honesty we so often scurry to hide, hurried, timid creatures too rushed or fearful to be ourselves. Left out can be a basis for divergent, challenging thinking that can take us to deep, unexplored places, avoiding scary groupthink. Left out can bring our group to a demanding crossroads. Easy or difficult? Shallow or meaningful? The choice is always ours.

Moments pass. Jean speaks. Doug speaks. Jeanie speaks. I speak. We choose difficult and meaningful. We reach deep down inside ourselves, talking quietly at first and then, with rising voices, sparkle with excitement and awareness. We talk. Really talk. About where we have been, really, and where we want to go, really. Left out turns into the brilliant blue and green or red and yellow and black shades of shared horizons, the adhesive, unforgettable bond of common consciousness, the dazzling magic of unexplainable synergy.

I, and we, choose trust...

CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Helen Hunt character (Carol): “Hey, we all have these terrible stories to get over...”

Jack Nicholson character (Melvin), interrupting: “That’s not true—some of us have great stories, pretty stories, that take place at lakes with boats and friends and noodle salad. Just no-one in this car...”

- From the movie *As Good As It Gets* (Brooks, 1998)

2.1 Introduction

Personal reflection: Banishment.

I sit. I sit terrified and distracted, as my world unravels. The sounds from the downstairs kitchen have gradually become more insistent, shattering the concentration I hide behind nightly, attempting to focus on eleventh grade homework. I am exposed. In the secrecy that defines our lives, we never talk about the abusive, drunken tirades and taunts that pass for evening conversation in this house of horrors. The sounds pierce the walls of my concentration. I hear the fear in my mother’s voice. She calls my name, once and then twice. Twice also I hear an out-of-place sound. A squishy melon smashing violently against the kitchen wall. Startled, I realize the squishy melon is my mother’s head being battered against the wall. I vault down the stairs. I have no idea what I will do when I arrive. My father stands, staggered and imbued with guilt, my mother’s bloody head held in his fine hands, hands that properly belong to an artist. I reach within myself and become bigger somehow. I banish him from the room, banish him from the parts of my life that he has physically dominated with his anger, size and strength. I reach for a cloth to staunch the blood... Thirty two years later, I first tell my conflict-averse sister, who was upstairs that night, about that scene in the kitchen. “I thought there was something wrong but I never knew”, she says...

I undertook this research with knowledge of many “terrible stories” from which I have endeavored to recover. I also undertook this research knowing that the ‘pretty stories’ or positive stories many of us have are one possible route to partially moving us past the terrible stories. The positive stories give us an idea of what is possible and practical, consistent with the principles of appreciative inquiry. Appreciative inquiry “is a kind of narrative inquiry in which participants tell stories of peak experiences to discover the best of what already exists in order to appreciate it, make it grow” (Cockell, 2005, p. 38). More generally, appreciative inquiry is:

...a way of looking at the world... As its name suggests, it is based on discovering the best of what works through structured questioning. Appreciative Inquiry recognizes that people are highly motivated by their own stories and images of success.”⁷

Using the principles of appreciative inquiry, I focused my research participants on talking about and telling stories about the experience of being in highly trusting groups.

2.1.1 Telling my story through autoethnography

In researching this dissertation, I was inspired by Ellis and Bochner’s striking work on autoethnography. Autoethnography is “an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple levels of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural” (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 739). In autoethnographic texts we write “evocative personal narratives” specifically focused on our “academic” as well as our “personal” lives. Our primary purpose in any autobiographical writing “is to understand a self or some aspect of a life lived in a cultural context. In personal narrative texts, authors become ‘I’, readers become ‘you’ and subjects become ‘us’” (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 742).

More specifically, I was inspired in my research by a need and a desire. I concluded that I needed “a form” to allow you as reader “to feel the moral dilemmas” (emphasis added; Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 735) involved in building trust in groups that lead. I had an incredibly strong desire to have you as reader “think with [my]... story instead of about it” (emphasis added; Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 735). Any success I have will come from my telling my story and the stories of others in such a way as to make an “affective connection” with you as reader (Egan, 2003). If I succeed, you will forever feel connected to this dissertation when you meet with groups that have the potential to build trust.

⁷ “appreciative inquiry” from the website AppreciativeInquiry.ca, last viewed December 15, 2004.

I found myself captivated by the idea that “Social science that doesn’t break your heart just isn’t worth doing” (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 752). My challenge was to expose my stories and those stories given to me in trust in ways that were personal without my becoming self-preoccupied or proselytizing. Thus I could practice “passionate scholarship” (DuBois in Wolf, 1996, p. 4) to contribute to the development of more high-trust groups that in turn could provide leadership in our organizations and in our society.

A second doctoral studies story⁸: This story, like the first one, involves Jeanie, someone whose areas of interest and whose expertise in teamwork almost directly parallels mine. She and I have become very close in the course of our time together in the UBC '01 cohort. Last year she asked me whether I would be willing to be one of five research participant subjects in her dissertation work on the magic of facilitation (Cockell, 2005). I agreed. Over the course of the next four months Jeanie interviewed four of us. She was also interviewed herself, as she was a participant- observer- facilitator- provocateur in the process.

The five of us dedicated big chunks of time in the six weeks between February 16 and March 28, 2004 to an on-line conversation. We started out as a group where we all knew Jeanie. Each of us sort of peripherally knew at least one of the other people. Our self-introductions were revealing and started us off on the right ‘foot’. This was our way of getting ready through polite introductions, although we all evidenced some early vulnerability in terms of what we self-disclosed. We then established groundrules and affirmed our purpose in giving Jeanie the stories and ideas she needed for her dissertation. Jeanie started the conversation part with five snippet stories, five stories of amazing things each of us had done with a group where we had ‘made magic’ together. She called these ‘peak experience stories’.

We spent the better part of two weeks building on those stories and forming our definitions of what making magic might be, using stories to illustrate what we said. We used words like engaging people..., allowing people..., freeing people... giving permission... and our stories were full of people learning important things, creating wonderful things together, expressing themselves emotionally and connecting and so on. As Jeanie provided guiding and gentle leadership, our purpose was affirmed regularly in what we said on line. We also lived and tested one of our groundrules in particular.

Then we went to a different place as a group and got into a whole other set of stories, a set of stories that demanded a high degree of trust—we began to talk about our pure joy and our vulnerability as facilitators, the risks that we took, our fears, how scared and excited we were sometimes when we took risks. From there we went to our greatest learnings from failures and what is the balance between us ‘delivering a product’ and ‘delivering process

⁸ Note: An earlier version of this story was told in the first three of the nine focus groups that were involved in this research process. The story was intended to be an example of a story that could be told about trust. The story was amended to read as it reads on these pages to reflect the input of the group the story is about. For more on this group see Cockell (2005).

and learning'. One of us described this process thusly: "For me, the energy of the discussion was more about what we learned in moments of perceived failure and vulnerability than "what made them failures". Part of what I got from the discussion was a question about whether my thinking about the word "failure" might be "limited or somehow incomplete". The last week we were on line we went into the subject of 'when should we not even try to make magic'. We had a conversation about situations where the rancor or other difficulty in a group was so great that we didn't think that making magic was possible. In those cases we have the option to respectfully decline to get involved. We talked about what kinds of factors and emotions are involved for us when we do that.

Quite outside Jeanie's original design, at the end of March we all arranged to be in Vancouver. We met and once again stories poured out. We had an absolutely fabulous, highly connected time, while contributing significantly to Jeanie's dissertation research.

As members of Jeanie's research group, we trusted one another enough that we achieved some level of dialogue together. I sought in my research process to do something similar, to continually "encourage compassion and promote dialogue" (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 748). As well, I am inviting you to be what Ellis and Bochner call "co-performers". I do so by asking you, story by story, "to take the story in" and use it for yourself, examining yourself "through the evocative power of the narrative text" (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p.748).

For all of the above reasons, I was drawn to a research methodology based on the idea that "our research interests come out of our own narratives" (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 121). I was also drawn to two ideas from Eichler and Lapointe. One was that "all perceptions and descriptions of reality are bound to be influenced by their perceivers and describers" (1985, p. 19). The second was that researchers "have to make deliberate attempts to identify their own points of view" (1985, p. 19). My hope was that "perhaps by acknowledging our own feelings and desires, we might actually look at other people more objectively" (Angrosino and Perez, 2000, p.682). One of my intents in telling my stories was to enable you to be more understanding about why I wrote this dissertation and what I wrote. My 'bigger' intent in telling both my stories and the stories of others (see narrative inquiry below) was for you to be inspired by the stories to consider changing the way you go about operating in some of the groups of which you are or will be a member.

2.1.2 Telling the stories of others through narrative Inquiry

I embraced narrative inquiry as a third of the foundations of my methodology, building on what I knew about appreciative inquiry and autoethnography. Narrative inquiry “is a way of understanding experience”. Narrative inquiry involves collecting stories from research participants. At its best it is “a collaboration between researcher and participant, over time, in a place or a series of places, and in social interaction with milieus” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 20). As such narrative inquiry fits with the concept of dialogue, that we supplement the “ideal of objective knowledge” with the “ideal of sharing in something, of participation” (Palmer, 2001, p. 40). I will say much more about dialogue in chapter three.

One of the most collaborative processes I have ever been involved in was the research process I described in the ‘magic’ story told earlier in this chapter and elaborated on below. Participants in that process truly became co-researchers. We modeled what I wanted to achieve in the focus group work that was part of my methodology. The section that follows describes the thoughts of the co-researchers on the building of trust in the ‘magic’ group.

Back to the second story from the doctoral studies cohort: At the end of the evening Jeanie’s magic group physically spent together, after two of the five had left, three of us sat and talked casually. The conversation turned to the level of trust that was involved in our story-telling and other exchanges. The trust was particularly evident over our last three weeks as a group, where we showed how much of ourselves we put in our work. Later we had an on-line conversation about trust involving all five of us. In the course of these conversations we identified the primary factors we saw as contributing to trust in the group.

The most significant common factor seemed to be Jeanie and her role. We all had enormous regard for and trust of Jeanie. We trusted her to put together a safe group, to facilitate the process if it ever proved necessary (it didn’t), and to share responsibility for the process and the leadership with us. As one person put it, “I feel I had trust because we each had a relationship with Jeanie and extended our trust in her to the larger group”. Jeanie, who does not consider herself a poet, role-modeled vulnerability right at the outset of our time on-line by putting some of her ideas in the form of a poem. Jeanie also gave us confidence in the eventual ‘product’ by showing her extraordinary writing skills in composing the snippet stories that she shared about each of our peak experiences. One of these stories was about Jeanie’s own peak experience. Once again she role-modeled vulnerability.

The second most significant factor seemed to be common purpose, passion, joy and deep interest in and commitment to the subject matter. This was particularly elegantly expressed in two separate e-mails. The first e-mail said: "I WANTED to be there...I was curious about the process, about how colleagues would interact, I wanted to know what you each felt about magic". The second e-mail really reflected on the idea of layering of levels of trust: "I'm recalling that telling a magic story near the end of the process was enriched by our trust and shared caring. It was more fun to tell the highs later in the process because I had a greater sense of who you were and how you might appreciate my success. In other words, trust isn't just about the way to get at the soft underbelly, but is also about connecting more fully with one another's joys".

There were other factors that reflected on the making of magic. One factor related to having a common dedication:

We had a common dedication to clients: ...the other thing I think would be important to mention is the care that we took to talk of our experiences in a way that respected our clients and others' stories. A couple of times I deleted a whole long response because I realized that much as I'd like to share that story, it would be unfair to my clients to do so. This is a really important part of the work we do...

Our process was a factor:

We had reciprocity through clear groundrules and the groundrules making it ok to pass (one member had family problems and had to pass for a while)...

A form of safety came from the medium through which we initially communicated:

We had safety. The on-line medium created a safe space where we could all be heard and tell our stories. Moreover for at least one of us there was anonymity that went with that: "Some of the most useful, deep, personal conversations I have had, have been with strangers at 35,000 feet on airplanes...knowing it to be highly unlikely we would ever see each other...there was nothing to lose and everything to gain".

Another factor was the type of people we were when we started out as a group (i.e. Jeanie's selection of group members). "We were a select group to start with: each of us being self-confident risk-takers by profession". The final factor was the process we engaged in as our first activity together:

Building from getting familiar with each other: we learned from what bits we had heard about each other and what we learned in the introductions and the stories...

The single text that was most useful to my informed use of narrative inquiry was Clandinin and Connelly. Those authors ask and answer a simple but vital question: "Why narrative? Because experience" (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 50). "Life is filled with narrative

fragments, enacted in storied moments of time and space and reflected upon and understood in terms of narrative unities and discontinuities” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 17).

My life experience and my narrative fragments shaped what I saw, heard and experienced as a researcher. I am, after all, “in the parade” I “presume to study” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 81). I am in this parade notwithstanding however much I might attempt to be objective and to see myself as a disinterested spectator on the parade route of group trust-building. Thus, I tell the stories I tell in here out of a “concern for human experience” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 17) and for bettering the human condition.

Narrative involves “change... change in the world... in the inquiry... .. in the inquirer... in the point of view” and in “the outcomes” (Clandinin and Connelly, p. 6). The reality is that most of you who read this from the academic, government and corporate worlds will have experienced mistrust in groups. The related reality that may be hard to accept is that you have contributed, by action or inaction, to the mistrust and thus would have become part of the problem (Stone et al., 1999). This is explored under systems thinking in chapter three.

I certainly have experienced change through this doctoral and dissertation journey and being part of the '01 cohort. I want to encourage each of you to change and to effect trust-building in some of the groups in your life. My methods of choice to do so are through recording the stories of others and through writing about my own experiences.

2.1.3 The Goldilocks Challenge

Even as I wrote the intentionally high-minded words I wrote above, I realized how I experienced this dissertation “living on an edge”, trying to maintain my “own balance” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 147). I used autoethnographic methods to express my “own voice in the midst of an inquiry designed to tell of the participant’s storied experiences and to represent their voices, all the while attempting to create a research text that will speak to, and reflect on, the audiences voices” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 147).

I had to recognize the peril of “abuse of subjectivity” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 148), of telling everything only from my vantage point or of developing in here a model that was already in place before the research was undertaken. I also strove to get a positive response from my focus group participants to questions such as: “Do you see yourself here?” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 148). The checks that I built in to a second round of focus groups in the late spring, summer and fall of 2004 were meant to ensure that I did not abuse subjectivity and that participants could see themselves.

I was also challenged to find the fine line between telling enough but not too much of both my own story and those of the people in the groups about which I am writing. My own story is important because it informs the reader about my perspective and because it illustrates that, as researcher, I am subject to some of the same pressures and challenges as the people in the groups that I am writing about. But, if I overdid telling my story, I would be indulging in a form of self-absorption. This self absorption could be my own version of what troubles me so much about the destructive narcissists that I write about in the ‘warning’ section in chapter three and in appendix #4. “Charges of solipsism are commonly attributed to narrative work” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 150). I consciously attempted not to come across as saying that my self is “the only existent thing”. I also strove to heed the advice of my committee chair, to be present without being ‘heroic’ (D. Fisher, personal meeting, October, 2004).

The method I chose to meet the narcissistic, solipsistic challenge and to heed the advice not to be heroic came from the Goldilocks fairy tale. Here I reference what I call the Goldilocks Theory of Management and Leadership. That theory suggests that one of our major challenges in managing and in leading is finding the intermediate “just right” between “not too hot” and “not too cold” (MacIver, 2003). Thus, in writing this dissertation I challenged myself to ‘live’ the Goldilocks Theory in relation to vulnerability, “allowing oneself to be vulnerable without being too vulnerable” (Angrosino and Perez, 2000, p.679). The

Goldilocks Challenge is echoed in the “Not too tight, not too loose” advice that is central to Buddhist teaching on the spiritual path.⁹

The Goldilocks Challenge balancing act caused me some considerable agony as I debated whether or not to include certain autobiographical stories. Thus, my finding the “just right” balance here was one of my greatest challenges. My having achieved it will be borne out by how many of you are influenced by what you read to live your lives differently in selected groups.

2.1.4 Ethnography through Observation

I used excerpts from my personal notes of my field observations of groups that had built trust (see the five stories that are referred to in section 2 below) as a lead-in to the focus group work that informed all of my findings. Observation “has been characterized ‘as the fundamental base of all research methods’ in the social and behavioral sciences” (Adler and Adler in Angrosino and Perez, 2000, p.673) and as “the mainstay of the ethnographic enterprise” (Werner and Schoepfle in Angrosino and Perez, 2000, p.673). Ethnography is a field with a “vector” (Atkinson et al., 1999, p. 465) of forces driving it in different directions. I realize that “inevitably there are going to be conflicting versions of what happened” (Angrosino and Perez, 2000, p.675). I also acknowledge that “the observer cannot observe anything without interfering or participating with its creation” (Wheatley, 1994, p. 20). Moreover, we “cannot study anything separate from ourselves” (Wheatley, 1994, p. 36).

I strove to re-create the group environment in the Royal Roads University (RRU) Masters of Arts in Leadership and Training (MALT) program in the five observation-based stories I told. My success in this striving was reflected on gratuitously (i.e. I didn’t ask for this feedback) in writing by one focus group participant. That one participant expressed the experience that many participants put to me informally before and after the focus groups:

⁹ I am indebted for this line of thinking on Buddhist thought from Daniel Vokey in comments to me on an earlier draft of the dissertation.

Flash Back! What I first picked out was how MALT-like these stories were... As I was reading, I was remembering the Dynamics, the Learning, the Safety of exploring group work in the first residency... This reflection is very significant to me because it shapes my biases on how I might (will) participate in this focus group...

Moreover, I had two participants who were members of an RRU group on which one of the stories was significantly based. Those comments of those persons were quite consistent with the story that I told based in part on their group (see italicized notes in appendix #1, Story #1).

2.1.5 Validity

The methods that I chose prompted me to ask myself important questions about the validity of my work. As Lincoln and Guba (2000) put it: “how do we know when we... are faithful enough... that we may feel safe acting on [our inquiries] or, more important, that members of the community in which the research is conducted may act on [our inquiries]?” (p. 181). They continue, “...objectivity is a chimera: a mythological creature that never existed save in the imaginations of those who believe that knowing can be separated from the knower... every way of knowing contains its own moral trajectory” (Lincoln and Guba, 2000, pp. 181-2). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) write that “narrative relies on criteria other than validity, reliability and generalizability” (p.184). They refer to the living out of our narrative inquiries through “wakefulness”, a “kind of inquiry that necessitates ongoing reflection” (Ibid). They also cite the value of “apparency and verisimilitude, criteria that put the emphasis on recognizability of the field in the research text”¹⁰ and “transferability”.¹¹ An important test, then, is whether the stories I tell in here sound ‘authentic’ and real.

¹⁰ This is taken from Van Maanen

¹¹ This is taken from Lincoln and Guba

As well, I was drawn to the idea in Greenwood and Levin, writing about a different form of research, action research, that “credibility, reliability and validity... are measured by the willingness of local stakeholders to act on the research. In so doing, these stakeholders are thereby risking their welfare on the ‘validity of their ideas’ and the degree to which the outcomes meet their expectations... the test is whether the actual solution to a problem arrived at solves the problem” (Greenwood and Levin, 2000, pp. 96-97). I incorporated my own version of the action research test into my method. I did so by focusing the three final focus groups on the preliminary conclusions that I had reached. In that final round of focus group discussion I asked focus group participants to comment on my analysis and the stories I chose. The final test is whether what I have written serves as a basis for your future action.

2.2 My Specific Methodology

2.2.1 The Three Stages

I had three stages to my methodology:

Stage one: I extracted the above-noted five observation-based stories (see summaries below and see more detailed summaries in appendix #1) from the field notes that I compiled over my fourteen years of observations of groups and teams. I used pseudonyms, the alteration and omission of key details and the inclusion of composite descriptions to preserve the anonymity of the persons who were involved from everyone except the participants themselves. Focus group members in the second stage were asked to read at least two of these stories in order to ‘ground’ them in the minute by minute and day by day progression of groups that had developed trust and in order to have a common base for group conversation at the beginning of each focus group.

Stage two involved convening focus groups and on-line discussion groups with volunteers from one particular program in which I taught, the RRU MALT program. This program began in 1996 with me as one of four initial faculty members. Especially throughout its first five years and even to some extent today the program bore and bears a heavy stamp of my

expertise in team dynamics in the design of the program. The program attracted as student learners individuals interested in improving their leadership practices, including their leadership of groups. Personal anonymity was guaranteed to focus group members and on-line discussion group participants. Participants also had the right to review, amend and strike out remarks made in the groups as a part of my stage two methodology. What I was looking for in the groups was a story-telling conversation about trust-building in groups both in the RRU educational program and back in the so-called 'real world'. In the chapters which follow I will sometimes include the on-line groups in umbrella references to focus groups and the focus group process. Despite the fact that the on-line groups did not have the intense face to face group experience I associate with previous work with focus groups, the on-line discussion groups followed very much the same progression of discussion areas, used essentially the same background materials, and 'discussed' most of the same specific topics as the face to face groups. There was obviously more coming and going with the on-line groups and more of an opportunity to reflect on ideas, but the level of conversation was amazingly similar.

The specifics of the stage two process were as follows. The face to face groups, ranging in size from six to eight people, met for three to three and a half hours. The sessions were taped and transcribed by a professional court reporting service. Sample pre-readings, agendas and supporting materials are included in appendix #2. The basic format was to open with a welcome and a summary of groundrules (see appendix #2). We then had introductions, going around the group round robin style. An element of circle (Baldwin, 1998) was introduced with research participants having the option to talk about their interest in the topic of group trust and to put a personal object 'in the center'. We talked for over an hour about the five stories in relation to five definitions of trust from the literature and to six possible sources of trust (see the sample background information in appendix #2). Focus group members also referred to their experience generally of trust in groups. Just before a break I told a personal story about trust (an earlier version of the magic group story told in this chapter). After the break, focus group members told their own trust stories in some detail. The telling of these stories took much of the remaining time. At the end of each face to face focus group we had a discussion of 'hot' topics from the first part of the session

and of topics such as application to trust in groups of a set of team effectiveness criteria developed by me (again see appendix #2). People were sufficiently involved that one of the toughest tasks was closing the session. Women dominated the research population, with the group in Vancouver and one of the groups in Victoria being all-women's groups. Two men attended the other Victoria session.

As noted above, the on-line conversations were structured essentially the same way as the face to face groups, with two weeks of conversation about the stories and other material sent out in advance, two weeks of conversation about participant stories, and a last week of general conversation. There were eight fully participating members in each of the first two focus groups (with one person having to leave early from the second group). The third group started with seven members but with three drop-outs soon lost energy and momentum. There were two men in the first two online conversations and one in the third. The only significant difference in the material put in front of participants in the online process from the face to face process was the substitution of the RRU faculty story (see chapter seven) for the magic story as an example. I also occasionally sent out a on-line memo to secure an interpretation of online silence.

The gender split in total was thirty-four women and seven men.

Stage three involved two additional face to face focus groups and one more on-line discussion group. One of these was an ongoing group throughout the last seven months of 2004 and the two groups met in the fall of 2004. One of these focus groups was made up of five participants from the stage two face to face focus groups who were interested in further discussion about my preliminary results. Each of the three face to face groups was represented. The second additional face to face focus group was the ongoing group, my UBC EdD cohort. I repeatedly took whatever results I was then working with and 'tested them' with the reality of my cohort colleagues. This was another vital reality check. I had the cohort focus on describing the building of trust in the cohort itself (the story of the cohort is told in chapter seven), on reviewing the earliest version of my model, on examining the early form in which I put the stories and on the overall process I was going

through. The third group was an on-line group made up of five instructors I worked with in the intense RRU learning environment who met throughout the last two months of 2004. These were instructors who were available for this process and who I judged to have the greatest interest and ability in the area of group trust, based on their RRU and life experiences. This on-line group discussion was preceded by on-line conversation in the spring of 2004 about the composite RRU faculty group experience described in chapter seven. A sixth instructor took part in that earlier conversation.

The stage two participants who involved themselves in stage three were self-selecting. I notified all focus group participants of the date for the later session several months in advance of the session. On the instructor side, four of the six faculty members had been part of three particularly trusting faculty groups I was part of at RRU. The other two MALT graduate volunteers who had been both student learners and faculty learners and with whom I had worked in both capacities.

In the case of the stage three groups, again there were more women than men. The returning stage two group had one man and four women, the faculty group had four men and two women (my initial population had two other women in it but one, who had retired from RRU, did not reply and one had to drop out early). The cohort has seven women and five men, including me. All groups were given the current version of the six element model, the current definition of the group trust and a sampling of the stories from the stage two focus groups. Discussion flowed around the areas of interest of the group in question. There was a high degree of interest in the model in all cases and great debate about how best to present and analyze the stories. The record-keeping was varied in stage 3. With the on-line group, I once again compiled the e-mails. With the cohort I used various means of recording (notes, tape recording and e-mail exchanges). As for the returning stage two group we used a graphic facilitator to record the conversation—this produced a very interesting and visual record of the meeting (see appendix #8).

2.2.2 My Decision to Limit Research Participants

One part of my methodology that requires further explanation is my decision to limit my research. Other than my cohort at UBC, the other participants were limited to those who had experience as Royal Roads University learners, both students and faculty. Note, however, that while many RRU experiences were a basis for the stories I sent to the first six focus groups—see below and appendix #1—those composite stories were also based on several groups I have observed in wide-ranging, diverse situations outside RRU.

There were six main reasons for limiting the research to people associated with RRU. One reason for choosing RRU was the nature of the RRU Leadership program. The RRU program, being an intense two year group-based program, gave participants more of an opportunity to experience and think about group development, including the building of trust, than any other program with which I have been associated. My notes on what the program was about from my time teaching the program, include references to MALT being: a caring, values-based learning experience that focuses on leadership, learning, organizations, systems and research; an experiential, adult learning approach to applied, competency-based learning in leadership; and fostering learning and practicing with passion and in relationships with others. The official program outcomes, as described in the updated university calendar that came out the year I left off teaching in the program were: self-knowledge, team-building skills, internal and external communications skills, problem-identification skills, problem analysis skills, internal and external 'political skills', change and influence management skills and technological skills.¹²

The second reason was that the participants in the Royal Roads Program were varied in terms of their background experience, career ambitions and geography. Other intense leadership programs where I was observer primarily involved participants from a single sector (usually business or government) and from the same geographic area. In some instances they largely had the same socioeconomic status.

¹² From the Royal Roads University Calendar, 2001-2002. Royal Roads University, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

A third reason was that the Royal Roads program, being highly experimental and experiential, required a high degree of trust between faculty learners and student learners in order to 'work'. Since I was one of an initial small group of faculty members that worked with seven different cohorts of RRU student learners, I was in the forefront of those learners developing trust in and having other experiences of group dynamics. Moreover, teaching both team-work and systems thinking meant that the material I taught would have potentially impacted their experience of groups in the RRU setting. Another factor was the very positive student learner feedback I received in the end-of-residency evaluations. Based on this feedback, there was a good likelihood, I hypothesized, of these graduates taking on the considerable time commitment (a minimum of eight hours) involved in the process. Moreover, I thought that learner trust might spill over to the focus and conversation groups, with these former RRU student learners trusting me and trusting a process that I put together on the very subject of building trust in groups.

The fourth through sixth reasons were all practical considerations. One of these was that Royal Roads has an electronic address base that would make contacting the whole student learning population feasible. I could thus increase the opportunity for diversity in the focus groups and eliminate any selector bias I might have by welcoming all who volunteered for the project. However, I did specifically target in my call for volunteers those who had been in programs in which I had taught, feeling that would lead to a greater willingness to take on the above-noted significant workload of being a focus group member. A second practical reason for focusing on the RRU experience was that my notes of the RRU experience were better notes than those I had taken in other programs in which I have been involved. In performing the observer function in the RRU setting, I was able to sit in on a single group's deliberations for much longer stretches of time than I was able to in any other program with which I have been associated. Thus the observer stories I could tell RRU student learners would be much more 'real' and 'true to the learner experience' than those I could tell about any other program. A third practical consideration related to the on-line conversation groups. RRU Masters-level learners get considerable practice at on-line conversation as part

of their degree work and thus would be more likely to be comfortable and open in the on-line discussion environment.

Finally, the seventh reason was a purely emotional one. I had invested substantial personal energy in the Royal Roads experience. I felt both a tremendous burden and a tremendous opportunity in being a member of the first RRU faculty group, both on the Master's Program side and in the Executive Program component. I spent by far the largest portion of my professional and personal time during a five year period at the peak of my career at RRU. I felt I left something of myself there.

The potential biases and pre-dispositions of my phase two focus groups was also clear from correspondence from two of my final on-line discussion group members. They agreed that:

[The] MALT experience is a pseudo reality (almost a laboratory type situation) where there is opportunity for manipulation of variables (knowing the team members assessment results and intake data to form the teams) that may not be present in the "real world". This may just need to be highlighted as a "delimitation". As well, individuals within the MALT program are motivated by other things (i.e. marks, participation, etc) to work at the team piece and to experience it "differently" than in a real-life workspace...

Based on these limitations, I feel compelled to issue a disclaimer. The results of this research are clearly influenced by the combination of learners themselves self-selecting for the RRU program, my power position of instructor in the program, my influence on what learners read and understood about group and systems dynamics in the first summer residency, and self-selection for the focus groups themselves. There were only three individuals who volunteered whom I had not taught in the summer residency—however each of those three individuals contributed something significant to the focus group process. Those who chose to be focus group volunteers were more on the 'mature' side. There was also a gender bias favoring females. These were the only obvious distinctions from the RRU MALT population

at large in my five years of teaching. That said, I must say the focus group participants were the very sort of people who would be likely to help build trust in a group (see appendix #5 for reflection on trust in the focus groups themselves): open, curious, questioning (note the nineteen questions in appendix #6) and willing to take risks and be vulnerable.

2.2.3 The Pluses and Predispositions Associated with RRU Learners

Generally speaking the experience of developing trust in groups was described by focus group participants as an exciting, magical, life-changing or life-confirming, affirming experience. Trusting groups that matched that description included a number of self-directed teams in the RRU program itself as well as dozens of groups out in the so-called real world. This was not surprising. There clearly was an element of self-selection and predisposition towards the importance of teams and other groups among those who enter the program. This could be expected to be even more so among those who self-selected for the focus group process.

This predisposition and the associated expectations of the program were well represented by the following question asked and answered by an on-line group participant:

Is it possible that learning focused on personal/interpersonal development, such as the MALT program, may require a higher level of trust than other types of programs? I tend to think that if I had participated in a MALT group that worked to task efficiently, with little need to consider process, I would probably have not felt I got the full developmental impact of the learning experience that I had hoped for. And I probably wouldn't have made some of the deeper connections with people - that is so satisfying in learning and in life.

However none of this is to suggest that the Royal Roads MALT program or the building of trust in groups is for the faint-hearted. My tentative definitions of trust going in to the focus groups zeroed in on the delicate topic of vulnerability in particular. Later I added the ideas of risk-taking and uncertainty (see chapter three). All three of these courage-requiring states were present in the stage one stories which I circulated to the participants before the group conversation. They were also present in the MALT-related stories told by participants in the focus groups.

The story that follows is one of many I could have chosen to illustrate the exceptional courage involved for some in being part of the MALT program (see the italicized stories which follow story #1 in appendix #1 for stories told by focus group members about another remarkable MALT group experience). The story that follows, which I will call Peter's Story, is taken almost verbatim from the written account of the on-line focus group participant. Later, in chapter six, I use Peter's Story to illustrate the model that I developed as part of this work.

...the one group I think of when I'm challenged to remember my best "team" experience ever was my first problem-solving group in the MALT program. Interestingly for me, anyway, is the fact that I would certainly have not said that a day or so into working in that group. The energy and enthusiasm of the group was a wonder to behold, but in our first sessions together, I felt overwhelmed by their apparent willingness to "let it all hang out." I am typically more comfortable letting trust and intimacy grow slowly over time (probably to be "earned," if the truth were known...) and I felt that I couldn't keep up with the group either on the process side or the content side. When we were wrestling with task, my strong tendency towards reflectiveness meant that I was often just ready to add my bit when the group would take a leap forward. As we would flip to process, I struggled with how or even if I should let the group know that I was feeling increasingly overwhelmed and passed over. By about the third day in the program, I felt that I was already at a turning point.

Since I've already mentioned that this was my best group experience ever, the question is, how did this transformation happen? For me, I think it started when I shared my deep misgivings and fears with a close friend who was also in that MALT cohort. I told her over dinner that I didn't think that I belonged in the MALT program, that I wasn't carrying my share of the workload, that this felt like the hardest work I had ever done, and that if it wasn't for the fact that I had a lot of money and pride invested in the program, I would have been out of there. To my complete amazement, my very competent and together friend said that she was feeling the very same way. Maybe that just normalized the situation for me a bit, but it helped me to realize that the fact that it was so hard was what made it so important that I do it with my whole heart and energy. I realized that I could have taken the "easy" route by going with a traditional program, but that I had chosen RRU for the very reasons that I was feeling so pressured. It was challenging, it was innovative, it promised a richness of both task and process that I hadn't found anywhere else. What happened next was truly a leap for me: I shared my misgivings and my perceived shortcomings with my "team." I apologized for my lack of engagement and asked for their understanding that my natural tendencies (and my worries over a very serious accident in the family) had meant that I had not contributed what I felt I could. Essentially, I was trusting that they would give me a second chance to meet my own expectations, and they didn't let me down.

Interestingly, my own "confession" led to some much deeper exchanges on the part of a number of my team-mates as well, and it was at that point (in my recollection, at least) that we just took off as a team. Our project came together with a joy and synergy that I've never experienced with another group (yet!).

Which of the “trust factors” were at play in allowing me to trust deeply enough to take the step I had? Expectations of personal reciprocity were in place by this time; I had seen and heard enough of these people that they would honour my faith and live by the groundrules we had set. Institutional factors were also an important factor for me, particularly as “lived” by our faculty. Their apparent credibility and vulnerability, and the fact that they and the university had so much at stake in those early MALT days, helped me believe that I was in good hands. Personal factors were also at play; although I may take a while in gathering information to begin with, I have always gotten a lot of personal satisfaction out of taking risks, both physical and otherwise. Opening myself up to that group felt a lot like the first time I went parasailing: scary, but potentially such a rush! Finally, for me, I just went with my intuition. As I had gotten to know the members of the group, I just knew that they would do the right thing by me when I confessed all my fears and shortcomings to them. I know that my intuitive trust in Sandy, who was our observer, was also a factor, because I instinctively knew that if our process blew up in our faces, he’d be there to help us get through it intact as persons, even if not as a group.

2.2.4 Focus Groups Readings and Atmosphere

I was absolutely enthralled and energized by the conversations in the focus groups. As I noted earlier we started with general introductions and comments about why people were interested in the topic of trust, talked about the displays and sources of trust in the stories I had circulated in advance, told personal stories about trusting groups we had experienced and then finished up with further conversation, including conversation about materials I circulated on what trust could actually look like (see appendix #2).

The materials I circulated in advance to inform the reading of the stage one stories included the tentative definitions of trust, three of the five of which referred to vulnerability, and the

speculative list of sources of trust. That six items on that list were as follows. The first was personal reciprocity expectations, the idea of a 'deal' or a group contract where you have an expectation of return for the investment you make in trusting the group. The second was institutional factors which included institutional expectations and safeguards—e.g. we are expected to trust others in the RRU learning program or in working for this organization/this employer; as a part of this expectation the educational institution. The third speculative source was risk-taking behaviors, a willingness to be vulnerable and/or to make a trusting leap of faith and see what happens; this can be based on some combination of past positive experiences, a belief in humanity, risk-taking proclivities and a very solid sense of esteem (e.g. even if this group turns out to be untrustworthy I can survive that intact). Fourth, I referred to a possible intuitive reaction, a willingness to trust and be vulnerable based on 'gut feel' about the group or about some members of the group; the group feels 'safe' or a critical mass or even one critical person in the group (e.g. the leader) feels safe. The fifth speculative source was leadership behaviors, a formal or informal leader can influence others to engage in trusting behavior by doing so first. Finally I referred to a possible source being a moral belief: Trust is the right thing to do and what a "good group member" should do (i.e. trust others in a group). These possible sources of trust proved to be a useful source of analysis in story-telling and in reflection on where trust came from (see the conversation about trust in the magic group interwoven into this chapter).

In selecting the stories to go to stage two focus group members, I concentrated on certain specific behaviors that, based on my years of observation of groups, I speculated were integral to the development of trust in those particular groups. I identified six of these behaviors or types of behavior. The first was the surfacing and successful resolution of conflict. Second was getting past a preoccupation with task accomplishment in group process. The third behavior was the use of feedback within and to the group to assist it in improving its process. Fourth, I looked at the impact on the behavior of the group of outside influences, including myself. The fifth behavior was the use of specific processes, roles and individual questionnaires to assist in group development. A sixth behavior arose from a group successfully dealing with previous problem behaviors using awareness of the systemic nature of group process (e.g. getting past blaming). I was to learn from the focus group

members that these behaviors could contribute to group trust but that there were four 'larger' internalized practices that accounted for the development of trust in groups that they had experienced.

I have summarized below the five stories that I made available to members of the stage two focus groups prior to their meetings. As noted earlier, these stories were told to inform research participants and to get the discussion of group trust rolling. They also served to get research participants in the frame of mind to tell their own stories. The stories, in summary form, were as follows.

Story #1: This is a story of a group dominated by process-oriented people. Much to their surprise and chagrin, the process-oriented people are confronted by their lone more task-oriented member, who tells them that she feels excluded in the group. The process-oriented people learn to listen to and trust the more task-oriented person and vice versa.

Story #2: This starts out as a 'blaming story'. The group in question initially blames the facilitator (i.e. me) for various problems they encounter. The group develops a common purpose and learns to take responsibility for their decisions and actions on their way to developing a high degree of group trust.

Story #3: This is a fairly dramatic story about a group that must confront deep internal division and conflict. In so doing group members must take big risks. As the group members learn from the risks taken by their members, they begin to "live like a butterfly and fly", in the language of one group member. The group members came to really, really trust each other.

Story #4: This story is actually two stories with a common thread. In both stories, the groups involved lost their way and got focused on task to the exclusion of trust-building type processes. Both groups learned through a

debriefing process how they had shut group members out. This contributed to the groups 'catching' and righting themselves.

Story #5: This story is about a truly destructive, even psychologically dangerous, person named 'Ann' being removed from a group. Subsequent to Ann's removal, the group reached a high degree of trust.

My life experience is reflected in my choice of the five stories. I started the research process thinking that both unresolved conflict and task-preoccupation were recurring issues that groups might have to deal with on their way to achieving trust. This bias is reflected in the first four of the stories I sent out. I also have had negative personal experience with destructive narcissistic behaviors (Brown, 1998). This experience is reflected in the fifth story. Once again, focus group participants expanded my horizons and helped me to look beyond resolving conflict and getting past task preoccupation as ways of building group trust.

I asked participants to read just two of the stories, knowing full well that some would read all of them. I was conscious that I was drawing on a population of people who had many stories of their own that they would bring to the focus group process, prompted by these readings. The early research results that I sent to participants along with the stories gave participants a smorgasbord-type listing of definitions of trust and of sources of trust (see appendix #2). There were parts of these materials (e.g. most visibly the references to vulnerability) that clearly influenced group conversations.

The mechanics of phase two of my methodology are described in appendix #2. Appendix #2 also has copies of all of the relevant correspondence and materials circulated to phase two participants. Forty-one participants took part in the phase two process. Another twenty-one participants involved themselves in the phase three process.

The environment I was attempting to establish in the focus groups can be illustrated by quoting a comment I made in one of the groups: "this group to me was the embodiment of

what a focus group should be.... it was like having a group of friends get together to build on each other's ideas". In other words, it was like being part of a trusting group (for more on that, see appendix #5). Put another way, I found that the experience of moderating both the face to face focus groups and the on-line conversations met the test specified in a text on focus groups:

What makes moderating [a focus group] so interesting is the people. Each focus group is new and unlike the one before... One exciting aspect of focus group discussions is that they bring together a variety of people with differing backgrounds and characteristics (Krueger, 1998, p. 57).

I was personally tremendously excited, informed and a little overwhelmed by the focus group process. I generated a tremendous amount of data, only a portion of which I have included in the dissertation. I am immensely gratified to each of the participants.

2.3. Summary and Linkage

I have in this chapter written extensively about the reasons that I chose autoethnography and narrative as bases for my methodology. I have written less extensively but, I hope, persuasively about my role as observer in ethnographic settings and my use of focus groups as a means of gathering new stories that are reported on in chapter five. I detail the specific steps that I took to form, inform and moderate eight focus groups as part of this research. I acknowledge, indeed celebrate, in this chapter, my personal interest in the subject matter and my corresponding subjectivity. Significantly, I note some of my biases and predispositions when I started the research about the recurring issues that led to groups developing trust and that focus group participants expanded my horizons on this topic. I also issue a disclaimer about the background of focus group participants while making it clear that I consider those participants to have been outstanding contributors to the research.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

I wrote this dissertation metaphorically standing on the shoulders of academic giants from many different fields. The initial conceptual genesis for this dissertation was in my extensive readings of literature on leadership, group development, systems thinking and organizational dialogue prior to starting the dissertation. I combined an in-depth review, re-thinking and integration of this prior knowledge with new readings on trust and group cooperation, undertaken specifically for this dissertation, in order to provide the conceptual foundation for what follows. I describe this journey and how I brought together and interpreted these materials in this chapter.

3.2 Key Ideas as I Started Out

Twenty-plus years of avid reading of the literature on leadership, group development, systems and dialogue taught me a great deal before I began the research for this dissertation. However, I learned a great deal more in revisiting this literature with the specific focus of this dissertation on group trust in mind.

3.2.1 Leadership

3.2.1.1 The Definition of Leadership

In the realm of leadership, my first question, for the last twenty-plus years, has been: what exactly is 'leadership'? I read many definitions and general descriptions of leaders, leadership and leadership theories as part of my research (Senge, 1990, p. 340; Robbins, 1991, p. 354; Yukl, 1994, pp. 2-5; Covey, 2004, pp. 252-264). Early on, in seeking to define leadership, I was reminded that even some texts on leadership note the struggles we have had in explaining the term. Yukl quotes an early text by Bennis as stating that:

Always, it seems, the concept of leadership eludes us or turns up in another form to taunt us again with its slipperiness and complexity. So we have invented an endless proliferation of terms to deal with it... and still the concept is not sufficiently defined (Yukl quoting Bennis, 1994, p. 3).

Bennis' later definitions were legion, including several definitions focusing on the distinction between managers and leaders: "leaders are people who do the right thing; managers are people who do things right" and "management is getting people to do what needs to be done... leadership is getting people to *want* to do what needs to be done" (Bennis quoted in Covey, 2004, p. 360). I also found convincing Senge's reference to leaders as "designers, teachers and stewards" (Senge, 1990, p. 354).

Contemporary circumstances make the search for organizational and societal leadership both more important and more focused. One of the most fundamental challenges to our leadership in organizations today is that the "only constant" is change (Bennis, 1989, p. 101). In other words, in a complex and increasingly inter-connected world of fluctuating global markets and public policies, we constantly have to change. We have to continuously re-define and hone exactly what we are trying to achieve in our organizations, and how we try to achieve it together. We have to make conscious choices to discover where our deep passions lie and what we can be best at (Collins, 2001 pp. 95-96). Leadership through endings and new beginnings will be essential aspects of personal and group processes in our organizations (Bridges, 1991, p. 6). We have to deal head-on with the question "What would you do if you weren't afraid?" (Johnson, 1998, p. 48)

Given the focus on so much respected and popular literature on change, it is not surprising that Kotter defines leadership as being "about coping with change" (Kotter, 2001, p. 4). He notes that "only leadership can motivate the actions needed to alter behavior in any significant way" (Kotter, 1996, p. 30). Senge (1990) writes about learning organizations where leadership provides us with a capacity to create together the future we want to create. Two specific change-related challenges to leadership are the ability to recognize and act on

what change brings, and taking a pro-active rather than a re-active approach to change (Covey, 1989, p.65).

Far too many organizations are overflowing with management and lacking in leadership. "Many an institution is well-managed and poorly led. It may excel in the ability to handle each day all the routine inputs yet may never ask whether the routine should be done at all" (Bennis, 1989, p. 17). "Most US corporations today are overmanaged and underled." (Kotter, 2001, p. 3) "Only leadership can blast through the many sources of corporate inertia" (Kotter, 1996, p. 30). Filling the leadership gap is particularly important as we move further into the Information or Knowledge Society, "the first human society where upward mobility is potentially unlimited" (Drucker, 2002, p.60). The knowledge workers who populate the service sector are a primary source and audience of my research.

In light of the above, I define leadership as "the positive influencing of others to reach a sustainable future that you and those others want to create together". I concluded that some of the most important leadership we will experience in our future lives in organizations could and should be provided by groups that trust. I will now describe for you the readings and the thought process that I followed to arrive at the latter conclusions.

3.2.1.2 The Process and Content Aspects of Leadership

I spent a great deal of time reflecting on the 'process' and 'content' aspects of leadership. With regard to process, the ability to *influence* rather than *direct*, and to secure the genuine involvement of others is critical. We can call the process aspect of leadership "interpersonal influence" and "influential increment over and above mechanical compliance" (Yukl, 1994, pp. 2-3). We can also label it "commitment" rather than mere "compliance" (Senge, 1990, p. 218). Whatever language we use, our ability to engage and involve others in meaningful ways is essential to successful leadership. We need to be able to influence and hear from the highly diverse people who populate our organizations. This involves a level of understanding, engagement and involvement of those people. It also involves tapping into connectors, the natural networkers, and those who "are very good at

expressing emotions and feelings”, thus being “emotionally contagious” (Gladwell, 2000, p.85).

A key aspect of the content part of leadership is the practical matter of what the leadership in an organization does. Inevitably, however, today’s content definition has become inextricably intertwined with process. We have come a long way from the days when I first taught leadership in the mid-1980s where the typical definition of what ‘leaders’ engaged others to do was to reach ‘goals’ (Yukl, 1994, pp. 2-3). In exploring content, I focused initially on Kotter’s four activities as fundamental to leadership. Those activities were “setting the direction” for change (Kotter, 2001, p. 5), taking on the “communications challenge” of aligning people (Kotter, 2001, p. 7) to comprehend a vision so lower level employees can initiate actions, motivating people, and creating a culture of leadership (Kotter, 2001, p. 9). I found Kotter’s four categories replicated in some form in many of the current writings on leadership (Bennis and Goldsmith, 1997; Covey, 2004; Goleman, 2000; Heenan and Bennis, 1999; Heifetz and Laurie, 1997). I labeled the four commonly-agreed to components of leadership as: providing direction for the organization’s future, empowering people in organizations, inspiring and coaching people in organizations, and hearing from people in organizations (see appendix #7).

We should also heed the warning from Colin Powell that an essential aspect of leadership is being prepared for loneliness: “a sense of aloneness is endemic to leadership at any level in any enterprise” (Harari, 2002, p. 244).¹³ Powell remembers, the night before the invasion of Panama, feeling “full of foreboding... Had I been right? Had my advice been sound?... What would our casualties be?” (Harari, 2002, p. 245). While few people in leadership positions will take a country to war, just about all of us attend meetings and we can all go through the “midnight moment of aloneness—that long moment of self-doubt, second-guessing and deep anxiety” (Harari, 2001, p. 246) that goes with leadership.

¹³ Isaacs (1999) puts the same issue in an everyday light: “our meetings and our institutions can be very lonely places” (p. 28).

3.2.1.3 Distributed Leadership and Leadership by Groups

I found it disturbing to reflect on how much time, attention and energy have been focused narrowly in organizations on defining the top leadership and on finding a small cadre of star 'leaders'. "Most people think of leadership as a position and don't see themselves as leaders" (Covey, 2004, p.16). "Major transformations are often associated with one highly visible individual" (Kotter, 1996, p. 51). The idea that change can come only from a single "larger than life person" is a "dangerous belief" (Kotter, 1996, p. 51). I found it even more disturbing to reflect on how systemic forces meant that many top leaders of organizations were masters of territoriality "and elaboration of our differences" (Oshry, 1995, p. 149).

While securing leadership from the formal 'head' of an organization and the 'heads' of all key departments is clearly important, we must get away from an exclusive expectation that one or more individuals will be 'the one or several true leaders' who 'save' and 'protect' us. Leadership can be provided in some form or fashion by most people in an organization. Leadership entails certain behaviors and ways of 'being' that enhance the experience and performance of the people in organizations.

Anyone in an organization can be a leader in a leader-full organization, an organization which has multiple leaders. A leader-full organization does not rely exclusively on one formal leader. In other words, "There are many leaders, not just one" (Goleman et al., 2002, p. xiii). The leader-full concept is well-described in literature on distributed leadership (i.e., leadership that is dispersed rather than concentrated", Gronn, 2002, p.655; "distribution of the responsibility for leadership... an idea whose time has well and truly come", Gronn, 2002, p. 654). One way to look at distributed leadership is in "additive terms as the behavior of multiple leaders". However, I see it, as Gronn does, "in a more holistic fashion" (Gronn, 2002, p. 654) and as evident in "concertive action rather than aggregated behaviour" (Gronn, 2002, p. 656).

The concept of leader-full organizations is useful for organizations in the Information or Knowledge Age. In this post-modern age:

The new capital in many... organizations... at least as defined by influence...and the ability to 'call the shots'... is determined not by ownership of the company or by one's formal position or tenure in the company but rather by one's possession of knowledge and skills relevant to the immediate needs of the organization...information is expandable without any obvious limits; it is also compressible...transportable, substitutable...diffusive... and, most important, sharable... our increasing reliance on information changes the very nature of the workplace. (Bergquist, 1993, p. 151)

Distributed leadership has been observed for some time in research on group environments. One of the foundations of this perspective is the work of Gibb in the 1950s, which is referenced in Gronn:

Gibb's starting point was the claim that leadership "is probably best conceived as a group quality, as a set of functions which must be carried out by the group". He then drew attention to the "tendency for leadership to pass from one individual to another as the situation changes". (Gronn, 2002, p. 655)

Distributed leadership in group environments is also reflected in the literature on productive and performing groups (Tuckman, 1965; Blanchard et al., 2000): "flexibility and shared leadership... allow the team to respond to new challenges" (Blanchard et al., 2000, p. 51). Practitioners of distributed leadership can, therefore, "lead without power" (DePree, 1999).

An extension of the idea of distributed leadership in groups is the idea of leadership being provided through pairings or groups, thus further getting away from the idea of leadership being focused "in one organizational role or at one level" (Gronn, 2002, p. 655). Bennis, Kotter, Drucker, Blanchard and Waghorn and Covey all contribute to this idea of leadership

through pairings or groups. Bennis was a co-author of a text on co-leadership, where he and Heenan write about leadership through dyads:

Co-leadership... is a tough-minded strategy that will unleash the hidden talent in any enterprise... co-leadership is inclusive, not exclusive... co-leadership should permeate every organization at every level... power and responsibility are dispersed, giving the enterprise a whole constellation of costars—co-leaders with shared values and aspirations, all of whom work together towards common goals... Called on to make more and more complex decisions more and more quickly, even the most da Vincian CEO's acknowledge that they can't do everything themselves... Future-oriented enterprises have to be able to spot the Next Big Thing and respond to it before the competition. (Heenan and Bennis, 1999, pp. 5-7)

Heenan and Bennis add that in co-leadership “trust is the coin of the realm” (p. 275) and that “the most exciting work being done today is collaborative, accomplished by teams of people working toward a common goal” (p. 17).

Drucker sees inter-organizational partnership as a solution in the present and coming environment, where “we have to make special efforts to be receptive to change and to be able to change” and that we need to balance “rapid change and continuity”. Partnership “in change” can be made “the basis of continuing relationships” (Drucker, 2001, p.90). We can thus increasingly organize relationships “as long term partnerships in the process of change” (Drucker, 2001, p. 91). Drucker goes on to link change and partnership to group work and trust:

... enterprises [will] come to rely on people working together without actually working together...it will...become more and more important for these people to get together and actually meet one another and work with one another on an organized, systematic, scheduled basis... [this] makes it more important to have trust in one another. (Drucker, 2001, p. 91)

Kotter talks about the mistake we make in assigning important change to a “low credibility committee” (Kotter, 1996, p. 53), which, unfortunately, is often the description of the executive or senior management committee. Kotter’s answer is another form of co-leadership. A team “with the right composition and sufficient trust among members” (Kotter, 1996, p. 55) can be “highly effective” and is a necessity under today’s new “business circumstances” in order to affect the changes we have to make to our organizations.

Kotter, writing with Cohen, expands on the importance of “sufficient trust” in a team in the Information Age. Kotter and Cohen (2002) note that “with big changes in a fast-moving world”, weak trust is “a huge problem” (p. 50). They add the rhetorical question: “How can you create a sensible vision and strategies for the overall group in a team with weak trust?” (p. 50). Earlier, they link trust to “emotional commitment” (p. 4) and note that “people change what they do because they are shown a truth that influences their feelings” (p.1). Emotional commitment affects how people bond together and the bond that they feel with the organization.

Blanchard and Waghorn note that “for the first time in the history of business, a company can be outclassing the competition today and out of business tomorrow” (Blanchard and Waghorn, 1997, p. 16). They write about future-oriented design teams needing freedom, time, risk-taking and members who are “unreasonable” people:

These people must fulfill George Bernard Shaw’s requirements for “unreasonable men” by never being content, searching constantly for new and better ways to do everything. (Blanchard and Waghorn, 1997, p. 144)

Covey writes about organizations building on the synergistic work of high trust-relationships as “the foundation for creating teams or organizations of cooperative people” on the path to “the Age of Wisdom, the fifth age of civilization” (Covey, 2004, p. 117). In an appendix titled “the high cost of low trust”, he notes the importance of asking evidence questions

along with “impact questions which get to the heart” of a matter (Covey, 2004, p. 365). Covey suggests involving more than one person in this kind of questioning, which again suggests that we cannot leave leadership to a single individual. All the time that you ask questions, “the other person or extended team is the intelligence force” (Covey, 2004, p. 368).

Leadership-providing groups can thus be a cornerstone of the well-led organization of the future. These groups can have different names, a Guiding Coalition (Kotter), a Future Design Team (Blanchard and Waghorn) and a Leadership Council (the name of the group constituted by CEO Fred Raley of SpawGlass of Texas). Their mandate is essentially the same: to look to “creating what isn’t” (Blanchard and Waghorn, 1997 p. xxi) and to find that next Big Thing. Thus these groups must be generative and must synergize. Generative dialogue and synergy are made more likely if we have trust in the group in question. The creation of, and work done by, leadership-providing groups increases the likelihood of commitment, which once again links the content of leadership with the process of leadership.

3.2.1.4 Sustainability through Leadership

A newer aspect of the definition of leadership and a distinct leadership challenge is combining change processes with sustainability. Sustainability has reached new prominence as a concept through research on the environment, but in my mind it always has been a key aspect of leadership. Sustainability has recently developed its increased profile through such organizational concepts as the triple bottom line (the TBL). The TBL is intended to focus us on the impact on the environment as an aspect of accountability. The triple bottom line thus goes beyond making money and includes having a positive impact on the environment, including the human environment in which we work. This wider consciousness and accountability is set out in the definition which follows:

The triple bottom line... focuses corporations not just on the economic value they add, but also on the environmental and social value they add – and

destroy... At its broadest, the term is used to capture the whole set of values, issues and processes that companies must address in order to minimize any harm resulting from their activities and to create economic, social and environmental value. (www.sustainability.com/philosophy/triple-bottom/tbl-intro.asp, last viewed November 23, 2004)

Sustainability in leadership is nothing new if we connect it to the long-written-about concepts of statesmanship and stewardship. Organizational “statesmanship” involves making “the transition from administrative management to institutional leadership” and “concern for the evolution of the organization as a whole” (Selznick, 1957, pp. 4-5). To steward is “to hold something in trust for another” (Block, 1996, p. xx). To steward is to build “the capacity of the next generation to govern themselves” (Block, 1996, p. xx). To steward is to govern ourselves so we create “a strong sense of ownership and responsibility for outcomes at the bottom of the organization” (Block, 1996, p. 5).

3.2.1.5 Deciding which Groups Need Group Trust

As mentioned above, Kotter describes trust as an essential feature of his Guiding Coalition. Blanchard et al., in describing a group which has reached a productive stage, note that “relationships and communication” are “built on trust” as well as on mutual respect and openness (Blanchard et al., 2000, p.51). Where and why does group trust come into the group leadership equation? In the language of the literature on communities, we have “to develop relationships and sufficient trust to discuss genuinely sticky practice problems” (Wenger et al., 2002, p. 82). Dealing with sticky practice problems, issues, or challenges means dealing with the real issues and not the symptoms (Senge, 1990), the people issues that defy easy solution, and daunting and difficult futures (Drucker, 2002). Sticky issues are a part of our twenty-first century life. They come from “the substantial increase in the proportion of human beings who work in conjunction with other people” (Bergquist, 1993, p. 42). They also come from a change to human capital in service sector and knowledge

organizations: “the inventory goes home at night” (Bennis, 1989, p. 86)¹⁴. Sticky issues arise also from questions of “moral motivation”: the purpose of the organization, historical inequalities perpetuated by the organization and the effects the economic order on the workplace climate.¹⁵

We have to develop relationships and sufficient trust because they provide a connection between people that allows us to avoid superficially dealing with the above types of problems. These types of relationships also allow us to get past “smart talk” (Pfeffer and Sutton, 1999), and instead find and implement genuine solutions. Dealing with sticky issues will generate the greatest payoff for sustainable productivity, for the completion of tasks and for the people who are our only organizational assets in our service sector organizations.

Trusting groups have the capacity to positively affect leadership in organizations in at least three ways: changing direction, lessening loneliness and role-modeling. Trusting groups that lead can generate the ideas and the energy needed to transform the direction of our organizations. Trusting groups that lead can support those who provide leadership, thus assisting in mitigating the earlier-referenced loneliness of leadership that Powell warns about (Harari, 2002). Trusting groups that lead by role-modeling trust for the rest of the organization can variously be described as contributing to a field of trust (Wheatley, 1994), a tipping point or critical mass of trust (Gladwell, 2000) or a “network pattern going in all directions” (Capra, 1996, p. 82) of trust. These three areas of leadership are detailed in relation to the leadership literature in appendix #7.

In thinking about the role-modeling function of groups that lead, we shouldn’t expect all groups to build trust or to lead. Thus, it is useful to examine one of the key concepts in Katzenbach and Smith (1993), that of the working group.¹⁶ The working group is an alternative to a group seeking to become a much-touted high performing team:

¹⁴ Bennis attributes this to Louis B. Mayer, the head of MGM studios “during Hollywood’s golden era”. (Bennis, 1989, p. 86)

¹⁵ I am indebted to Daniel Vokey for these thoughts on “moral motivation” made in response to an earlier draft of this dissertation.

¹⁶ This choice was re-named “the single-leader discipline” in a subsequent book (Katzenbach and Smith, 2001). This discipline was described as follows: “The leader, often in consultation with the group, determines

... in many situations, particularly at the top of multibusiness companies, the structured working group option can make more sense. Too often, however, the choice between working group and team [i.e. another grouping in the model] is neither recognized nor consciously made (p. 88)... Unlike teams, working groups rely on the sum of "individual bests" for their performance. They pursue no collective work products requiring joint effort (p. 85)... The basic distinction here turns on performance. A working group relies primarily on the individual contributions of its members for group performance, whereas a team strives for a magnified impact that is incremental to what its members could achieve in their individual roles. The choice depends largely on whether the individual achievements can deliver the group's performance aspirations or whether collective work-products, skills and mutual accountability are needed (pp. 88-89)... An effective working group, like a team, benefits from a clear purpose and a common understanding of how performance will be evaluated... But working group members do not take responsibility for results other than their own (p. 89)... if performance aspirations can be met through individuals doing their respective jobs well, the working group approach is most comfortable, less risky and less disruptive than trying for more elusive team performance levels. (p. 90)

the performance-based reason and purpose for group work, makes the decisions, establishes the required individual contributions and group patterns of communications, and determines the requirements of success and how and when to evaluate progress" (p. 5).

The implications of choice and the 'working group' idea are significant.¹⁷ All of us who build groups should ask a series of questions before we do much else. These questions could be asked as a part of what is referred to as planning and initiating pre-conditions for trust in chapter six. Those questions include: How tight/effective should the group become, based on its expected function, and why? Will the group simply be asked to share bare bones information and not much else? Or, will the group provide leadership or support or help to create organizational climate? We have to get away from groups engaging in team-building and even trust-building as part of a knee-jerk achievement-driven morality play. In that play we could easily say high performing and trust are good; anything else is bad. We must avoid achievement for the sake of achievement.

However, I am also mindful of the thoughtful input of one of the members of my stage three on line discussion group who reviewed all of the major conclusions I had then arrived at, including conclusions about limiting our expectations about the number and type of groups that build trust:

What struck me was the concept that often we think of leadership as being held by individuals and here you are saying we need group leadership to do lots of things in organizations — which requires trust — right? And if so, then the idea that it is perhaps Ok to NOT have it when groups are carrying out more day-to-day tasks kind of undermines the premise — wouldn't we get crappy day-to-day decisions if people don't trust each other ?? I don't think you can have larger trust -based leadership tasks happening if not supported by a culture of effectiveness at the more mundane level of operations.

¹⁷ Drucker, like Katzenbach and Smith, writes about the elements of choice involved in the ways that teams work together, likening business organizational teams to sports teams:

The first kind of team is the baseball team... players play *on* the team; they do not play *as* a team... The second kind of team is the football team... players play *as* a team... "in parallel"... "in series"... Third there is the tennis doubles team... the sort of team that plays in a jazz combo... the team that is most likely to produce a genuine innovation... players have a primary rather than a fixed position. They are supposed to "cover" their teammates, adjusting to their teammates' strengths and weaknesses and to the changing demands of the "game". (Drucker, 1995, pp. 98-99)

Thus, one of the Solomon-like challenges¹⁸ for any organization is to consciously separate out those groups which could potentially make a key contribution to a climate of trust in the organization from those where it is sufficient to say 'this is a working group and it is acceptable for these people to work at individual bests side by side together'.

3.2.2 Groups and Group Development

3.2.2.1 Groups and Group Development Patterns

Earlier I defined a group as a "two or more people with some reason for gathering collectively". Over the last twenty-five years I have learned a great deal from the literature on groups and from various models for group development. First and foremost I have learned about legitimate reasons for gathering collectively. Katz and Kahn's classic text (1978) described the "need for affiliation" fulfilled by groups (p. 374). More recently, Goleman wrote about "the team advantage: the group mind", noting in particular our needs around information: in today's information, knowledge and wisdom-aspiring workplace it is "a fundamental fact" that each of us "has only part of the information or expertise we need to get our jobs done" (Goleman, 1998, p. 203). Also prominent in the group and team literature are descriptions of the many benefits attributed to high performing groups, a "high morale" group with "optimal productivity and high standards" (Blanchard et al., 2000, p. 51) and a group which "significantly outperforms all other like teams, and outperforms all reasonable expectations given its membership" (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993, p. 92).

¹⁸ This is a reference to the Biblical situation where King Solomon had to decide which of two women had a valid claim on a child. Both women recently gave birth to a son, but one of the boys died. Each woman claims the living child. "Fetch me a sword," the king announces. "Cut the live child in two, and give half to one and half to the other." Faced with this radical gesture, one woman urges him to split the baby in two, while the other pleads, "Give her the live child; only don't kill it." The king instantly realizes that the woman who wants to protect the child must be the real mother and rewards her with the baby. (Who Gets To Be "Solomonic"? by Bruce Feiler Posted Monday, Aug. 27, 2001, at 8:30 PM PT on slate.msn.com/id/114288/ last viewed March 15, 2005)

Second, I learned that it is vital that we thoughtfully lead, monitor, develop and correct, as necessary, the ways in which we gather collectively and the processes that groups go through. "Lack of coherent teamwork" could nullify "the gains of individual effort or brilliance" (Belbin, 1994, p. 11). Process suggestions in the literature consistently include developing common, meaningful purpose, vision and values (Blanchard et al., 1990, pp. 12, 33; Katzenbach and Smith, 1993, p. 49; MacIver, 2001, p. 104), defining team member roles (Blanchard et al., 1990, p. 33; MacIver, 2001, p. 104), managing relationships with the outside (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993, p. 142; MacIver, 2001, p. 104), having ongoing feedback and evaluation (Blanchard et al., 2000, p. 12; MacIver, p. 104; Singer, 2004, p. 84) and ensuring balanced communication (Blanchard et al., 2000, p. 12; MacIver, 2001, p. 104). Developing and following agreed-to group groundrules to accompany values (MacIver, 2001, p. 104) or a 'Code of Honor' where the "code gets to... legislate behavior... be the impartial third party, the policeman" (Singer, 2004, pp. xvii, 68) are among many ways of working towards "procedural justice" (Korsgaard et al., 2003). These are approaches that will assist groups in developing trust and otherwise developing as a group.

Third, I learned about the importance of choices. One type of choice was mentioned above but there are many more choices, starting when we first contemplate putting a group or committee together. We make important choices about the composition of a group. We can choose to put together balanced groups with a "diversity of talent and personality" (Belbin, 1994, p. 99)¹⁹. Balanced and diverse groups have been demonstrated to perform better than groups solely "comprising clever people" who were "high critical thinkers" (Belbin, 1994, p. 11-13). A group in which people naturally performed a variety of named roles and which had a "wide spread of scores in mental ability" were observed to "pull together better than teams that were intellectually more homogeneous" (Belbin, p. 95-96).

¹⁹ The diversity includes people who naturally perform such group roles as energizing groups with "innovation" (Belbin, 1994, p. 41), being "tolerant enough to always listen to others and strong enough to reject their advice" (Belbin, 1994, p. 53), being socially oriented and sensitive (Belbin, 1994, p. 78) and "always preferring to think things over" (Belbin, 1994, p. 69).

Fourth, I learned about recurring patterns that groups go through. These patterns are portrayed visually in models, two of which are illustrated in the diagrams from Blanchard et al. and Katzenbach and Smith that appear below. The online Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines a “model” as “a usually miniature representation of something; *also*: a pattern of something to be made” and as “an example for imitation or emulation”²⁰.

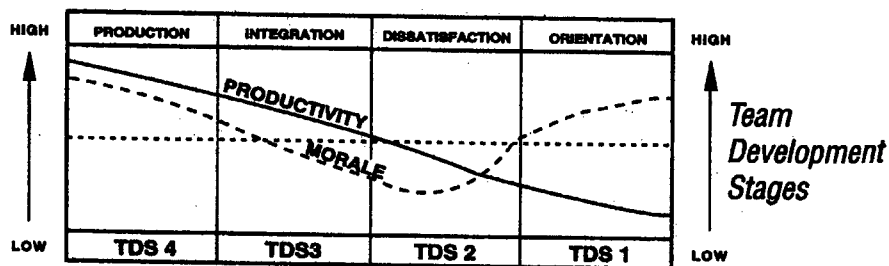
The first model describing recurring patterns that I remember seeing was Tuckman’s (1965). On first using Tuckman’s work in an applied setting in 1990, I found myself completely captivated by the model. Partly it was the way it changed people’s perspectives through the open acknowledgement of the importance of resolving group conflict. Partly it was how easy people seemed to find it to understand and remember (i.e. Tuckman’s basic concepts, turned into the rhyming forming, storming, norming and performing). Partly it was that Tuckman acknowledged both the task side and the process side. He did so in talking about what he called the task and interpersonal realms. Tuckman noted on the one hand that “any group, regardless of setting, must address itself to the successful completion of a task” (p. 385). On the other hand, Tuckman noted that “at the same time and often through the same behaviors”, group members will be “relating to one another interpersonally” (p. 385).

Tuckman’s breakthrough article was revolutionary for its time and continues to be featured in many of the standard texts on management and organizations (see Robbins, 1991, pp. 276-8). Tuckman’s four stage process has been reworked and renamed by Blanchard et al. (2000). Blanchard et al. describe four team development stages: Orientation, Dissatisfaction, Integration and Production. These stages, and their impact on productivity and morale, are illustrated below in Diagram 3-1.²¹

Diagram 3-1: Blanchard et al. model (next page)

²⁰ “model” in Merriam-Webster Online

²¹ From Blanchard et al. (2000, p. 60)



Tuckman's first stage of forming had two sides: an interpersonal side and a task side. On the one hand, the first realm of interpersonal group structure was "testing and dependence" (Tuckman, 1965, p. 386). In this stage "the term 'testing' refers to an attempt by group members to determine "what interpersonal behaviors are acceptable to the group". There was also a dependency for "guidance and support" on the "therapist, trainer, some powerful group member or existing norms and structures" (Tuckman, Ibid). On the other hand, the first task stage was "orientation to the task", an attempt by group members "to identify the task in terms of its relative parameters and the manner in which the group experience will be used to accomplish the task" (Tuckman, Ibid). The characteristics of the group during Blanchard et al.'s version of this stage can include: "moderate eagerness; high, often unrealistic expectations; anxiety; tentative, conforming behavior; and some testing of boundaries" (Blanchard et al., 2002, p. 30).

The second stage in group development involves an uncomfortable time, which is described as part of the normal dynamic of a group in getting to high performance (Tuckman, 1965; Blanchard et al, 1990; Katzenbach and Smith, 1993; MacIver, 2001). This stage, which Tuckman labeled "intragroup conflict", can be a breakthrough stage. Tuckman noted that group members "became hostile toward one another... as a means of expressing their individuality and resisting the formation of group structure (p. 386). He also used the following words, phrases and concepts to describe this stage "uneven... interaction", "infighting", "lack of unity" and groups which "polarize". For me, on the interpersonal side, all of this 'boiled down' to the idea of there being "conflict over progression into the

‘unknown’ of interpersonal relations”. The second task-activity development stage was described as “emotional response to task demands”, a stage in which group members react emotionally to the task “as a form of resistance to the demands of task on the individual”. In other words, there was a “discrepancy between the individual’s personal orientation and that demanded by the task” (p. 386).

Blanchard et al. characterize Dissatisfaction as involving, in part:

... a discrepancy between expectations and reality; confusion and frustration around roles and goals; dissatisfaction with dependence on authority; expression of dissatisfaction; formation of coalitions; feelings of incompetence, confusion, low confidence; competition for power authority and attention... [and] some task accomplishment. (Blanchard et al., 2000, 40)

Each time over the years that I have read this passage to a group that is struggling at this stage, their reaction can be summed up as follows: “How did they get inside my head and describe exactly what I am experiencing?” The plain and emotive language used by the authors is very helpful to real live people in relating to group development.

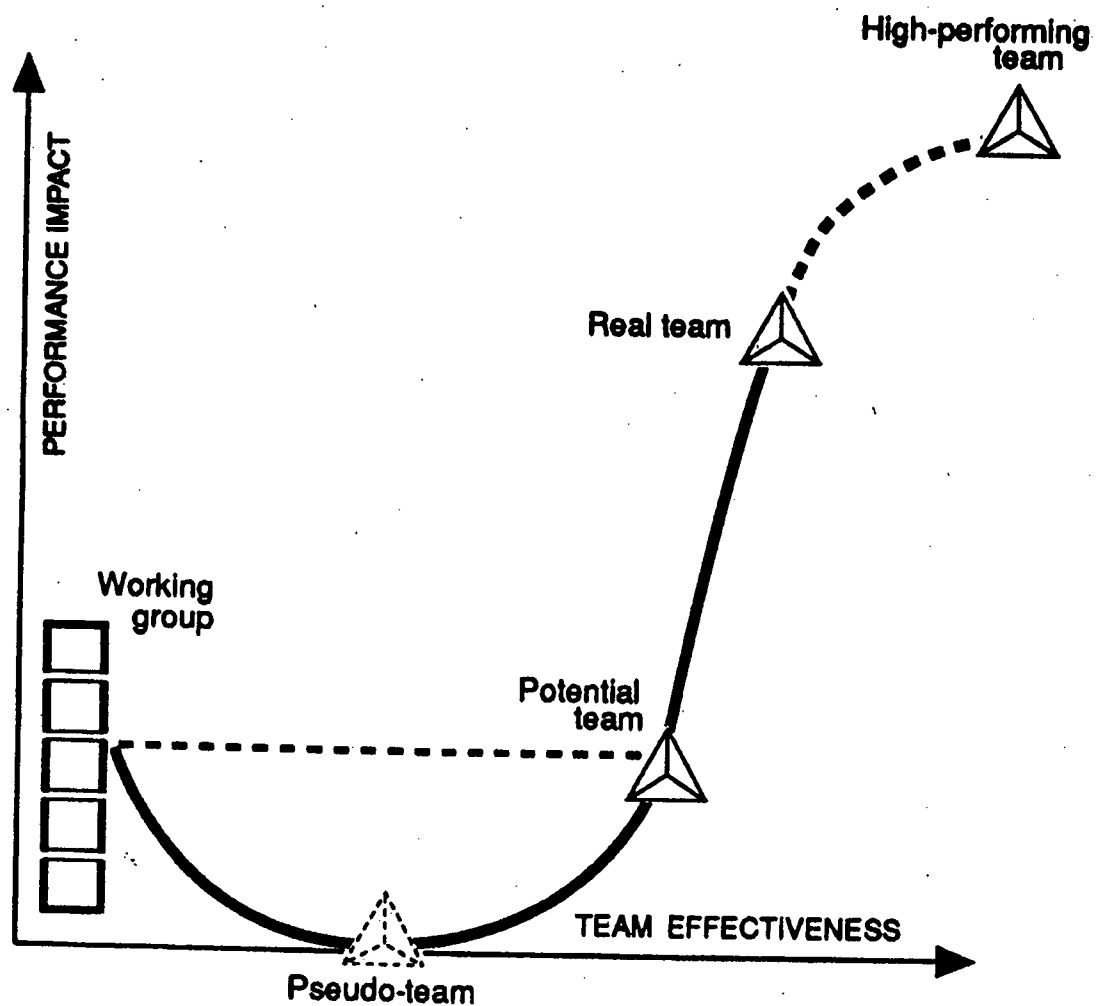
However, as I learned through observation throughout the 1990s, there is no automatic progression to or through this second stage. Katzenbach and Smith (1993) describe groups that get stuck in the second stage, which they call the Pseudo-Team stage (see diagram 3-2²² below). They describe this stage as applying to “a group for which there could be significant incremental performance need or opportunity” but the group “has not focused on collective performance and is not really trying to achieve it” (p. 91). As well, groups that go on to the second stage can regress or cycle back to formation (Tuckman 1965; MacIver, 2001) over time. This can be a temporary state or it can be part of a downward cycle reflecting a group’s dysfunctions and inability to deal with a range of thoughts and emotions, be they critical, concerned, praising or joyful. Groups can easily get caught in recurring cycles where they try to fix things quickly and to get things done. Those cycles

²² The diagram is from Katzenbach and Smith (1993, p. 84)

then become part of the problem with a group (Senge, 1990; MacIver, 2001). Moreover, I learned that the pivotal event of the second stage does not have to be conflict. Expression of emotion, including joy or regret, could prompt a group to go through this stage (see the description of the Feeling Stage in MacIver, 2001 in appendix #3).

Diagram 3-2: Katzenbach and Smith, 1993

THE TEAM PERFORMANCE CURVE



Tuckman's (1965) third stage, which has come to be known popularly as 'norming', once again involves two realms. In the realm of task activity Tuckman characterized this as "the open exchange of relevant interpretations" (p. 387). These interpretations could range from "exchanged interpretations" in a laboratory-task context to "discussing oneself and other group members" in therapy and training group contexts. He notes that "in all cases one sees the information being acted on so that alternative interpretations of the information could be arrived at". This notation on Tuckman's part is significant since so many groups do not discuss interpretations of information. When presenting information, many groups tend to talk past one another and to 'batter' each other with their 'facts-of-the-matter'²³. In terms of group structure Tuckman (1965) described this stage as one involving development of group cohesion by the group members. This cohesion was gained through the group establishing "new group-generated norms to ensure the group's existence" (p. 386). I see this purpose on the part of the group as important. In my mind there is an important distinction between any norms arrived at earlier and the norms arrived at in this stage. My observation is that the norms the group agrees to could be exactly the same norms arrived at through such processes as agreement on groundrules. However, there is a whole new meaning to norms agreed to or affirmed after intragroup conflict. For example, "bringing up conflict issues as they arise" means something quite different after you have experienced a blow-out over some suppressed conflict than it would before that blow-out. The key characteristic that Tuckman (1965) identifies for both realms is "openness to other group members" (p. 387).

An alternative description of the third stage, that of 'Integration'²⁴, by Blanchard et al. has been helpful to groups I have worked with. The description gives groups both something to aspire to and a way to understand 'in the moment' what is happening to the group.

Blanchard et al. (2000, p. 58) describe this stage as being characterized by, among other things:

²³ This is an oft-repeated phrase used by Joe Schaefer and taken from my lecture notes (1997-2001). Royal Roads University Executive Program in Leadership, Royal Roads University, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

²⁴ This stage was called 'Resolution' in an earlier edition of the book (Blanchard et al., 1990).

... increased clarity and commitment on roles, goals, task and structure; increased commitment to norms and values; increased task accomplishment; growing... cohesion, harmony and mutual respect; willingness to share responsibility, leadership and control; understanding and valuing of differences; use of team language—‘we’ rather than ‘me’ and the tendency to avoid conflict.

My experience, however, is that groups at this stage do have incidents of conflict. However, the conflict tends to be lightening-quick. Also it is not fraught with all of the emotional overtones, blaming and personalization of the conflict that goes on earlier in the life of a group.

The fourth stage is the higher state described earlier (i.e. a High-Performing Team in Katzenbach and Smith, 1993 and Production in Blanchard et al., 2000). Tuckman's (1965) fourth stage is “the emergence of solutions”. The emergence of solutions involves “constructive attempts at successful task completion” (p. 387). In the group structural realm Tuckman calls this fourth stage “junctional role-relatedness”. In this stage, the group, “which was established as an entity during the previous phase, can now become a problem solving instrument” (p. 387). What enables this change? “Members can now adapt and play roles that will enhance the task activities of the group” since “role structure is not an issue but an instrument which can now be directed at the task” (p. 387).

In addition to all of the above, there are two other issues that are addressed in the models that merit highlighting: the risk issue and the evolution of trust. Katzenbach and Smith specifically identified risk issues that are involved in groups being more effective in working together. In writing about the “critical choice” a group might make of aspiring to be a potential team, a real team, or a high performing team, their language is strikingly similar to the language that I use in referring to the development of trust in a group. They note that:

The team option promises greater performance than the working group. But it also brings more risk. Because of deep-seated values of individualism and

a natural reluctance to trust one's fate to the performance of others the team choice demands a leap of faith. (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993, p. 90)

There is also specific reference to the evolution of trust in each of the four stages in the Blanchard et al. model. Trust is described as follows. In the first stage of Orientation, there is "anxiety about... trust in others" (Blanchard et al., 2000, p. 30). This is one among several areas of anxiety. There is then a dip in trust that occurs in the second stage of Dissatisfaction: there is "low trust" (Blanchard et al., 2000, 40). In the third stage of Integration, a group moves to "growing trust" (Blanchard et al., 2000, 58). Finally, in Production "relationships and communication" are "built on trust", among other things (Blanchard et al., 2000, 51). These relationships are very positive at this stage and the trust, it can be assumed, is high. The idea of trust evolving over time is thus captured here, although the idea of layers of trust is not developed in any way that I could see.

3.2.2.2 The Avoidance of Groupthink

Groupthink is a concept that refers to poor decision-making in a group and is vital to considering the role of trusting groups that lead (Janis, 1982). Groups experiencing groupthink typically do not consider a wide list of alternatives and are willing to compromise the integrity of their decisions and their group process in order to achieve a superficial and false unanimity. Members of such groups are typically not critical of each others ideas, don't examine multiple alternatives, fail to seek outside expert opinions, and can be highly selective in gathering information (i.e. they find information which supports their conclusion). Among the most famous examples of groupthink cited in the on-line literature on decision-making in groups were those that led to the two shuttle disasters of the last twenty years:

The culture [in NASA] can also be powerful because it is so pervasive, since it is rarely exposed to outside influences. Unlike the space team that conducted Apollo, recruited from a dozen major pools of experienced workers, most workers at NASA today have only worked at NASA since

graduation. Some retired military officers are brought in at headquarters — mostly because they are good at “following orders” of the officials who hire them — and specialists are brought in as needed, but they are far from the levers of power within NASA. This encourages an inbred “groupthink” that is not conducive to disagreeing with what management wants...“How is the culture going to change when you are bringing in people that have been trained to accept and have only worked with one cultural style?” an insider e-mailed.²⁵

3.2.2.3 The Chicken and Egg Proposition and Paradox

One of the ideas that I most thoroughly examined through the research literature and my own research is essentially a chicken and egg proposition. A chicken and egg proposition is one that lacks clarity as to which of two things is preeminent or ‘first’ (i.e. which came first: the chicken or the egg?). The proposition concerns the interrelatedness of group process focus and group task focus. This proposition is connected to earlier references to the content and process of leadership being intertwined and to both task and interpersonal aspects being cited in Tuckman’s (1965) model. Later this ‘task and process both come first’ proposition will take yet another form. I will suggest that early group activities to earn trust could legitimately involve members primarily in task completion (e.g. “doing what they say they will do”). As well, however, group activities could equally legitimately have an initial focus on process (e.g. establishing a reliable process that ensures procedural justice, safety of disclosure) or on interpersonal relationship development and disclosure facilitated by an implicit or explicit process requiring deep listening.

Groups must consider investing in both process and task as appropriate for the group in question. This suggestion runs counter to the argument that group process is a means to an end (i.e. human productivity or the completion of tasks). I believe that, in order for groups

²⁵ Taken from an article by J. Oberg titled “The Columbia Tragedy: NASA’s Culture of Denial”; (see www.msnbc.msn.com/id/3077543/). See also M. Cahill in an article published on September 9, 2004 at www.knowledgeboard.com, the on-line publication of the European KM community; both last seen November 23, 2004.

to develop trust, at some point one or more of their processes must become ends in themselves (e.g. positive and supportive appreciative processes or conflict resolution type processes). This suggestion also runs counter to the argument that we should have a sole focus on process as a panacea ("trust the process"). It suggests that groups that develop trust must have some reason for being.

The chicken and egg idea of focusing on both task and process fits with the increasing emphasis in highly varied literature on "both/and thinking" adopting the dualistic philosophy of yin/yang. Early on in western business literature this was described as an "embrace of the 'genius of the and'" and avoiding the "tyranny of the or"²⁶ and as getting away from "either/or thinking". Soon after both/and thinking was described as "adopting paradox", by combining and embracing seeming opposites (Bennis and Townsend, 1995). This "both/and" idea has appeared in recent highly varied research and practice based literature on leadership, personal development, systems and organizational improvement. This literature poses the challenge to embrace a variety of seeming opposites that affect our ability to work in groups.

There are many versions of the challenge to embrace seeming opposites. One is my self-challenge to be a practical dreamer. A second is the challenge to practice "patient urgency" (Bennis and Townsend, 1995, p. 24). On the interpersonal side, our capacity to deal constructively with one another would be enhanced by being "lovingly candid" (Bryan et al., 1998, p. 90). This is particularly the case where we must address performance issues, relationship issues and unresolved conflict. Embracing paradox²⁷ can be the stuff of groups which lead, especially if the groups have built into their membership sufficient diversity that

²⁶ From Collins, J. and Porras, J. (1994). *Built to Last*. New York. HarperBusiness. p. 43

²⁷ There are more examples in the still-emerging literature on this topic: one of the best-researched business texts of the new millennium suggests that we need "level five leaders" who are a "study in duality: modest and willful, humble and fearless" (Collins, 2001, p. 22). These would be executives who "argue and debate... and unify" (Collins, 2001, p. 60), leaders who "retain faith that you will prevail in the end... and at the same time confront the most brutal facts" (Collins, 2001, p. 86). Leadership by paradox also requires us to understand the importance of the paradoxical coexistence of change and stability (Capra, 1996, p.169), and the reality that organizations must pay attention to both preservation and change at the same time (Collins, 2001, p. 196). I would add to the list the following paradoxes that inform my work in teaching leadership and teamwork: disciplined creativity, serious fun, calculated/thoughtful risks and cooperative competition.

various 'opposites' can be represented naturally and well by one or more members of the group.

My 'chicken and egg' position necessitates leadership at all levels of service sector organizations adopting a philosophical stance that promotes human understanding as an end in itself through what we can variously call group conversation, dialogue and discourse. While I will use all three of these terms somewhat interchangeably, I will focus most on the concept of generative dialogue that is more fully developed later in this section. What we are trying to do through any form of dialogue is to reverse the effect of what Senge et al. call the ladder of inference (Senge et al., 1994, p. 242), where we abstract or infer meaning from presenting data rather than talking about the data itself. Paying attention to our counterproductive inferences in groups can also come from truly working at the fifth of Covey's seven habits, "Seek first to understand, then to be understood" (Covey, 1989, p. 235). Thus, to quote Gadamer,

...In a conversation, when we have discovered the other person's standpoint and horizon, his ideas become intelligible without our necessarily having to agree with him... The person understanding has... stopped trying to reach an agreement... it makes an end of what is only a means. (Dostal, 2002, p. 303)

As suggested at the outset of this section we need to similarly make an end of what many of us have accepted only as a means, or worse still, as a 'necessary evil': thoughtful and situationally appropriate attention to the development of group process. Some of us have had so much of a focus on the end being 'tasks', 'doing things' and the 'getting the job done' that this approach will demand fundamental attitudinal change and openness. This is related to Capra's (1996) point that we need to accomplish "a shift in society from thinking about objects to relationships" (p. 37). More radically, I agree that "the ultimate test of the validity of knowledge" (and, I would suggest, of tasks that we undertake in most groups in service sector organizations) is "whether it enhances the capacity of people to live well" (Castellano, 2000, p. 33). This may be an idea that still has a relatively 'small' following or

‘start’. However if in future this idea engages enough emotion-transferring types²⁸ who are able to start an epidemic of change (or ‘tipping point’ or critical mass cf. Gladwell 2001) we could face an epidemic of understanding.

My ‘chicken and egg’ suggestion is that groups give attention equally but differently to both task and process, outcomes and relationships, and people ‘doing good things’ and ‘living well’. This suggestion would appear to be at odds with the statement by Katzenbach and Smith (1993) that “performance is the primary objective, while a team remains the means, not the end” (p.12).

I would take my suggestion a step further and add that, sometimes, a focus on task gets in the way of getting the task done. In my role as observer I have been fascinated to observe that a too-exclusive focus on task can lead a group to experience many process problems, particularly if the task in question is complex and difficult. This problem is illustrated in the “addiction to task” stories told in story #4 in chapter two and in appendix #1. What makes these stories remarkable is that the groups in question got completely wrapped up in task despite being in highly process-oriented environments such as the Royal Roads University MALT environment. Too much of a task focus can provide us with a great incentive to pay attention to process!

3.2.3 Systems thinking

Systems thinking can be described in many ways.²⁹ The essence of systems thinking is our endeavor “to regain our full humanity” (Capra, 1996, p. 296). In order to do

²⁸ These are what Gladwell calls people who “infect” the other people in the room with their emotions (Gladwell, 2001, p. 86)

²⁹ In various handouts at Royal Roads University I drew on Capra (1996), on Senge (1990) and on student learners in the RRU program in summarizing systems thinking, in part, as:.... The discipline of thinking in wholes..... A way of understanding the webs and patterns of people’s relationships, and being able to map those relationships and get away from blaming.....Knowing that things affect each other (but do not ‘cause’ each other) and will do so increasingly in a globally interdependent world..... Knowing that because things are part of a whole we have to look at the whole- the parts- and then the whole again... we have to step back and see the whole, step forward and see the specifics and step back and see the whole again... Knowing that you

this “we have to regain our experience of connectedness with the entire web of life” (Capra, 1996, p. 296).

A host of systems challenges, disabilities and standard difficulties exist with groups. These must be overcome, counterbalanced and talked about in our groups in order to develop trusting relationships. The vast majority of these are recurring systemic patterns that we can anticipate and deal with through systems thinking. I will first examine some of the most standard blame and victim-related challenges and ways of answering the challenge through slowing down and shared responsibility. Finally, I will turn to reinforcing feedback, the single most important systems thinking concept that influenced the development of the layered aspect of the model that appears in chapter six.

3.2.3.1 Groups and Unseen Fields

A field is a force “of unseen connections that influences... behavior” (Wheatley, 1994, p. 13) and an “unseen” structure, “occupying space and becoming known to us through [its] effects” (Wheatley, 1994, p. 49). We know about these fields “not because we experience them directly but because we see their effects” (Senge et al., 1994, p. 65).³⁰ According to modern science, “space is not empty but instead is a “cornucopia of invisible but powerfully effective structure”.³¹ When applied to groups, the concept of field is illustrated by an ancient Sufi saying: “You think because you understand *one* you must understand *two*, because one and one makes two. But you must also understand *and*”.³² In a group made up of two or more people the ‘field’ is the ‘and’, the glue that connects people in the group. “We now sense that some of the best ways to create continuity of behavior are through the

have to care about everyone in an organization (including yourself) and why you have to care..... All about relationships and partnerships: how people fit together, whether people really converse with each other and understand one another, and how to value emotion and feedback; all of that leads to real, meaningful conversation... Increasing interdependence in a fragmented, specialized world...

³⁰ The recent work of Masaru Emoto supports the concept of field. Emoto’s study of water provides proof that thoughts and feelings even affect physical reality. By producing different focused intentions through written and spoken words and music and literally presenting it to the same water samples, the water appeared to change its expression. From the website for the movie *What the bleep do we know?* (www.whatthebleep.com/crystals/ last viewed on January 20, 2005)). Emoto’s newest book, *The Hidden Messages in Water* (Emoto, M. Beyond Words Publishing), further explores his research.

³¹ This is from Wilczek and Devine (as cited in Wheatley, 1994, p. 49)

³² Donella Meadows is credited with quoting this statement (as cited in Wheatley, 1994, p.9)

use of forces that we can't really see" (Wheatley, 1994, p. 12). A factor that will influence some people to trust other members of the group and to trust the whole group is continuity and consistency of behavior. Members of the group will rely on this behavior as the group goes about its processes and its accomplishing of tasks together.

The group or organizational field or aura can be compared to a magnetic field, a "region in the neighbourhood of a magnet, electric current, or changing electric field, in which magnetic forces are observable".³³ Trusting groups of all sorts will generate fields, thus providing a form of leadership by example. For example, trusting groups that model empowerment make it more likely that empowerment will 'spread' and even positively 'contaminate' organizations until the organization reaches a trust 'tipping point' (Gladwell, 2000). This, in turn, could contribute to the just-mentioned epidemic of understanding. An example of a field is the situation cited in Senge et al. (1999) where a CEO's request for help and promise to listen resulted in an explosion of energy (p. 194). Senge et al. note that a "speech in itself... was not enough". The CEO had to meet the challenge of walking the talk: he "had to help build capabilities in himself and in everyone" for developing the "new honesty" he was promoting. Similarly, we cannot announce an intent to build trust and do nothing more.

3.2.3.2 Groups, Connectedness and Shared Responsibility

One way of living the above descriptions of systems thinking is through securing and building connectedness through building trust in groups. One of the most obvious challenges in so doing is the variety of interests and perspectives we bring to groups, including the various inferences referred to earlier. Within any group we can have competing, fractured sub-groups (MacIver, 2003), differing "truth claims" (Vokey, 2001, p. 28) and a refusal by one or more people in the group to take responsibility for the resolution of disputes and differences (Oshry, 1995, 60-61, 80). A "problem... is only a problem to individuals or groups in relation to their interests, aims and objectives" (Vokey, 2001, p. 80). Coming "to an understanding may require that I give some ground with my objectives"

³³ "Magnetic field" is defined in Britannica Online; last viewed on March 15, 2005.

(Dostal, 2002, p.128). A threat to our interests, aims and objectives can threaten our personal identity. "I am my position" (i.e. I identify so strongly with my job and position that it becomes my identity) and "the enemy is out there" (i.e. if something goes wrong it must be someone else 'out there' and not me who is to blame for it going wrong) are human and organizational learning disabilities that profoundly affect group process (Senge, 1990, pp. 17-26).

Solutions to these systemic challenges or problems, not surprisingly, can come from systems thinking. There is great power in the 11th of Senge's systems laws, "there is no blame" (Senge, 1990, p. 67), or, put somewhat differently, the idea that we "Abandon blame" (Stone et al., 1999, p. 58). We can also learn a great deal from reversing the 6th of Senge's systems laws. Senge states the law as "faster is slower" (Senge, 1990, p. 62). However I have found people to relate more readily to this law restated as: "slower is faster"³⁴. Slowing down in order to address problems and in order to develop a basis for trust can in the end result in faster, better decisions.

Another useful component of systems thinking that assists groups is the idea of contribution systems. The fundamental concept is that we all contribute to enduring problems in systems of which we are an ongoing part:

The first question [when there is a breakdown in relationships and we slip into blaming] is "How did we each contribute to bringing about the current situation?" Or to put it another way: "What did we each do or not do to get ourselves into this mess?" (Stone et al., 1999, p. 60)

Another systemic challenge is assuming enough but not too many responsibilities in our groups and organizations. Many of us struggle with finding and remembering the 'just right' Goldilocks level of responsibility (see chapter two for more on Goldilocks) in group and organizational settings. We can wear ourselves out either by taking on too much

³⁴ This suggestion came from a learner named Kay Johnson during an in-class conversation at Royal Roads University in 1997

responsibility in some area of our lives and by becoming 'victims' (e.g. blaming only others) in other areas of our lives. The process of becoming victims is summarized by Oshry as a situation where:

... all your energy is focused on "Them"...your anger at Them, your disappointment with Them, your resentment of Them. It's crystal clear to you that whatever is wrong is their fault...[you] fall into oppression... [saying]... "Look at all these problems They are not taking care of...They sure are either malicious, insensitive or incompetent" (Oshry, 1995, p. 60-64).³⁵

Oshry notes that groups made up exclusively of members of a single 'level' of an organization are prone to differing systemic patterns that are each equally dysfunctional. This pattern is described as a "Dance of Blind Reflex" (Oshry, 1995, p. 53). These are dances that we "fall into" without being aware that we have done so. Thus, as noted earlier, groups made up of exclusively of top-level executives can "fall into... differentiation" or territoriality "in order to cope with... responsibility and complexity" (Oshry, 1995, p. 138). Middle level managers in the same group "fall into" diffusion, a "space that draws us away from one another" and into "competition and alienation" (Oshry, 1995, pp. 150-1). In our groups at the 'bottom' or front line of an organization it is "easy to hide in the 'We'". In doing so one is prone to "stand back and not put oneself at risk" (Oshry, 1995, p. 178). Oshry pushes us to explore the potential for shared responsibility and partnership, thus becoming "partners in creation" (Oshry, 1995, p. 67). 'Partners in creation' is another way of arriving at generative dialogue, which is described below. Katzenbach and Smith (2001) echoed Oshry in stating that "The team discipline... demands shared leadership and mutual accountability" (p. 7).

³⁵ Gallagher and Ventura describe the victim phenomenon in similar terms: "For many years...I've heard about 'they'... And I've often wondered...Just who are they, anyway?...You know who I'm talking about: They could have prevented this situation. They never tell us what's really going on. They oughta DO something about this! It's their fault" (Gallagher and Ventura, 2004, p. 3)

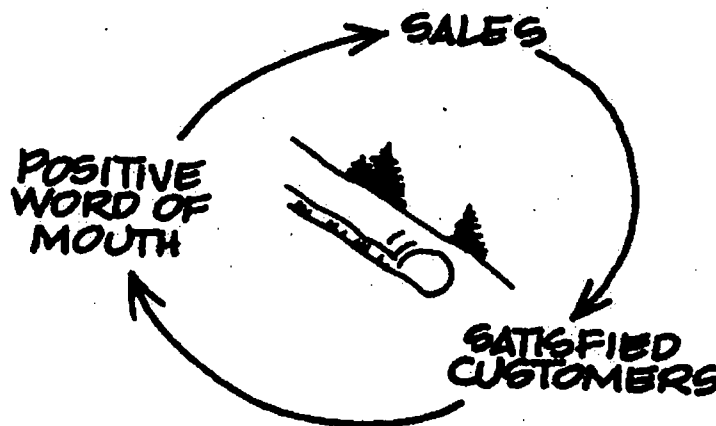
3.2.3.3 Groups and Reinforcing Feedback

The single systems thinking-related idea that most profoundly affected how I have developed models of groups development is the idea of reinforcing feedback. Senge subtitles reinforcing feedback as “discovering how small changes can grow... into large consequences” (Senge, 1990, p. 80). The basic idea is that, in a reinforcing process, a small change “builds on itself”. Whatever movement occurs is “amplified, producing more movement in the same direction” (Senge, 1990, p. 81). Senge illustrates this with a reinforcing circle diagram of a reinforcing sales process caused by customers talking to each other about your product:

If the product is a good product, more sales means more satisfied customers, which means more positive word of mouth. That will lead to still more sales, which means even more widespread word of mouth... and so on. (Senge, 1990, p 82)

Senge’s diagram appears as Diagram 3-3 below³⁶:

Diagram 3-3: Senge’s reinforcing loops process



³⁶ Senge, 1990, p. 82

Senge identifies two types of reinforcing loops, both of which are relevant to group betterment. Where things start off badly and grow worse, it is referred to as a “vicious cycle”. These are the cycles of where groups struggle, those struggles lead to still more problems with the group, and pretty soon things are going downwards because the negativity feeds on itself and becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. These negative cycles become a positive force when they cause sufficient problems in the group that it is resolved that something has to be done. For example, in composite story #5, as reported in chapter two, things got worse and worse as a destructive individual manipulated the group until I intervened and removed that individual from the group.

Senge notes that there are also “virtuous cycles”—processes that reinforce in desired directions. This phenomenon explains the deepening of trust (see chapter four) and repeated leaps of faith (see chapter six) in some groups. Having success at taking one risk leads to a greater belief in the possibility of subsequently taking on new risks. I can relate this to conflict and repeated instances of conflict that I have observed in groups after so called storming or dissatisfaction is resolved the first time. Having once seen conflict dealt with in a constructive way, groups are more likely to take it on without fanfare or fuss another time. Senge relates these reinforcing loops to such language as the “snowball effect” (see the snowball in the center of Diagram 3-3 above) and “the bandwagon effect” and to such business concepts as “momentum is everything” in building confidence in a new product or within a fledgling organization (Senge, 1990, p. 83). Senge also notes that these cycles can only go so far because “eventually, limits are encountered”. These limits are one form of balancing feedback where “there is a self-correction to maintain some goal or target” (Senge, 1990, p. 84).

Senge et al. note a particular form of balancing factor in *The Dance of Change*. Applied to trust-building, this balancing factor suggests that we must consciously set aside the right amount of time, get the right coaching and support help, make sure that people see groups as relevant to what they are trying to accomplish, and role model at the executive level ‘walking the talk’ of investment in groups. He also notes that we can sustain groups past the normal balancing and negative effects that might interfere with sustaining change by directly

addressing fear and anxiety, ensuring that we assess and measure where possible the progress we make and secure “infectious commitment” (Senge et al., 1999, p. 344), which is another form of virtuous cycle and compelling force for the good of the organization.

The concept of reinforcing positive loops could be overlaid on the Katzenbach and Smith (1993) model (see diagram 3-2 above). A group could improve its performance and its group bond over time by making a whole series of decisions and accomplishing certain tasks. It could also do so through some other development (e.g. the affirmation of an increasing sense of accomplishment through more openness in group meetings). The improvement could take the form of a series of virtuous loops as a team evolves from being a potential team to a real team to a performing team.

3.2.4 Dialogue and Discourse

3.2.4.1 Key Concepts and Definitions

I learned from the literature on dialogue and discourse that we can have different kinds of conversations in organizations. These can be the kind of conversations where we examine the biases and prejudices that may be preventing us from growing and from inventing the new things that we need to invent for the future. A primary part of promoting dialogue and discourse is dealing with the impact of dialogue and discourse on the self. We can converse in a dialogic process about how threatening to self and to personal vulnerability are the changes in identity that occur as we continue our membership in a trusting group. The results of reflective and generative dialogue are worth achieving. In their most elegant form, we can call these results the emergence of common consciousness (Bohm, 2000, p.33) and the fusion of new horizons (Gadamer, 2002).

Defining dialogue is not easy. I see dialogue as “a transformational collective conversation in which people think and create new meaning together in relationship and communion with one another”. Some of this definition is drawn from Gadamer’s description of dialogue:

... in a successful conversation... both [partners in the conversation] come under the influence of the truth of the object and are thus bound to one another in a new community. To reach an understanding in a dialogue is not merely a matter of putting oneself forward and successfully asserting one's own point of view, but being transformed into a communion in which we do not remain what we were. (Gadamer, 2002, p. 379)

Other elements are drawn from the definitions of dialogue provided by Bohm and Isaacs. Bohm states that dialogue is "... changing the way the thought process occurs collectively". He adds: "we haven't really paid much attention to thought as a process" (Bohm, 1996, p. 9). He talks about the necessity to "share meaning" because "society is incoherent and doesn't [share meaning] very well" (Bohm, 1996, p. 19). Isaacs refers to dialogue "creating something new" through "a conversation in which people think together in relationship" (Isaacs, 1999, pp. 18-19).

Two higher levels of dialogue are reflective and generative dialogue. Reflective dialogue is dialogue where we are willing to think about what Isaacs calls "the rules underlying" what we do—"the reasons for our thoughts and actions" (Isaacs, 1999, p. 38). Reflective dialogue has value but where we must get to is "generative dialogue, in which we begin to create entirely new possibilities and create new levels of interaction" (Isaacs, 1999, p. 38). Gadamer's suggestion that we converse together through dialogue to fuse new horizons may be the ultimate expression of generative dialogue, a group creating together something that is totally new and uniquely suited to the situation (Gadamer, 2002). To get there we must "communicate freely in a creative movement in which no-one permanently holds to or otherwise defends his own ideas" (Bohm, 2000, p. 4).

3.2.4.2 The Challenge to Achieve Meaning and Understanding

In groups, "where adherents of rival traditions divide into hostile camps, each believing they have nothing to learn from the other" (Vokey, 2001, p. 78) we face a situation where the

camps vigorously defend their ideas and act as bastions seeking the support of others in the group. These camps or “unsupported ends” (Oshry, 1995, p.80) within a group can be so wrapped up in their own position that they ‘fall into’ a pattern of “shifting responsibility for resolving issues and conflicts” from themselves to others. The camps or ‘ends’ typically fail to take responsibility for working with others in the group to resolve the differences or to rise to the higher level of fusion, common consciousness or flow. Thus, in a group we can miss out on the “infinity of the unsaid” (Dostal, 2002, p.121).

In the groups that lead, counteract loneliness and create organizational climate in our lives, we must learn how to counter a tendency which Bohm lamented in the following terms, “in all human relations nowadays people... talk around things, avoiding the difficulties” (Bohm, 2000). We have a “crisis of fragmentation” (Isaacs, 1999, p.276) where we see divisions among and within people wherever we look. “We fragment the world and in the process the parts lose their connection to the whole” (Isaacs, 1999, p. 53). The result of all of these divisions, and the failure to develop trust in groups is that we live in a “... society [that] is incoherent and doesn’t share meaning very well” (Bohm, 2000, p. 19). We end up with “an inflationary glut of words... more words, less and less meaning” (Isaacs, 1999, p. 46-47).

Problems we encounter with meaning and feeling affect the way we act in groups. These problems also lead back to the periodic cycling through polite expression that I observed to be a prominent feature of many groups working under task and time pressure (MacIver, 2003). Instead of addressing the differences, the friction, and the fragmentation that are natural outcomes of the kind of diversity that Bohm urged us to build into groups engaging in dialogue, we lapse into a combination of ‘niceness’ and dominance by a leader or authority figure. This cyclical ‘niceness’ and dominance is understandable in a new group (Tuckman, 1965) but is unsupportable in an ongoing, long-standing group that is being depended on to provide leadership in an organization. In effect it becomes a frustrated version of one of Katzenbach and Smith’s working groups. As Katzenbach and Smith (1993) note with regard to executive groups, it is not appropriate that they be driven “to the working group approach without any consciousness that a choice is being made” (p. 221).

Understanding is a challenge in these circumstances. Gadamer noted that "... all understanding is always interpretation. Understanding is carried out within the limits of language" (Gadamer in Palmer, 2001, p. 37). Achieving understanding then is a way in which one's "range of vision" can be "gradually expanded" (Dostal, 2002, p. 302). The whole point of understanding is that it enables us to engage in conversation where we get to know the other person— i.e. "to discover where he is coming from and his horizon" (Dostal, 2002, p. 303). Gadamer refers to three features of understanding: that it is bilateral, that it is dependent on the parties and that it involves revising goals. The difficulty with much of what passes for group togetherness is that people merely stash their goals away in the background for a while. We need to aspire to real understanding connected to knowledge:

Understanding precedes and succeeds knowledge. Preliminary understanding, which is at the basis of all knowledge, and true understanding, which transcends it, have this in common: They make knowledge meaningful... If... the scholar wants to transcend his own knowledge—and there is no other way to make knowledge meaningful except by transcending it—he must become very humble again and listen closely to the popular language... in order to re-establish contact between knowledge and understanding. (Arendt, 1993, p. 311)

3.2.4.3 The Search for Truth

Dialogue and discourse can also be part of our search for truth, which may be one of our defining characteristics as humans. Learning to "imaginatively adopt the perspective of another tradition requires a rare gift of empathy as well as intellectual insight... dedication to truth must outweigh their attachment to their own beliefs " (Vokey, 2001, p. 60). "We have to get meanings coherent if we are going to perceive truth, or to take part in truth" (Bohm, 2000, p. 35).

3.2.4.4 Examining and Suspending Assumptions

One of the most central and most risky tenets of dialogue is the idea of examining and suspending assumptions. Fundamental to achieving trust in groups is consciousness of how we are not consciously aware of many assumptions. These assumptions are “embedded in ways of life, such as the root metaphors that are so basic and pervasive as to be generally below the threshold of conscious awareness” (Vokey, 2001, p. 86). We defend assumptions “as if we are defending ourselves” (Bohm, 2000, p. 34). When others don’t listen to our “basic assumptions” we “feel it as an act of violence” (Bohm, 2000, p. 46). The flip side is that we ourselves can be caught up in our own assumptions to the point where others “experience the violence of the prejudices that rule unchecked” (Palmer, 2001, p. 44).

Assumptions can also be referred to as mental models, a way of seeing and interpreting the world (Senge, 1990). These assumptions and mental models lead to self-sustaining selective listening and seeing demonstrated in an earlier-mentioned linguistic model known as the Ladder of Abstraction. In proceeding up this ladder we go from the actual data (i.e. what happened) at the bottom of the ladder up a rung to selective perception to personal meaning. From personal meaning we go up more rungs to assumptions to interpretation and attribution of motive and purpose (Senge et al., 1994, pp. 242-6).³⁷

The ladder of abstraction exposes many limits on the way we relate to others, including the very thought processes that guide us. Bohm refers to thought as a “screen” through which we see the world (Bohm, 2000, p. 40), a form of self-deception (Bohm, 2000, p. 56), something which is neither free nor honest (Bohm, 2000, p. 67), and a “system of reflexes” (Bohm, 2000, p. 82). In extreme cases where we construct unconscious mental models, climb ladders of inference and engage in screening we may move to a state of ‘autistic hostility’ where we would not agree with the other person, no matter what they might say. We can find ourselves in an escalation process that “not only intensifies conflict over the original issues; it proliferates to other issues” (Katz and Kahn, 1978, p.635). In Bohm’s

³⁷ I particularly like the following description of the impact of the preconceptions that we develop as we move up the ladder and that then loop back to affect our interpretation of subsequent data. The description is: “If you don’t like someone, the way he holds his spoon will make you furious; if you do like him, he can turn his plate over in your lap and you won’t mind” (www.question.com/quotes/authors/irving_becker.html; last viewed on November 22, 2004)

language, we have to realize that “we are looking at the world through our assumptions... the assumptions could be said to be an observer in a sense...this is a common problem in introspection... you say ‘I’m going to look at myself inwardly’ but the assumptions are not looked at—the assumptions are looking” (Bohm, 2000, pp. 69-70).

There is another way. In groups and in other relationships, we can develop trust as a vehicle for bursting the ‘bubble’ of group assumptions. These group assumptions are effectively closed systems assumptions that lead to poor decisions and not being able to recognize the fallacies in those decisions. “You make me want to be a better man”, the Melvin character says to the ever-honest and caring Carol character in the movie *As good as it gets* (Brooks et al. 1998). “Let’s re-examine our decisions”, a NASA official could have said in response to the earlier-referenced groupthink that allegedly led to the space shuttle disasters.

3.2.5 Personal and Interpersonal Factors

3.2.5.1 Being Heard, Acknowledging Natality and Building on Strengths

There are many reasons why it matters how we treat one another and what we produce through working in groups. Most basic for me is that abuse of people in groups is wrong and destructive. Moreover, neglect and the failure to understand people can be hurtful and alienating and can underscore the lack of power that some people suffer from in groups. For example:

Some of the men I spoke to—and just about every woman—told me of the experience of saying something at a meeting and having it ignored, then hearing the same comment taken up when it is repeated by someone else (nearly always a man). (Tannen, 1994, p. 277)

Tannen (1994) goes on to note that:

... the difficulty of getting heard can be experienced by any individuals who are not as tenacious as others about standing their ground, do not speak forcefully at meetings, or do not begin with a high level of credibility.... Whoever is more committed to compromise and achieving consensus, and less comfortable with contention, is more likely to give way. (p. 291)

One of the most fundamental moral reasons why it matters how we treat one another in groups is Arendt's concept of natality. This concept is fundamental to dealing with the power and privilege problem I learned about in my time in the doctoral program. Arendt contends that each one of us represents something new: "In the birth of each [child] this initial beginning is reaffirmed because in each instance something new comes into an already existing world which will continue to exist after each individual's death" (Arendt, 1968, p. 167). As reported in Brukhorst (2000): "natality signifies the new beginning inherent in human life and human action as well as the contingency [of time and place] in which life and action unfold... we must make our own decisions and lead our own lives" (p. 188).

Group process that emphasizes meaning and understanding respects natality. Beyond natality, valuing human beings as human beings has a whole other dimension to it that matters for practical, productive, happiness and esteem-related reasons. Statistically it has been suggested that "most organizations operate at 20 percent capacity" because "only 20 percent of employees working in the large organizations we surveyed feel that their strengths are in play every day" (Buckingham and Clifton, 2001, p. 6). The failure to use strengths and talents in groups is a serious loss. This represents a loss to society as a whole, to the groups and to individuals.

3.2.5.2 The Fear Factor

Fear was referred to earlier as one of the challenges we must meet in dealing with change. Fear also affects our capacity to take on risk, be vulnerable and cope with uncertainty and, ultimately, our capacity to engage in dialogue. To quote Bohm:

If people could stay with power, violence, hate, or whatever it is all the way to the end, then it would sort of collapse—because ultimately they would see that we are all the same. And consequently they would have participation and fellowship. People who have gone through that can become good friends. The whole thing goes differently. They become more open and trusting to each other. They have already gone through the thing that they are afraid of, so the intelligence can then work. (Bohm, 2000, p. 33)

Thus we can get past the “fear and pleasure sensations that block the ability to listen freely” (Bohm, 2000, p.6).

I referred earlier to a poignant question I often prompt groups to discuss about future change: “What would I do if I weren’t afraid?” (Johnson, 1998, p. 53). A related concept that underlines the potential of what we can do for ourselves in groups that trust is: “When you move beyond your fear, you feel free” (Johnson, 1998, p. 56). In work I have done with groups all over North America who have viewed the video of the same name that goes with the book, these quotes regarding fear are mentioned most often as the most important quotes from the book referenced in the video. One of the most potentially disabling fears that I came across in the literature was “the fear of reflection” (Isaacs, 1999, p. 260). Isaacs notes that “people will raise privately what they feared to raise publicly” (Isaacs, Ibid). He describes a group of people trying to map the differences they faced as behaving in the following dysfunctional way:

I felt as if I were pulling teeth! They were reluctant to say directly that they did not trust the other division to look out for their interests. They felt they could trust no one, but to say such a thing would be heretical (Isaacs, Ibid).

This fear of reflection contributes to the challenges of successful getting groups to engage in honest and open debriefing in order to build a trust space, something that I will refer to later.

3.2.5.3 The Esteem Factor

Still another basic issue in group process and helping people to decide to be vulnerable is personal esteem. Esteem is related to the capacity to attach ourselves to others in groups, which will be referred to in section two of this chapter. We live in a society where problems with ego, self-esteem and self worth are endemic:

The biggest addiction in the world today is not to drugs or alcohol. It is to the human ego... There are two types of ego-centered-ness, self doubt and false pride. Both are enemies of magnificence. People with self-doubt are consumed by their own short-comings... People with false pride... see themselves as the center of the universe... It's easy to understand that self-doubt comes from lack of self-esteem, because people afflicted with it... act as if they are worth less than others... [With] people suffering from false pride [who] behave as if they are the only ones who count, underneath they're trying to make up for their own lack of self-esteem. (Blanchard and Waghorn, 1997, pp. 171-2)

Those of us with esteem problems struggle to secure "the regained sense of being truly alive" (Miller, 1981, 113). Esteem can be defined in many ways. Most recently Branden has defined it as "the experience of being competent to cope with the basic challenges of life and of being worthy of happiness" (Branden, 1998, p. ix). Earlier he had defined esteem more broadly as "confidence in our ability to think, confidence in our ability to cope with the basic challenges of life and confidence in our right to be successful and happy, the feeling of being worthy, deserving, entitled to assert our needs and wants, achieve our values and enjoy the fruits of our efforts" (Branden, 1994, p. 4).

The impacts of esteem are significant to group process. Covey (1989) expressed the idea that before we can become truly interdependent (as in a group environment) we must first achieve personal independence: "Dependent people need others to get what they want" (p.

49). Esteem and a positive and healthy self-concept are essential in order to “really take in the other” (Gadamer, 2002). Steinem notes that:

...families and cultures that do not foster core (or global) self-esteem... produce kids who feel there must be something ‘wrong’ with their own interests and abilities. They therefore begin to create... a ‘false self’ in order to earn inclusion and approval, to avoid punishment and ridicule” (Steinem, 1992, pp. 66-67).

As well, those of us who lack esteem are often living with a feeling of “oppressive guilt”, which is “a feeling [which is] stronger than intellectual insight” (Miller, 1981, p. 85). The above-noted lack of esteem means that there is a limit to how much people can contribute of themselves to groups and no limit to how much they can ‘blame’ others for what goes wrong.

Esteem also links back to productivity and our willingness to continue to work at difficult tasks: “high self-esteem subjects will persist at a task significantly longer than low self-esteem subjects” (Branden, 1994, p. 5). This, in turn, affects our capacity for risk. Healthy self-esteem “correlates with rationality, realism, intuitiveness, creativity, independence, flexibility, ability to manage change, willingness to admit (and correct) mistakes, benevolence and cooperativeness” (Branden, 1994, p. 5). Lack of esteem leads to “blaming, alibiing and scapegoating.” (Branden, 1998, p. 28) Blaming, alibiing and scapegoating in groups are both a source of struggle and a result of struggle. They also eat away at trust.

3.2.5.4 The Motivation Factor

Motivation is “the willingness to exert high levels of effort toward organizational goals, conditioned by the effort’s ability to satisfy some individual need” (Robbins, 1991, p. 192). While we may agree with Covey (1989) that “Trust is the highest form of human motivation” (p. 178), high levels of effort are still required to build trust in most groups. We can motivate ourselves in groups and in organizations to make the effort to build trusting groups if we can better understand and apply theory about human growth processes (i.e.

human connection and association, individual growth and affirmation and contribution to organizational success) as well as needs theory. Senge et al. characterize the growth processes respectively as “networking and diffusion” (“because my colleagues take it seriously”), “personal results” (“because it matters”) and “business results” (“because it works”) (Senge et al., 1999, pp. 46-54). Needs theories also help us to understand why people would want to join groups and then to make the effort to build trust in those groups. These needs theories include the Maslow and ERG theories, each of which I describe briefly below. Maslow suggested that there were five human needs. He put those needs in a hierarchy, going from lowest to highest: Physiological, Safety, Esteem, Love, and Self-actualization (Robbins, 1991, p. 193). The ERG theory identifies three human needs: Existence, Relatedness, and Growth (Robbins, 1991, p.199). Growth processes and needs theories help to explain why we would see value in building trust and how we can get past limiting cycles that detract from our ability, for example to do the ‘dance of change’. If we motivate others through understanding what matters to them, we can set “the ‘growth processes of profound change’ into motion” (Senge et al., 1999, p. 54).

3.2.5.5 Circle

Circle will be mentioned in the coming chapters as one of the processes which I have experienced which has the greatest potential to help groups live trust. Circle is a way of achieving dialogue and reclaiming “a partnership way”³⁸ (Baldwin, 1998, p. 128). Circle is “a council of ordinary people who convene to create a sacred space and from that space accomplish a specific task, supporting each other in the process” (Baldwin, 1998, p. 14). Participants in circle, “work towards a more humane and interpersonal culture”. Basic agreements support the practice of circle. These can include “confidentiality around personal stories, listening without interrupting... and calling for time out if people need to regroup and think through an issue” (Baldwin, 1998, p. 32). Circle also uses such methods as “check-in to present” oneself “in an anecdotal way”, starting with dyads to “build interconnection” and a “focused center” to help “orchestrate the rise of collective alignment”

³⁸ Here Baldwin (1998) is quoting Riane Eisler who “takes on five thousand years of patriarchy” and who challenges people to reclaim the partnership way. For more on this see: Eisler, R. (1998) *The Chalice and the Blade*. San Francisco. Harper. Eisler, R. and Love, D. (1990) *The Partnership Way*. San Francisco. Harper.

(Baldwin, 1998, pp. 127-9). However, like other ways of building trust “This is not easy” (Baldwin, 1998, p. 181).

3.2.5.6 Problem Behaviors that Threaten Trust

The final thing that I will examine in this part of the literature review is whether there are circumstances where the development of trust is impossible in a group. Baldwin (1998) notes that:

... we become a dangerous influence in our circles [if] we refuse life's invitation toward consciousness and continue to deny [our shadow or the] unexplored, feared and unwanted aspects of our personality” (pp. 160-1).

O'Hara (2004) asks the question “Is trusting ever wrong?” (p. 16) and then notes:

Some people are just too evil for words... We should place our trust intelligently and with an eye to moral rectitude. There are many examples where excessive trusting has lead to downfall. (pp. 16-17)

Regretfully, for someone who believes so strongly in people, I have concluded there are very limited instances where investing in trusting processes can actually be counter-productive and personally threatening if we allow ourselves to be vulnerable. These limited circumstances I have found where trusting is ‘wrong’ revolve around the involvement in a group of someone exhibiting “malignant narcissism” (Hare, 1993, p. 185; Peck, 1983, p. 77) or “destructive” narcissism (Brown, 1998, p. 1). Those individuals who display these destructive narcissist behaviors can be described while so doing as self-centered, lacking empathy, feeling entitled, exploiting others, arrogant and as showing an inability to form and maintain satisfying relationships (Brown, 1998, pp. 2-3). This type of ‘extreme’ narcissistic behavior involves characteristics “usually associated with the pathological narcissist” but there are fewer of the characteristics (Brown, 1998, p. 1). Those people who exhibit this behavior cannot contribute when exhibiting this behavior in a positive way to the development of trust and a collaborative and dialogic group process.

3.3. Focusing Specifically on Trust

3.3.1 Trust and Faith

One much-referenced dictionary defines trust as “assured reliance on the character, ability, strength or truth of someone or something; one in whom confidence is placed” (Webster, 1971, p. 952). The eminent writer on esteem, Nathaniel Branden, implies some degree of certainty in saying that trust is created by “congruence between words and actions” (Branden, 1998, p. 46) and “requires consistency and predictability” (Branden, 1998, p. 48). O’Hara notes that there can be a link between “trust and predictability” since “trust enables us to see the future” when we “live in a constant state of uncertainty” (O’Hara, 2004, p. 11). Assurance and risk assessment, for some, are a key element of trust-building: “we need to be arguing for more appropriate trust and for better means of assessing risk” (O’Hara, 2004, p. ix). While I am all for thoughtful risk (see below), I found trust and group trust to be much more ‘iffy’ and uncertain than these definitions suggest.

Faith emerged as central to my research work on trust. The single most instructive references I found to faith were in Guido Mollering’s work. Mollering quotes key passages from the work of sociologist Georg Simmel. He then contends that “the link between trust bases and a trustful state of expectations is much weaker than is commonly assumed” (Mollering, 2001, p. 403). Mollering supports Simmel’s recognition that “a ‘further element’, a kind of faith... is required to explain trust and its unique nature” (Mollering, 2001, p. 403).

Other key faith-related references in Mollering that I was drawn to included trust being described as “a functional alternative to rational prediction” (Lewis and Wiegert; in Mollering, 2001, p. 410). Mollering also described trust as performing “a crucial function in modern societies whilst the bases for trust are actually rather weak. The ‘leap’ [to trust] is

far from rational... for Simmel, trust combines good reasons with faith..." (Mollering, 2001, p. 411)

When it came to definitions, the single most important definitional statements I found were in Mollering: trust is a "state of favorable expectations regarding other people's actions and intentions" (Mollering, 2001, p. 404). Trust "is seen as the basis for individual risk-taking behaviour, co-operation ... order, (and) social capital" (Mollering, 2001, p. 404). He adds that fairly broad consent could be found for Rousseau et al.'s definition of trust as "a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another" (Mollering, 2003, p.1). I also found value in Korsgaard et al.'s risk-based definition of trust in the work group: "an individual's intention to accept vulnerability to the group based on the expectation but not the guarantee that the group will act in a considerate and benevolent manner towards the individual" (Korsgaard et al., 2003, p.116).

Social capital, which is referenced above, is a key concept in group trust. Fisher and Nelson describe social capital as being "made up of social obligations or connections" (Bourdieu in Fisher and Nelson, 2005, p. 9). The "central element in the creation of social capital is trust" (Fisher and Nelson, 2005, p. 10). Social capital builds on the ideas that "social networks... [our] dense networks of reciprocal social relations... [make] our lives... more productive" (Putnam, 2000, p. 19). There is a distinction between activities which bridge social capital and those which bond social capital. The bridging is a kind of grease or "sociological WD-40" and the bonding "constitutes a kind of sociological superglue" (Putnam, 2000, p. 23). Research on social capital notes the way that "people have drifted apart" in the workplace (Putnam, 2000, p. 89). "Successful investment in social capital takes time and concerted effort" (Putnam, 2000, p. 90). However the results are there: "social connections with co-workers are a strong predictor of job satisfaction" (Putnam, 2000, p. 90). This research has direct application to building trust in groups: it is hard work, but it pays off.

An essential concept here is that trust involves vulnerability, risk and uncertainty. This concept can be linked to the unpredictability that goes with the openness of discourse and

dialogue. We must be willing in our groups to “risk and test our own prejudices, understand others, better understand ourselves” through moving towards discourse (Vokey, 2001). This represents a deeply threatening idea to many people: “really taking in the other will involve an identity shift in us” (Dostal, 2002, p.141). Moreover, “real understanding always has an identity cost” (Dostal, Ibid.). Gadamer adds to the ‘threat level’ by promising, if we truly allow ourselves to be challenged, “we will see our peculiarity for the first time” (Dostal, 2002, p. 132). Only the most secure people would be likely to be comfortable with being in a group setting when we first see our “peculiarity”.

To circle back to the definition of trust, risk can also lie in openness to the process and in the suggestion I make repeatedly that we be vulnerable to others: “The more authentic the conversation is, the less the conduct lies within the will of either partner” (Dostal, 2002, p. 106). We “arrive where we began”,³⁹ looking at the notions of risk, uncertainty and vulnerability as inherent in group trust. “Complete knowledge or ignorance would eliminate the need for, or possibility of trust” (Mollering, 2001, p. 406). When in life, in responding to complex leadership type issues, will we ever have ‘complete knowledge’? Mollering’s quote is an essential one that I will come back to repeatedly.

In light of all of the above, I have defined group trust as:

A state where all individuals in a group accept vulnerability to the group based on favorable expectations but no certainty of their acceptance in the group, mutual opportunities in the group to achieve desired outcomes, positive intent and considerate and benevolent behavior of individual group members, and social capital which can be derived from the group.

Group trust, as defined above, includes trust that arises from both elements of the “chicken and egg proposition”, the timely and reliable completion of work and the necessary attention to process and interpersonal issues. Expectations, outcomes and behaviors can span both the

³⁹ This is a short portion of a famous line from T.S. Eliot in *Four Quartets*: “And the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we began and to know the place for the first time.” (see: quotations.about.com/od/stillmorefamouspeople/a/TSEliot1.htm last viewed January 20, 2005)

task and the process sides of the equation. Thus, it is equally valid, using the “chicken and egg proposition”, to commit to group trust because you believe it is the right thing to do as it is to have instrumental expectations of group trust (e.g., what you expect group trust to contribute to productivity).

3.3.2 Risk, Uncertainty and Vulnerability

Trust can be generated by engaging in the right kinds of conversations in groups, conversations in which we ensure that “the other person is with us” (Gadamer, 2002, p. 367) “we can be at one with each other” (Gadamer, 2002, p. 385) and we be prepared that “the other may be right” (Dostal, 2002, p. 32). Being prepared for the other being right leads us back to the issue of vulnerability. I referred earlier to the dictionary and Mollering definitions of trust. Other definitions that I found useful had one common denominator, as noted below; they all referred to vulnerability in some fashion and got away from the earlier-referenced idea of assuredness.

Mishra suggested that trust “revolves around one party’s willingness to be vulnerable to another party, based on the belief that the latter party is (a) competent, (b) open, (c) concerned and (d) reliable” (Mishra, 1996, p.265). The article which provided me with key elements of my modeling work (see the section on this later in this chapter) also had a useful definition: trust is “an individual’s intention to accept vulnerability to the group based on the expectation but not the guarantee that the group will act in a considerate and benevolent manner towards the individual” (Korsgaard et al, 2003). Finally, another cautionary perspective, this time on the vulnerability issue, is provided by Kramer et al.: when individuals engage in trusting behavior they create for themselves “both opportunity and vulnerability... the opportunity surrounds the perceived gains... if and when their acts of trust are reciprocated by others... The vulnerabilities derive from the potential costs of misplaced trust...” (Kramer et al., 1996, p 360) These repeated references to vulnerability

and what Kramer et al. call “exposure” (Kramer et al., *ibid*) support Mollering’s idea that we must make faith an essential part of suggesting how to build trust in groups.

It is worth taking a moment to look at definition of vulnerability. The word vulnerable, Merriam-Webster on-line notes, is derived from the “Latin *vulnerare* to wound, from *vulner-*, *vulnus* wound; probably akin to Latin *vellere* to pluck, Greek *oulē* wound”. To be vulnerable is to be “capable of being physically wounded” and to be “open to attack or damage”.⁴⁰

Risk, too, bears examination. Viscott (1979) has written a very thoughtful book on risking that is as relevant today as when it was first published in 1977. Viscott notes that it should be clear that in taking risks “you can get hurt” (p. 22). There are two sources of hurt: “the loss implied in every risk and the possible failure of the risk itself” (Viscott, 1979, pp. 22-23). Risk-taking can be connected to growth: “Everything you really want in life involves taking a risk... You cannot grow without taking a risk, a chance” (Viscott, 1979, p. 17).

Viscott (1979), however, cautions us to prepare for a leap of faith-type moment and for evaluating the risk. First, Viscott notes that:

The moment of taking the risk is the most troublesome, when you actually let go and jump free of the bonds of the past... That is the time of greatest fear... the moment of greatest uncertainty, of taking off and landing. It’s the time when people panic and ruin everything. It’s the time of maximum commitment when our best effort must be made with complete abandon (p. 23).⁴¹

Viscott (1979, p. 72) notes that the “hardest task is to evaluate your own needs and life and make a decision to risk or not that is in your best interests”. He provides a chapter filled

⁴⁰ “vulnerable” in Merriam-Webster Online; last viewed March 16, 2005

⁴¹ Viscott later uses the metaphor of passing in an automobile as an illustration of the dangers involved in risk. It is in the moment of passing that “most fatalities occur”. “The driver most likely to be killed is the one who hesitates...” (p. 56).

with questions, including the following questions “to ask before putting your reputation on the line”:

Will I ever be completely prepared? Have I made my best effort to this point? How can I rehearse what could happen? Am I in the right role for me? How does it feel? Who is watching? What is that important to me? What do they see? What do I hope they will see? (p. 85).

Viscott (1979) concludes by noting that “if you take risks without asking questions, you are only inviting trouble” (p. 87).

3.3.3 Psychological Safety

Consistent with the idea of vulnerability and the associated leap of faith, one other part of the risk equation is having some degree of psychological safety in taking a risk.

Psychological safety relates to the earlier-referenced paradox of thoughtful, calculated, or managed risk and to Viscott’s many questions. Psychological safety describes “individuals’ perceptions about the consequences of interpersonal risks in their work environment” (Edmondson, 2003, p. 258). In psychologically safe environments:

... people believe that if they make a mistake others will not penalize them or think less of them for it. They also believe that others will not resent or penalize them for asking for help, information or feedback. (Edmondson, 2003, p. 257)

This relates to “how members of organizational work teams can overcome the interpersonal risks they face every day at work, to help themselves, their teams and their organizations to learn” (Edmondson, 2003, p. 253). Most people “feel a need to manage” risks relating to “being seen as ignorant, incompetent, negative or disruptive” in order to minimize harm to their “image” (Edmondson, 2003, p. 256). There are potential gender and power issues

involved here as well: "There is evidence that men are less likely to ask questions in a public situation, where asking will reveal their lack of knowledge" (Tannen, 1994, p. 26).

While Edmondson (2003) notes that the nature of the vulnerability involved in psychological safety "is more narrowly defined... than for trust" (p. 258), her message has implications for trust. "Psychological safety can increase the chances of effortful, interpersonally risky, learning behavior, such as help seeking, experimentation and discussion of error" (Edmondson, 2003, p. 260). Groups should promote psychological safety through reflexive learning, which will provide them with the "self-awareness and the agency to enable change" (Edmondson, 2003, p. 262). Groups should mitigate "the inherent risks of speaking up" through psychological safety and "coordination and some degree of structure to ensure that insights are gained from members' collective experience and also used to guide subsequent actions" (Edmondson, 2002, p. 261). Group learning, which can also be called "reflection-in-action or 'double loop learning'"⁴², consists of "iterative cycles of action, reflection and adjustment" (Edmondson, 2003, p.262). Group reflection can be "quick and pragmatic" (Edmondson, 2003, p. 262), occurring daily, at a natural break in a project or when a project is completed. Edmondson's research reinforces the value of the trust-building observation and debriefing process that Stewart (2004) and I have found to be such a valuable part of the experience of many groups.

3.3.4 The Extra-Rational and Non-Rational

I have focused thus far on some of the rational elements of trust, tempered by the elements of risk, uncertainty and vulnerability and Mollering's faith. As part of my research I explored the extra-rational or non-rational aspects of trust. This was a key part of counterbalancing safety and fleshing out the Mollering concept of not securing complete knowledge. Extra-rational knowledge is a concept that I first heard enunciated in my early 20s. Bosetti (multiple presentations, 1976-81) defined extra-rational as being outside rational thought. However, extra-rational knowledge draws in some probably reasoned, but possibly unconscious way, on experience and on-the-ground-information-based instincts. I

⁴² Argyris and Schon quoted in Edmondson, 2003, p. 262

have since added to this concept the idea that we can also develop non-rational thought by drawing on intuition, "the power or faculty of attaining direct knowledge or cognition without evident rational thought and inference".⁴³ Non-rational thought is also linked to faith, e.g. faith in humanity. Bosetti carefully distinguished the extra-rational from the purely irrational, which he described as having no basis in experience and/or reason. Bosetti's concept of the extra-rational can be linked to trust and to the idea of 'non-rational' trust, as developed by Good. Good makes the interesting and clever observation that "to be non-rational in a certain way may be decidedly rational as a strategy for coping with limits in one's rationality" (Good quoted in Mollering, 2001, p. 413). To me, the key idea is being alert to our intuition and being willing to act outside pure reason and logic, while keeping rational thought and the power of questions and devil's advocacy from a trusting group as a necessary check on our extra-rational and non-rational ideas.

Here, once again Simmel's and Mollering's concepts merit further examination. Mollering refers to the 'further element of social-psychological quasi-religious faith' involved in trusting (Mollering, 2001, p. 405). He notes that "trust performs a crucial function in modern societies whilst the bases for trust are rather weak... trust combines good reasons with faith" (Mollering, 2001, p. 411). He quotes Simmel at length:

To 'believe in someone', without adding or even conceiving what it is that one believes about him, is to employ a very subtle and profound idiom. It expresses the feeling that there exists between our idea of a being and the being itself a definite connection and unity, a certain consistency in our conception of it, an assurance and lack of resistance in the surrender of Ego to this conception, which may rest upon particular reasons, but is not explained by them. (Simmel in Mollering, 2001, pp. 405-406)

Mollering also notes that, for Simmel, confidence is "intermediate between knowledge and ignorance" about a person. That, of course, links to Mollering's comment about complete knowledge or ignorance (Mollering, 2001, p. 406). Simmel again goes outside pure logic in

⁴³ "intuition" in Merriam-Webster Online; last viewed on December 15, 2004.

stating that “even in the social forms of confidence, no matter how exactly and intellectually grounded they may appear to be, there may yet be some additional affective, even mystical ‘faith’ of man in man” (Mollering, 2001, p. 407). Mollering later quotes Luhmann as arguing that “the inner foundations in trust which we are seeking cannot lie in cognitive capacity” but in a “type of system-internal suspension” (Mollering, 2001, p. 409). Suspension, Luhmann conceptualizes as “mediating between reflexive interpretative trust bases (‘good reasons’) and the momentarily certain expectations in enacted trust” (Mollering, 2001, p. 407). Lewis and Wigert in turn pick up from Simmel and Luhmann in suggesting that “trust is a functional alternative to rational prediction for the reduction of complexity” (Mollering, 2001, p. 410). They add the concept of an emotional element, without which proper trust does not occur: “trust in everyday life is a mix of feeling and rational thinking” (Mollering, 2001, p. 410). This in turn loops back to intuition, which often has an emotional base, which explains why we find intuitive ‘gut’ reactions surfacing so often when we are in the midst of making important decisions.

The payoff from the rational, extra rational and non-rational elements of trust and psychological safety lies in the possibility of achieving the “miracle of understanding” which comes through “the sharing in a common meaning” (Dostal, 2002, p. 112), in creating something new (Isaacs) and in fused horizons and common contexts. Gadamer notes that the “purest reproduction of meaning [relies on unified] context”. Gadamer also states that when fusion happens, our “horizon is extended so as to make room for the object that before did not fit within it” (Dostal, 2002, p. 133). Fusion, he observes, “opens a broader horizon” (Dostal, 2002, p. 134). The result is learning from each other (Palmer, 2001, p. 39). And at the highest level referred to earlier, to quote Bohm, the result is a “... move to coherence... harmony of the collective and the individual” (Bohm, 2000).

In reflecting on extra-rational thought, it is worth noting that there was a time when pure reason was intuition, with the reasoning of the intellect seen as valuable, but ‘lower’ form of rationality. It says something about our modern world that this understanding of reason has all but been lost, so that intuition is considered ‘extra-rational’. This represents a real potential loss since it can be argued that intrinsic goodness is only directly apprehended

through a kind of intuition. Hence “it is only with the heart that one sees rightly. What is essential is invisible to the eye” (Antoine de Ste. Exupery).⁴⁴

3.3.5 Identity and Attachment, Trust and Cooperation

The Korsgaard et al. (2003) model connects “the relationships between identity, attachment, trust and cooperation in groups” (see Diagram 3-4 below). “Attachment style” answered some of the outstanding questions I had about group composition decisions that should be thought through before a group is first convened. I also agreed that procedural justice, identity and cooperation were key parts of building trust in groups; the Korsgaard et al. research on each of these areas informed my research.

The first conclusion that Korsgaard et al. supported was that we can consciously decide not to include in the membership of a new group people known to have attachment avoidance and possibly attachment anxiety problems. Group attachment style describes “a group member’s propensity to seek and feel secure in group situations” (Korsgaard et al., 2003, p. 113). Group attachment styles influence “both the propensity to become identified with a group and the relationship between group identification and the individual’s trust in the group” (Korsgaard et al., 2003, p.113). The securely attached group member “feels safe and comfortable in his/her organizational environment and knows that his/her group will be available and responder to his/her needs” (Brodt, forthcoming, cited in Korsgaard et al., 2003, p. 122). “As a consequence, s/he will work independently and freely share information among group members”. S/he will “also keep in touch with his/her group as deadlines and other group needs arise” (Brodt, forthcoming; Brodt and Korsgaard cited in Korsgaard et al, 2003, p. 122).

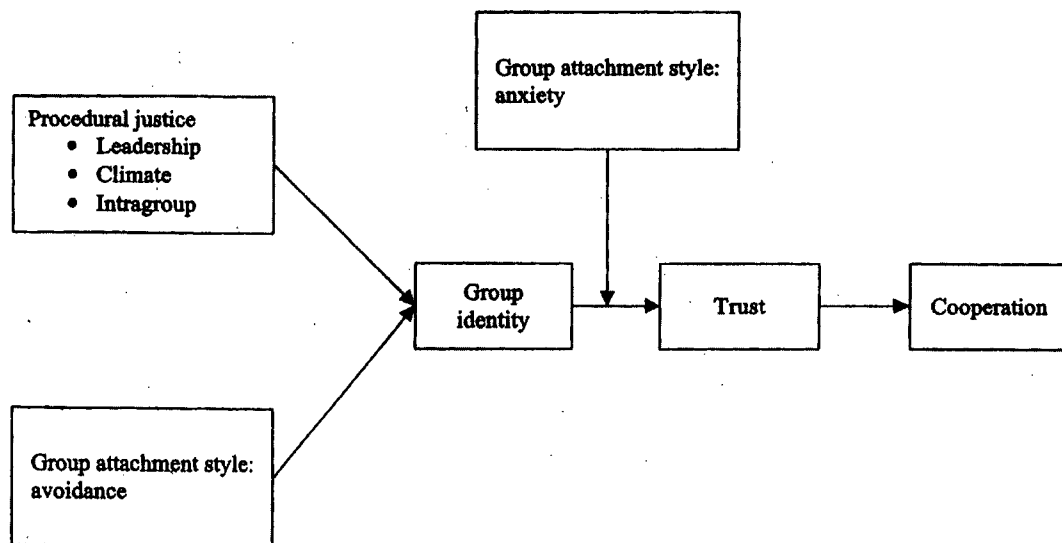
Group attachment avoidance is “the extent to which the individual desires to be distant from or independent from the group” (Korsgaard et al., 2003, p. 123). At the extreme negative

⁴⁴ I am indebted for these reflections on the history of reason and for the Ste. Exupery quote to Daniel Vokey commenting on an earlier draft of the dissertation.

end is a preference “not to depend on my group or have my group depend on me”. Group attachment anxiety “reflects a worry or anxiety about being accepted by one’s group”.

Diagram 3-4⁴⁵, which follows, shows how including in the group people with the two forms of attachment difficulties could impede the development of identity, trust and cooperation. Initially avoidance could hurt our ability to establish an identity. Later anxiety (“worry or anxiety about being accepted by one’s group”; Korsgaard et al, 2003, p. 123) could impede a group building trust after it has an identity.

Diagram 3-4: Trust model: Korsgaard et al.



Korsgaard et al. (2003) describe group identity as fostering cooperative relations, “with that relationship explained, at least in part, by; the impact of group identification on trust in the group” (p. 119). “Identification... refers to the extent to which individuals define themselves in terms of their membership in a particular group” (Korsgaard et al., 2003,

⁴⁵ From Korsgaard et al. (2003, p. 114).

p.113). "Social identity leads to more favorable evaluation and treatment of ingroup members" and impacts "prosocial or altruistic behavior towards the group" (Korsgaard et al., 2003, p. 118). The following sequence is noted:

Intragroup interactions, viewed through the lens of procedural justice, provide important information to the individual regarding his or her status within the group. That is, being treated in a procedurally just fashion signifies that the individual is a member in good standing within the group or organization. The self-esteem enhancing effect of having their status in the group affirmed leads members to identify strongly with the group. (Korsgaard et al., 2003, p. 120)

However, the researchers also note that "the empirical results regarding the relationship between group identification and trust [have] been inconsistent". This may be owing to attachment styles (i.e. group attachment anxiety is the factor which interferes). (Korsgaard et al., 2003, p. 121)

Group trust, according to the research, leads to group cooperation. Group cooperation was defined as "an individual's ... active and persistent pursuit of the goals of the work group, regardless of personal or interpersonal interests" (Korsgaard et al., 2003, p. 114). Like Senge, the authors distinguished the described state of cooperation from mere compliance. "Compliance and conformity may be passive and may even thwart group goals when initiative is required". Cooperation related to an "active component", was based on "discretionary behavior" and was "voluntary and outside organizational guidelines" (Korsgaard et al., 2003, p. 115).

This model impressed me as not having the same exclusive focus on task-related success that I read into the other models. The highest state or the 'end' of the other group models read as follows. Tuckman's group at the high end became "a problem solving instrument" (Tuckman, 1965, p. 387). Katzenbach and Smith's group became a High Performance Team (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993, p. 92). Blanchard et al.'s group became a Productive team,

“a synergistic productive unit” (Blanchard et al., 2000, p. 49). This is different than the above-noted Korggaard et al. definition of group cooperation, a definition that focuses on the group’s goals. Thus, if a group established a goal of having a better process or real group and individual learning, this would be as valid as a goal of improved business performance. The Korggaard et al definition is consistent with Senge et al. (1999) naming networking and diffusion and personal results, along with business results, as forces that reinforce virtuous spirals.

Moreover, this model specifically suggested ways to counter groupthink and to possibly work towards dialogue. Many texts on dialogue separate dialogue from converging on a “conclusion or course of action” (e.g. Senge, 1990, p. 247).

Korggaard et al. (2003) moved me towards a ‘fit’ that I could present to people as an alternative to all of the models, including my own, that I had worked with to date. I realized, though, that this model did not represent the ‘how-to’s’. The ‘how-to’s’ could be derived by combining Mollering’s leap of faith with my own experience and what I learned in the focus groups. I worked at converting key thoughts from this model into a model that was consistent with my views on systems thinking and with my desire to be able to provide practical suggestions for groups on how to ‘get’ to trust.

3.3.6 Swift Trust

Finally, I wish to explore swift trust. Swift trust is something that can be achieved in temporary groups, which “constitute an interesting organizational analog of a one night stand... [given that they] have finite life span, form around a shared and relatively clear goal or purpose and their success depends on a tight and coordinated coupling of activity” (Meyerson et al., 1996, p.167). This concept is of particular relevance to my work given the short duration of the ‘life’ of many of the groups I have observed in experiential or problem-based academic and learning settings. In relation to work, most of the project groups in the construction industry where I have done a great deal of work have a relatively short life. I

have also noted the prevalence of more and more ad hoc groups generally in the service sector (e.g. task forces with specific short term mandates). The concept of swift trust is referred to in appendix #5's description of the development of trust in the focus groups themselves and may also have been involved in the magic group story told in the last chapter.

3.4. Summary and Next Chapter

Both content parts of this chapter acknowledge my considerable debt to various thinkers and writers. The first content part describes readings that I had valued and thought about at length prior to starting work on this dissertation. These readings include articles and books on such diverse topics as leadership, group development, dialogue and esteem. The first part also acknowledges the impact of my many years of professional practice, where I attempted to put into practice what I learned from the literature. However, in this section I do not restrict myself to what I knew when I started in on the work on the dissertation. For example, I develop the concept of leadership by groups. This is a topic that I had read about previously, but had not really fully considered, prior to questions being put to me in the dissertation focus group process. These questions were about whether "all groups" should work at building trust.

In the second content part, I hone in on trust specifically. Most significant of all is what I learned about trust from Mollering and Korsgaard et al. I look in depth at the pivotal topic of "faith" and the related topics of vulnerability, risk and uncertainty. These are topics that I had had little or no exposure to before this program, other than through the material from Viscott (1979) and the ruminations of Bosetti about extra-rational thought. However, as explained in chapters one and two, I have experienced a great deal of personal vulnerability in life. Thus, this is a topic that I was excited to explore. I note the importance of identity and cooperation as key elements of the Korsgaard et al. model. I conclude by talking about swift trust.

This chapter is also accompanied by an appendix, appendix #3. This appendix documents some of my additional learning from previous work on modeling. I mention my own earlier work at modeling as part of the previous work. The model which emerged from my work on this dissertation is complementary with my earlier model but is also quite separate from it. The literature blends well with the findings I took from the experience of focus group participants, which are summarized in chapter four.

CHAPTER FOUR: KEY FINDINGS ABOUT BUILDING TRUST IN GROUPS

4.1 Introduction

Group trust is “people stepping further and further outside their comfort zone with little concern about the risk”. – from the conversation in one of the second stage on-line groups

This chapter is one of two chapters that draw on the conversations in the stage two focus groups. The other chapter that does so is chapter five, in which I recount selected stories drawn from the stage two focus groups. While there is some overlap between the two chapters, generally speaking I largely confine this chapter to the general conversations about the nature of group trust and about the demonstrations of trust in the five stories I circulated. These conversations occurred early in the focus group process, before focus group participants volunteered their own stories.

The experience of developing trust in groups was frequently described by focus group participants as an exciting, magical, life-changing or life-confirming, affirming experience. This was not surprising. There is clearly an element of self-selection and predisposition towards the importance of relationships generally and specifically of teams and other groups (see chapter two) among the research participants. However, even taking that predisposition into account, the level of engagement and involvement of focus group participants on the topic was extraordinary, showing a high interest and belief in the topic. It was especially striking to see how hard focus group participants worked at describing what group trust and group trust experiences meant to them.

What was also very clear was that focus group participants acknowledged that group trust is highly individual and situational. That said, there was agreement that group trust, as Mollering (2001) suggests, involves favorable expectations in the face of vulnerability, risk and uncertainty.

The rest of this chapter represents a summary of other selected ideas and thoughts that came up in the stage two sessions. These thoughts and ideas included the following: that metaphors are a good way of capturing the import of group trust; that being able to be vulnerable in a trusting group can be seen as a positive; that for some it is important to get the job done through groups that trust; that there are multiple sources of group trust and we must respect that what works for me does not necessarily work for you; that over time group trust can become layered but does not automatically do so; and that there are practices, 'fields' and methods that can assist a group in securing the procedural justice that Korsgaard et al. (2003) identify in their model.

This section which follows summarizes those key findings from the focus group process. I also note in here outstanding questions that turned the conversation in some of the focus groups upside down and some of the trust-building processes that really made the biggest difference to some individual focus group participants.

4.2 Describing Trust in Groups

Trust in groups was described in many different ways in the focus groups. The descriptions revolved around the frequently referred to trio of trust factors: risk, uncertainty and vulnerability.

4.2.1 Metaphors for Group Trust

The descriptions of trust that I found to be most compelling tended to be metaphorical and to come relatively late in each of the focus group processes. In a poetic moment in one focus group, one participant referred to trust in a group as involving a situation where we "join together, reach to hold a hand, strongly stepping into our future". As anyone who has spent significant time with the highly vulnerable, including children and people who have difficulty trusting, would know, the act of 'reaching to hold a hand' can be a profoundly trusting and symbolic act.

Trust was called “the umbrella that helps hold it all together” by another focus group. It was added this umbrella-like trust then sees “the achievement of task”. Umbrellas to me are of great significance as a symbol of trust, not only because of their system or hub-like framework and the linked structure that holds them together but because, like the human mind, they have to be open in order to be effective.

In still another analogy, in still another group, the growth of a tree was used as a metaphor for group trust. Great significance was attached to the roots, which, like the roots of trust, we often do not see from the outside. One participant in the group stated: “Where the tree grows and as people we grow, leaves and seeds fall off the tree... everything that we stretch and do adds growth”. In that same focus group, a second metaphor was advanced. Group members compared being part of a trusting group to being like “sinking into a warm bath”. In support of this analogy, one group member stated that building trust in a group involves being “very welcoming, very open”. Moreover, in order to allow yourself to sink in to that warm bath, “you’ve got to have the trust”. Another member of this group then added a reminder that, in order to take the warm bath, “you have to take your clothes off first”. The nakedness referred to as part of discussion of the warm bath analogy underlined in that group the previously-discussed factors of risk, uncertainty and vulnerability.

This latter part of the bath metaphor leads to discussion of two vulnerability-related factors that are involved in building trust. These two factors were the mutuality involved in vulnerability and the integrity issues present in being truly vulnerable.

4.2.2 Vulnerability: One Payoff for Trust

Vulnerability was mentioned in various ways in the focus groups as one payoff for group trust. In particular, vulnerability was cited as enabling research participants to be true to themselves. The participant who referred to being true to yourself made the following statement: “It’s OK to be who you are... you’re trusted as who you are... not the person you make yourself out to be when you present the successful self”. Earlier in the same

group a focus group participant noted that group “trust is about allowing space for you to be who you are”. Later in that same focus group still another member of the group referred to the importance of addressing vulnerability through “the structure of the environment you create” so “there is an acceptance of that versus a judgment”. Another description was of members of a trusting group being able to “take off our masks and be our authentic selves”. Finally, groups where trust had been built were described as places where I as a participant in such a group could “find... voice” and “lead from where I stood”, going to “the deepest level of intention”.

One of the most intriguing ways in which we can be vulnerable in a serious adult world is play or “silliness”. One participant described “bantering and humour” as part of a “safe positive atmosphere”.⁴⁶ Group members then noted that in high trust groups laughter would be “therapeutic” and would “relax... you”. As well, as trust built the nature of the humour itself would change so it was no longer ‘shots’ at others: “it’s as often about yourself; you know what hurts people and you don’t go there”. The effect of all of this combined with what has been referred to earlier, it was noted, is that “you can probably get through anything”.

Circumstances sometimes present a group with vulnerability with which group members have to deal. One participant told a story about a year long course he took as part of his employment where “there were three really, really bad instructors” and “we taught each other”. He noted that “this forced us together... [forced us to] recognize our diversity and the value of it”. He went on to say that over time the group became “stronger and tighter, stronger and tighter”.

Another payoff from vulnerability is that in trusting groups we can have more real conversations about what the group is about or how it should be using its time and other resources. Those real conversations could come from a place of integrity. In having real

⁴⁶ In discussing this and another reference to laughter in that focus group I noted the observation of a participant in a program I worked with years ago. This participant observed that the level of laughter in groups where there was high trust was deeper; it came from the belly. One of the other participants in the group agreed, noting “when you’re not comfortable, you kind of go ‘heh, heh’”.

conversations, you “free the group up”, as one participant put it. Put somewhat differently by another participant, we could characterize this environment as follows:

It's OK to say what there is to say... [There is] room for whatever form of communication you have so that you can be present... where I see trust being possible is that we're present to all of our self... there's room to be present to what's not working today

Another reason that vulnerability is important was given in another of the focus groups. A participant stated “the experience of working in your teams brings out a part of us that we sometimes hesitate to show, our humanity”⁴⁷. One reason for pursuing our humanity in groups is that the alternative to showing our humanity is often to marginalize one or more members of a group. A striking focus group description of what it feels like to be marginalized by a group and thereby to not trust that group was the following statement: “I was throwing out these ideas and they [the group] just ... sort of pushed [me] aside... I was quietly sitting in the corner” of the meeting room “breaking my jewelry, my bracelet, apart”.

4.2.3 Getting the Job Done: A Second Payoff

The second big payoff from building group trust was the ability to do a better or faster job. An extraordinary moment in the research process came when one focus group had been deliberating for about an hour. The following question literally stopped the conversation: “If we were more comfortable with the value of the process [that leads to trust], would we invent less to do?” Later on, the person who raised the question noted that if in our groups we keep on adding on “to the old way” we will end up with “more to do”. When the conversation initially stopped after the question, I could ‘feel’ people silently taking in the full import of this essential task and process-related question. After the silence, one of the group members asked the participant to repeat what she had just asked. There was palpable energy in the group after the question was asked—I could feel that the question provided a

⁴⁷ See the chapter one reference to the movie *Network* (Gottfried and Lumet, 1976).

real ray of hope to the participants. Imagine if we could really find less to do and focus on the most important things through being in groups where the members trusted the group.

Another side of 'getting the job done' is the norming value of group trust. As noted, the question about inventing less stuff to do was a real meeting stopper. Another meeting-stopper question came up in another face to face focus group. The question related to why trust matters to groups when you are dealing with difficult and problematic individuals. The question came from an individual who questioned my opening premise (see appendix #2) that building trust in groups was necessarily more challenging than building one-on-one trust.⁴⁸ He asked one of the group members who had just described a trusting group: "Are there [members of the group that you have just described as being trusting as a group] that you would not trust as individuals?" Her answer to this question was "yes" and the question was then tossed back and forth in the focus group. I could see people literally sparking to the idea that we could improve the performance and acceptance of some of our problem people in offices and other settings by making them 'subject' to the dynamics, processes and mores of a trusting group.

One other critical question that was raised in the process was the following question from a formerly task-oriented person who discovered the value of process in getting to task: "What would happen if we could frame process as a critical task?"

4.2.4 The Sources of Trust

In the handout that I mailed to focus group participants (see chapter two and appendix #2), I speculated on six different sources of trust, which became seven when one of the cohort members added caring as a source that related to the ethic of care⁴⁹. The seven speculative sources were reciprocity, institutional factors, risk-taking behaviors, an intuitive reaction, leadership behaviors, moral belief and caring. The listed sources were accepted implicitly

⁴⁸ The exact quote reads as follows: "The decision to trust in collective settings is different from, and in many respects more problematic than, decisions about trust that arise in other social contexts" (Kramer et al., 1996, p. 357)

⁴⁹ The writer in the EdD cohort linked this to the work of Nel Noddings and Carol Gilligan.

and explicitly in focus group deliberations. Many participants in the focus group process mentioned specific examples of the sources of trust.

The most interesting conversation was around the root source of trust. For some participants the root of all trust is self: "trust breeds trust". One of the members of that group, which was the one that linked trust with the growth of a tree (see earlier reference), noted that "you break a branch off [a tree] now and then... if you know you have other branches, you'll be just fine".

There was a debate about the earning of trust. The minority point of view was that "There is no such thing as earning trust. You either trust or you don't". That person noted that they have always "trusted until there was a reason not to trust". A person in another group stated: "I have an automatic trust... until someone in the group disproves that fact". This was referred to by the first group as the "intrinsically trusting", optimistic, "life will unfold as it should", "desiderata" approach to trust.

The majority point of view about earning trust was baldly expressed by one participant as "talk is cheap... I am a 'show me' kind of person". In other words trust in a group has to be "established and earned" in a reciprocal sense. "This takes time". Not surprisingly, the reciprocation point of view broke down along task and process lines. For those that are task oriented, their point of view is represented by the comment that where trust existed in a group "each of us [is] doing our part". A participant in another focus group noted that trust comes when group members "bring their competence to the table" and you can "rely on them to do their piece".

Another reciprocal source was the real significance to truly being honoured as a human being in a group. This was expressed in a number of ways that were striking, ranging from a simple reference to others "being present" to someone referring to having "seen and heard enough to know that [members of the group] would honour my faith". Another person referred to members of groups taking the time "to build and foster community and relationships". One participant zeroed in on mutuality by referring to "mutual acceptance"

as a single theme which that participant drew from the first hour or so of focus group discussion.

4.2.5 Levels of Trust

One notable idea that came out in several different ways in the focus groups was the idea of there being different levels of trust in different groups or different group situations. The idea of levels led one participant to ask the other members of their group the question: "Are we looking for drive-through trust or does trust need to be tested, re-confirmed, tested again and become warm and real and solid over time?"

Another version of the conversation about levels of group trust took place in a second group. The conversation related to tort law-like concepts such as the likelihood, cost and magnitude of possible damage. Thus in tort law our liability for damage that we are responsible for increases as the damage is of greater consequence and more likely to occur. Translated to group trust issues, this resulted in yet another extraordinarily good question: "Must a higher level of trust need to be established if the product/end result is personal/intangible or as the perceived value of the anticipated end result increases?"

In a third group there was mention of the "level of chaos" changing in groups so that we operate with "waves of trust... minimal layers of trust... [and] higher levels of trust". Later in the same group one of the participants referred to "having the courage to go to the next level".

For those who saw the evolution or deepening of trust occurring in groups, a number of distinctions and descriptions helped bring this idea to life. Time in particular was an issue for some individuals. One of these individuals referred to "long term versus short term trust". This related to the idea of trust being different in a group which meets for some period of time, which underlay the description of many of the trusting groups outside the MALT program. Long-term trust was referred to as "a different issue" than with a group where it was unclear whether the group would ever actually meet again or not. The life of

the group in turn can be linked with the idea of trust occurring through “intimacy” that has “grown slowly over time”. This in turn connected with a host of related ideas about deeper trust involving a “feeling of connection”, “stretching”, “soul searching” and “personal and interpersonal development”. However, the other reality for some people is that time is not an absolute or a constant. For some, an extraordinary level of trust can emerge in a relatively short period of time (hence three of the participants referring to a MALT group as being the most trusting group of which they had ever been a part).

A specific situation where differing levels of trust came out quite notably was in the one on-line group where a couple of people had a very different experience around responding to my request to provide stories of groups in which they had had high trust (see appendix #5 for a description of this conversation).

4.3 The Trust Space and the Results of Trust

4.3.1 Four Practices and Three Fields

As will be noted in chapter six, a group trust space can be made up of internalized practices and emerging fields. The fields go from emerging to being fully present by the time a group has embraced a leap of faith by one of its members. These practices and fields tie in closely with the ideas from the research literature (chapter three). Four practices emerged from the focus group process as important: deep listening, common passion/purpose, openness, and shared leadership responsibility, which I also refer to as shared leadership and shared responsibility. Three fields or auras also emerged as vital: feelings of safety, of identity and of bonding. I will now describe the four practices and the fields and include accompanying quotes from focus group participants.

4.3.1.1 The Practice of Passion and Purpose

The first of the practices is passion and purpose. Knowing deep down inside and having conversations about personal passion or common purpose are key. This could occur through developing a vision statement or through an open group conversation about “what we are all about”. One focus group member made the following statement about this part of the process: “... part of the trust-building is finding the commonality amongst [the members of a group]... creating or clarifying or identifying who you are as a group through your own commonalities, common vision, common purpose”. Another person made it very personal: “A person needs to have a reason to commit to a process... usually in a group everyone has a reason to be there”. One participant noted the boost given to the development of group trust “when people have a common background and a similar understanding of the task”. Referring specifically to the development of trust in the focus groups themselves this person noted that my “expectations were clear” and this was “a self-selecting group with commitment” to the topic. Then again, perhaps it is the commitment and the capacity to commit which is the key source, as suggested in another group: “maybe trust is part of being a shared commitment”

4.3.1.2 The Practice of Deep Listening

Having group members engage in deep, deep listening was a second practice that was repeatedly referred to. Listening was called “the pillar to creating trust” by someone who added that “it takes courage to listen”. The reasoning behind the importance of listening was conveyed by the following statement: “when we are heard we make deep connections... when we make deep connections what we are doing is recognizing shared values”. A variation on the topic of listening is the associated idea of asking questions. One participant who argued in favour of curiosity noted the power of “asking questions, not just trying to find new ways to get my point across”. This, of course, could lead to dialogue, as defined and described in chapter three.

4.3.1.3 The Practice of an Open Attitude

A third practice referred to repeatedly was taking an approach that stressed having an open, curious, learning-oriented attitude. Curiosity was especially important to the focus group member who said that we need to “notice [others] doing something” and be “curious” about others. Another person added: “when confronted [in a group] it is disarming to adopt an approach of curiosity”. A third person suggested that group trust came from “surrendering control... walking naked into a land of uncertainty... surrendering to surprise and being open”. This was expanded to refer to “surrendering to the resistance... letting it flow through you... and [coming from a] place of trusting myself and listening to my primary knowledge”. Another focus group participant referred to the importance of “surrendering to surprise... being open to what is happening around you”. Finally, one of the clearer statements about a learning attitude, and about how rare this attitude is, was this statement: “[There] has to be a willingness to identify that learning is important... in a lot of work environments it’s not an important thing to learn”.

4.1.3.4 The Practice of Shared Responsibility

There were repeated references in the focus group process to shared responsibility between whoever was the formal leader of a group and the rest of the group. It was viewed as essential that leaders share responsibility and that they draw others into sharing responsibility. One statement specifically about the kind of leadership that works in trusting groups mentioned the kind of leadership that builds on an understanding of “the knowledge and skill about how to help people feel at ease”, which in turn helps “create trust and elicit the quiet people”.

4.3.1.5 A Feeling of Safety

Practices that brought safety into the group and/or that institutionalized or otherwise reinforced psychological safety were important. One unequivocal statement in support of safety was: “If we don't feel safe we can not learn, we can not take off our masks and be our

authentic self. We hide behind our costumes, our images and protect ourselves from others...” Another statement focused on the people part of safety: “People who create this sense of safety are real. They really care about what happens and people in general. It can not be faked—it must be authentic...” Finally, participants noted that “the more the sense of safety is created, the more people put their best stuff out there” and “we as human beings are enabled to be the best we can be”.

4.3.1.6 A Feeling of Identity

Group members repeatedly referred to how strongly they personally identified with groups that had built trust. One participant referred to identity as the “core to trust-building”.

4.3.1.7 A Feeling of Bonding

A bond is a form of Kotter and Cohen’s (2002) emotional commitment or, as Webster puts it, “a uniting or binding element or force: tie: the bonds of friendship”. It is also “an attractive force that holds together the atoms, ions, or groups of atoms in a molecule or crystal” and “an adhesive, cementing material, or fusible ingredient that combines, unites, or strengthens”⁵⁰. Where I use the terms bond and bonding from this point forward I will be referring to interpersonal group factors that unite, attract, cement and strengthen the members of the group as a group. In one earlier-mentioned story about a year long course, a focus group member talked group members teaching each other, owing to really bad teaching by the formal instructors. This group of students, again as noted earlier, became “stronger and tighter, stronger and tighter” over time to the point where the participant concluded that “I count some of those people among my closest friends”.

4.3.2 Six Processes to Achieve the Trust Space

The four practices and the three fields are entirely too theoretical for some practical-minded readers, particularly Sensing Thinking Judging types (i.e., ISTJ and ENTJ) in the Myers

⁵⁰ Merriam Webster Online; last viewed April 12, 2005

Briggs typology. These are people whose personalities “tend to be practical and matter-of-fact” (Myers, 1980, p. 5) and who want to read more specific ‘how-to’s’. Six how-to ideas that were mentioned in the focus groups are described in the following paragraphs, with accompanying quotes from members of the focus groups. The six process ideas are: rule-making, personality-typing, debriefing, processes to encourage conflict resolution, mechanisms to get away from judging, and check-ins.

These six processes would, for some groups, be among the first activities undertaken, early in the life of the group. Thus, with the right group, setting up groundrules right away would be a constructive early step in earning trust. In that instance, at the very first meeting, a group member could say something like: “I have an idea. Before we do anything else, let’s agree on some common groundrules that we all commit to follow. These rules will help us to work better together”. Alternatively, if the group was one that was really focused on task at the beginning, it might be counterproductive to try and push process too early (for more on that see Erika’s story in the next chapter). In that case, if the group later experienced process difficulties, a group member could make a suggestion to use one of the six processes in order to contribute to the creation of a trust space (see chapter six for more on ‘creation of a trust space’). Thus a member might say something like, “You know, I think that one thing that is dragging our meetings down is the way we often interrupt one another. I suggest we adopt and actively enforce a groundrule of ‘No interruptions’. Whenever someone violates the groundrule, we would go back to the person who was interrupted before hearing the thoughts of the interrupter”. Both of these approaches and all six of the processes are valid ways to prepare a group for the vulnerability that goes with a leap of faith.

4.3.2.1 Rule-making

Rule-making and monitoring are ways to provide for listening and safety. Statements made in support of this mechanism included the following statement: ...“Working through groundrules ... was really important... [with a] group that doesn’t listen to each other”. Another person addressed safety and past history in a story that is told in full in chapter six. The storyteller noted that: “The result of rule-making with a group in an organization that

did not have a history of trusting groups was that people essentially said ‘for this time, with these groundrules, I will trust you’”. However, rule making that does not address these matters or that does not lead to a way of operating that creates trust space could be rule making for the sake of rule-making.

4.3.2.2 Personality Typing

One of the features of the Royal Roads experience for many learners is the use of personality questionnaires in order to build diversity into groups and to increase learning about the types and sources of differences of perspective among group members. Not surprisingly, a number of focus group members suggesting that personality typing and other ways of tapping in to the strengths and tendencies of group members (Myers, 1980; Buckingham and Clifton, 2001) could assist groups in several ways. These ways included: listening without editing and judging, having a more open attitude, building in the kind of safety mechanisms that are appropriate for the group in question and understanding different leadership styles. One person noted that profiles can “help put things in context”. This person added that personality typing can be “a platform for humour... for lightening the atmosphere... [for] making the atmosphere in the room... OK for trust to come in”. Another person addressed the way the personality typing reinforced the value and importance of the collective, especially in very diverse groups: in a trusting team that she was part of “weaknesses were honoured” and it was “OK not to have all the answers”. The result was that the language of members of the team was about us “doing things collectively”. However, participants warned that the reverse can also hold true: personality typing can result in closed, even judgmental approaches, simplistic labeling and a breakdown of trust. Thus one or more of the four earlier-mentioned practices (section 4.3.1) must be reinforced in any personality typing work.

4.3.2.3 Debriefing

Debriefing, a process of evaluating a meeting or activity, was referred to as a key practice in several of the composite stories in chapter two (see appendix #1) and in the section on psychological safety in chapter three. Focus group participants agreed that debriefing can have tremendous value in moving forward on all of the practices and in creating safety. One participant said this about debriefing: “Once you’ve had a debrief, you don’t have to conform any longer to your... preconceived idea about what is normal behaviour in this group. Suddenly people are just released from that”. Another person said that through debriefing we “can begin to question and produce more ideas”. This person added that the message to ourselves can be “I don’t have to behave the way I thought I had to behave before”, which really enforces openness and different ways of listening. Still another person focused on the trust-specific outcomes of debriefing: “after the debriefing... [there] seemed to be changes when trust became more apparent”. A fourth person focused on the nature of the debriefing, linking it to openness: if we have an “open exchange” in the debriefing process, “we can really say the not so good stuff with the good stuff”. So once again the key is linking debriefing to what we are trying to achieve through the four practices. We should not do debriefing for the sake of debriefing or do it in a nominal way.

From the above comments it was clear that a good debriefing can help to open up attitudes (e.g. by pointing out where a group has not been open). In debriefing we can identify listening issues (e.g. by pointing to the number and nature of interruptions). We can use a debriefing as an opportunity to create safety (e.g. by creating a forum for people to raise issues). Through debriefing we can reinforce purpose and point out where purpose and passion have been lost or violated (e.g. We seem to lose our focus on the long term and on our commitment when we...). Finally, when a group slows down and really focuses on its debriefing process, it provides new and different opportunities for shared responsibility.

4.3.2.4 Processes to Encourage Conflict Resolution

Value comes from mechanisms that encourage conflict resolution undertaken consistent with the four practices. Frank exchanges, at the appropriate times, are encouraged in my earlier model (MacIver, 2001; see appendix #3) and were clearly a factor leading to trust in at least three of the MALT stories included in the pre-readings. Focus group members said a number of different things about the value of frank conversations: One said that: "Frank discussions [and]... open dialogue...allows you to feel there's less risk to take steps in a group". Another said that: "It is 'critical' to the success of 'frank expression' to use skill in 'the way in which you express yourself'.... in particular we need to use "'I' statements" which put what you are talking about in the "place of your own experience" and are "really non-threatening". A third person allowed that, in order for a group to grow, "sometimes it takes a fracturing [through conflict]. [This] creates the environment where suddenly people can become more real... authentic and open. [It] kind of creates its own little trust situation which, in turn builds and creates a bigger trust".

4.3.2.5 Doing Away with Judging

Getting away from judging (which could also come through groundrules, debriefing and other mechanical means) is a key to openness and real listening. The most telling statement of all, for me, was someone who talked about the impact of the MALT program's emphasis on getting away from judging: "for the first time in 20 years I feel I can talk without being shut down as ... ditz... [I am] being given permission to express a different point of view". Another participant also said that "judgment is just a killer", particularly in relation to creative work. A third participant added a statement very specific to trust-building: "judging, judging, judging... It could actually serve to shut down any [trust] building right off the bat".

4.3.2.6 Check-ins

Check-ins, which were referred to as an element of some circle work in chapter three, were yet another mechanical process that focus group participants said could contribute to the four practices, particularly in reinforcing listening right from the beginning of a meeting and in identification of impediments to openness. Check-in was described in one group as a way of “going around” and “letting people say ‘here I am’”... we need to “sit in circle and damned well do a proper check in so we know where folks are coming from”. Groundrules can provide for check-ins but it is essential to make them open and real and to have people fully engaged when you do them.

4.4 Summary

This findings chapter summarizes the opening and closing conversations in the stage two focus groups, where participants showed a strong belief in the value of group trust-building. This belief was evident in their use of metaphors about group trust-building, as reported in this chapter. The majority of participants also showed a keen awareness of the challenges involved in gaining acceptance of the merits of devoting group time to trust-building processes. This awareness was gained through difficult meetings where process or the interpersonal side of group development was devalued. I suspect that this very awareness was one major reason why one participant question temporarily brought deliberations in one focus group to a halt. As noted earlier in this chapter, that question suggested that in our groups we “invent” unnecessary tasks because of a lack of group trust. The belief in layering of trust was very strong among focus group participants. Integrity and having real conversations were clearly valued by focus group participants, as evidenced by their comments on these topics. Participants also noted the advantage of being able to use group norms and ways of operating to gain trusted participation from some group members that

you might not trust individually. Finally, group discussions elicited some ideas about practices and mechanisms that assist in building a trust space. All of the practices were consistent with the learning provided at Royal Roads and with my own belief system, although I would not have isolated the four named specific practices before my literature review and the focus group process. The six mechanisms are all ones that I incorporate into my practice, although once again I would not have isolated these specific six mechanisms prior to the focus group process (for a summary of criteria, and related mechanisms, that I had named as contributing to group effectiveness prior to my research see the twelve team effectiveness criteria listed in Appendix #2). Many more ideas on practices and mechanisms were contained in the stories told in chapter five, which follows.

CHAPTER FIVE: TEN STORIES ABOUT BUILDING TRUST IN GROUPS

5.1 Introduction

In chapter three I noted that:

Trusting groups have the capacity to positively affect leadership in organizations in at least three ways: changing direction, lessening loneliness and role-modeling. Trusting groups that lead can generate the ideas and the energy needed to transform the direction of our organizations. Trusting groups that lead can support those who provide leadership, thus assisting in mitigating the earlier-referenced loneliness of leadership that Powell warns about (Harari, 2002). Trusting groups that lead by role-modeling trust for the rest of the organization can variously be described as contributing to a field of trust (Wheatley, 1994), a tipping point or critical mass of trust (Gladwell, 2000) or a “network pattern going in all directions” (Capra, 1996, p. 82) of trust.

This chapter has ten stories, organized according to which of the above three ways of leading is predominant in the story in question. Each story matches at least one of the following five criteria. The first criterion was the nature of the story: that I found it to be memorable or even inspirational in nature. I found Pam’s, Joan’s and Erika’s stories to be particularly gripping. The second criterion involved my judging the ease with which readers would relate to the story. I found the stories told by Donna, Donald, Ervin, Terry and Shauna to be the kinds of stories that many of us can insert ourselves into quite easily. Thirdly, I was looking for specific illustrations of what is involved in creating a trust space. Pam’s story is the place where the phrase “trust space” originated. That story, Linda’s story and Donna’s story all involved an early and very clear articulation and internalization of

simple, but profound, ways of operating. In the other seven stories the way of operating evolved more over time. The fourth criterion was that the result from the creation of trust was quite clear: a compelling success, collaborative-type co-operation, and/or a connection that flowed from the group trust. Adrienne's, Donald's, Donna's and Joan's stories all involved significant accomplishments. All of the other stories show both evident cooperation and connection. A final factor was diversity—I deliberately picked stories in different sectors and situations. As well, the specific ways in which trust is built are highly varied in the ten stories and the stories illustrate some of the many different manners in which groups can go about the loops and cycles of trust-building.

I did not include any 'MALT' stories. Thus, I attempt to deal head on with the idea that group trust is best left to rarified and removed environments such as a university teaching environment. For those who are interested in more MALT or MALT-like stories I have included excerpts from my original stories and an additional MALT story from the focus groups in the appendices (see appendix #1).

Each of the stories is told from the perspective of the person who told the story in one of the focus groups. I will make a point of describing, in each story, the creation of a trust space. All of the names used here are pseudonyms. Other key details have also been changed in order to preserve anonymity. The changes in details include the names of cities and the names of corporations and government organizations involved in the stories. Each story begins with a brief summary.

I hope that you relate to at least one of the stories in a very direct and personal way.

5.2 Trusting Groups that Lead by Generating "Fields"

This group of stories was selected because the group process and the modeling by the group in question would contribute to a 'field' or 'aura' of trust in the organization. First, of course, the group itself would have to create its own trust field. There are four stories in

this section, two disparate stories from corporate environments and two matching stories from public sector environments.

5.2.1 Adrienne's Story

This story puts us in a major corporate setting in a major Canadian city. Adrienne is someone who started out as task-oriented. She is modest, even Spartan, in describing her leadership role and the group's achievements. The group, led by Adrienne, is made up of people who could see themselves as 'competitors'. The group demonstrates extraordinary openness en route to building trust and to developing an exceptional course for the corporation in question. Adrienne is very good at sharing responsibility and credit, as the story makes clear.

Adrienne was for years the HR manager in a large, nationally-known corporation (LNK) headquartered in Eastern Canada. In the situation described in the story, Adrienne was the group leader of a group that was mandated with the development of a learning course. It was intended that that course would build on the success of a previous course. Adrienne described the mandate as follows:

...we had [previously] had a mandate to go and fix the senior managers who were getting in the way of progress and not getting with the program... that had been a rousing success [so]... we got asked to roll it out to the rest of the organization... to the next layer of people...

As the manager in charge, Adrienne selected the three other members of the group, who were all external consultants, based on their expertise. As a task-oriented person who has come to believe in process, Adrienne says she didn't give a lot of thought to the chances that she was taking:

Each of the other [three] consultants had their own firms. They were all people who worked with me. I had a whole army of around 25 different

people designing stuff for us and lots of facilitators, but this particular group of three people had never worked with each other before. They knew each other professionally, in fact in many ways they were competitors of each other. And so it was a fairly high-risk thing to do, I suppose. I, frankly, didn't think about it much. Remember, I said I tend to be somewhat task-oriented. I knew that these three people had the skills that we needed to get the program done and they each brought something unique to the table...

In terms of the initial approach to the group process Adrienne emphasized both task and process. The leadership of the group and the way of operating as a group evolved. The group's approach was flexible and tied to the work at hand. Again, to use Adrienne's words:

"Each of them... brought unique knowledge and skills to the table... leadership (moved) around. When we would start a meeting there would kind of be a rough agenda, but nobody chaired the meetings. It was whoever had the idea." Adrienne added that there was a "mutual assigning [process] ... You take this piece, I'll take this piece, people volunteering to take on bits and work on them and bring them back.... [We worked together]...[figuring] out what could go wrong, might go wrong, hypothetically might get in the way, knowing the culture, knowing how to make it work".

Leaps of faith occurred regularly as the group met after the early meetings. A leap occurred as people volunteered ideas or component parts of the program that came from their personal proprietary programs and as the leadership shifted in the group

The response of the group to the leap(s) of faith was very positive:

...We became more than friends because we were in this, you know, this experience of ... developing in parallel and then we had to take something that had gone on over here and something that had gone over here and synthesize them into this thing that then went to there as well. The... level of

respect that each person had for the three other people in the other room and the caring and support that I felt from them [was]... phenomenal ...

The results of building this high level of trust included the above noted bond and the production of an exceptional program for the LNK organization: "...That program turned out to be probably the single best thing we produced in the time that I was with [LNK, out of]... about 70 different courses ...". Adrienne, who has had a long and successful career, summarized the trust experience as follows: "probably one of the best project experiences I've ever had in my life..."

5.2.2 Ervin's Story:

Ervin's story is another corporate sector story. A big part of the success described in the story came from the composition of the cross-functional group. Both group diversity and shared leadership responsibility from within were big pluses in building trust in the group. Members of the group began to "share stories about deeply held beliefs" and the group became increasingly cohesive. Ervin's story also highlights two other important aspects of building trust. One is that the role someone who provides informal leadership can be essential. A second is that members of a group that has built trust can build on that trust in subsequent relationships and work together—there is an enduring connection. A final and more controversial aspect of this story was that the removal of one individual from the original group is contended to have positively affected the building of trust.

Ervin was part of a cross-functional team of eight individuals in a national financial sector organization. The team was "tasked to work on developing guiding principles for our division." Ervin notes "We had a fair amount of diversity in the team, cultural, gender etc. as well as in levels, clerical to senior management. The opportunity to be intimidated was there." He later added a personal note: "At that time, not only had I been new to the cross-functional team but also had just taken on a new position and was dealing with some challenges in my personal life. I did not feel the need to share with others my challenges."

Ervin doesn't refer specifically to the early days of the group. However, with the opportunity to be intimidated that Ervin refers to, I would surmise that initially there was a great deal of politeness, by the more 'junior' people anyway. As well, given the corporate environment (see Ervin's comment below), I would expect that there was also a pretty strong task focus.

Informal leadership in the group helped to create a space for trust. Ervin notes that:

Though we didn't have a formal leader, there was one individual who demonstrated extraordinary leadership ability in that, he was great at engaging everyone. He used humor and asked lots and lots of questions and (deferred) back to the team, all the team. He was great at handing off conversations to others to lead. He was an intuitive facilitator... I learned a lot from him and now in hindsight can better appreciate what he brought to the table. His leadership skills helped us develop a fair amount of trust within the team and that allowed us to take risks and share ideas and suggestions. I had to admire him...

He added later that this intuitive leader had "[like] Sandy... the ability to almost seamlessly create a psychologically safe environment".

The presence of this type of leadership sounds extremely promising for the creation of conditions where the group could collectively take a trusting leap of faith. However, the group did not do so initially. Rather I would speculate that it kept cycling back to formation and a combination of task and process owing primarily to the influence of one other individual. Ervin notes:

... there was another person who just seemed to be belligerent. It seemed that when that person engaged it was to point out what was wrong with what we were doing and rarely offered a constructive suggestion or alternative. I just remember feeling drained by this person because other members of the

team were working hard to move things forward... at times the individual just seem[ed] to keep working against us... it felt like trying to move forward with a ball and chain wrapped around your ankle...

What led to the creation of trust in the group, then, in the face of these difficult circumstances? Again Ervin does not say specifically but my experience of extremely capable trust-inducing leadership in the face of toxic behaviour is that the trust space sometimes wins out. Ervin notes that “ultimately, [the toxic person] attended less and less of our meetings”. Effectively then, the group experienced the removal of this person from the group.

Ervin described the group’s subsequent transformation to a group of individuals actively taking leaps of faith and responding positively to this:

We began to share personal stories about some of our deeply held beliefs. Through the process we got to know each other quite well and built a number of strong relationships that contributed substantially to projects we would end-up working on together in the future.

After reflecting further, Ervin later added the following passage that talks about both the time element involved in building trust in some groups, about the layering effect, and about the long term benefits of building trust to the organization and to the individuals involved:

... for this team, in a financial services head office environment, vulnerability slowly opened up, (as Senge would say, slower is faster) but quite powerfully. As we neared the end of our work together, we shared some of our deepest held beliefs and stories as to what constituted guiding principles for us and why. It was at this point we allowed ourselves to be vulnerable. Though our project came to an end, the relationships didn't. A number of us went on to work on other project teams together. We trusted each other and sought each other out at times for guidance and mentoring. And as for our

intuitive, engaging leader, he eventually became senior vice president of organizational strategy.

5.2.3 Terry and Shauna's Linked Stories:

Adrienne's story and many of the later stories are ones where the MALT experience and/or MALT skills assisted the formal leader of the group in building of trust in the group in question. Terry and Shauna, speaking one right after the other in the same focus group talked about highly trusting groups that they were part of at an early point in their careers, long before the MALT program was started. The composition of both groups was important: they were made up of dedicated professionals, most of them at the beginning of their careers. Both groups were formally led by a woman who was secure enough to share her leadership responsibilities. A strong common passion/purpose and openness were part of the way of operating in both groups. And it was clear from the energetic way that both women talked about the groups that both groups were ones with which they still strongly identified. Focus group members and I were very drawn to Shauna's description of the power of being part of a trusting group, "We gave up our ideas of being inadequate". This phrase was one of those focus-group-stopping phrases that I found such a powerful part of the face to face focus group process.

In one of the face to face focus groups, the last two stories told were two linked stories about groups that focus group members had been part of where the group built trust without any obvious group awareness of taking risks. These stories are worth recounting for three reasons. One is that they reinforce the importance of common passion and enlightened and shared leadership responsibility. The second is that they suggest that we can sometimes build a "leap of faith" type environment with a collection of new professionals who are challenged daily. The more speculative reason that I found these stories to be powerful is that they may demonstrate in relation to group trust the power of T.S. Eliot's earlier-referenced idea of going back to where we first began and knowing it for the first time. After hearing these stories, I was struck by the idea that in creating the conditions for trust

and for a leap of faith, we are creating an environment for doing what comes naturally to some of us before we get scarred by negative organizational and life experience.

Terry started by making the following statement: "...I am going to go back to a group that I was part of many, many, many years ago.... I'm going back to a place where I realize that I really feel there was trust in that group... a place that makes me feel very comfortable and where when I look back on it I look at it now in a very positive way, which I likely didn't recognize at the time".

Terry then went on to a description of the creation of the group:

We were all new professionals in the health services field-- we were all hired around the same time... there [were] two programs, they separated them out and brought in seven new health services coordinators. I won't go through the dynamics of that. But eventually we were hired in... brand new, no experience anything. So we have no courses, no experience, nothing. I think we grew up together in a way.

Later, a comment of Shauna's during the telling of her story led Terry to add this about the group that was brought together:

... we were all so new as a group. I would say that we were all feeling pretty inadequate because we didn't know what we were doing. So I am wondering if we were all in the same place so it equalized us...

Thus there could be real power in the selection of members of the team; in this case the selection of people with a strong sense of purpose and passion (see below) who were taking professional leaps of faith every day because they felt too inadequate.

Terry noted that the group had a way of operating that made it more likely that there would be "a very high degree of trust in that group":

And the reason [for that trust] is ... [that] I could say anything I wanted, it was open... I don't think that there [were] any fears or trepidations... everyone was safe. There was honesty in that group...

The leadership that the group experienced, which was a bit more unusual some twenty-five years ago, is the kind of leadership that prompts leaps of faith:

I felt that the leader... is a key point in this... we were all treated fairly, all respected for our strengths [by the leader]... we all contributed our strengths and we each had credibility for our strengths, ... for what we brought into the group. And so even when we looked at work and division of work, we drew on our strengths in that group to work together, and we build on those strengths.

Distributed leadership and shared responsibility was also a part of life in the group. To my mind, this undoubtedly contributed to people taking leaps of faith: "there wasn't anyone else" in the health unit "to go to so we became leaders in our own areas...leaders relying on one another to move the program forward".

Also contributing to a trust was a common commitment and passion. Terry states:

I think there was a common... love of the work and a strong commitment to the work. There was never any question of what we were there to do. We were very committed to the... clients and developing a system better for them..... when we went to do something we always focused on (the) ... client.

The results of all of this successful trust-building were very positive:

I could go on but it was just a very safe open comfortable environment and we got a lot done ... None of us knew any structure, we had no training for [group process] and we had none of [that MALT stuff] and we did none of that except appear and get organized... ⁵¹

Terry's final comment in the focus group was about the power of the bond in the group: "we had a [twenty-five year] reunion in January ... and we still connected" with one another.

Shauna told her story immediately after Terry, emphasizing right away the sense of common purpose:

One of the jobs that I did that has given me so much joy and was so much fun to do was I worked in an inner city school as a first grade teacher... We were one of the few inner city schools in the suburbs of Metropolis, so part of what made our group special was that we felt very different. And we felt very much, as Terry just explained, that we had a cause and a purpose, we were going to provide a safe place for these kids to be and to teach at the same time... That was really important to us that we actually were going to teach

⁵¹ In an e-mail where she reflected on questions from me about the role of life experience and of common purpose in the creation of trust, Terry added the following:

Yes, we may have not had the life experience "to learn" not to trust (although there were a few who were older and likely more cautious) and we had an environment that created trust. I felt that I could speak out at all levels (maybe it is being young!) but I certainly felt safe in speaking out. But we also didn't have other aspects that may have caused distrust. We weren't competing with each other, we weren't trying to "hold onto our" own areas, protect our own area or program or turf. We were very committed to cooperation and sharing resources amongst us. In later years, with mergers, amalgamations I saw increasing protectiveness, power struggles etc. and that filtered down the organization so staff and leaders in different areas began to compete with another and fight versus share and support. The fight to exist in this world of decreasing resources also contributes to this.

I think the shared common purpose and commitment to the work did foster the trust. When we were ultimately all working together for the same purpose we were clear as to our existence and purpose, and the organization supported this. Where I have seen mistrust occur in a team was when others were more concerned about controlling your area and questioned your existence and value as a program or as a role. When the team is threatened, or members are threatened then trust is affected.

kids who brought from their home lives such a great deal of difficulty. And it would be a natural inclination just to say, "I don't care that I teach them anything; I am just going to make them safe." And we wanted to give those kids so much more than just that. We wanted to make them like every other kid who went to school to learn something... so there was just that powerful commitment with this group of people that we were going to do both of those things... we were unique because there was such affluence around us and the people that I worked with were so energized. And again I think because it was such an emotionally difficult job at the same time is that you really built relationships with people that you relied on just for survival.

The result of this very powerful common purpose was a high incidence of leaps of faith and positive responses from the group:

So ... we could say anything to anyone in our group of people that was working with us. And we could fail, we could fail miserably, and there would always be someone there to pick us up and support us and to make us feel like we could try again. It was just really powerful because of that kind of relationship that we had with one another.... What was really important to me (was that)... we gave up our ideas about being inadequate. It was a really easy situation to feel really inadequate but for some reason we just felt a lot more powerful if we realized that we were hiding behind those words.

Once again, shared leadership contributed to creating the space for trust:

... we were all of equal power within the school... there was... the whole recognition that people brought different strengths to the situation. So on one day you were going to be great at doing whatever it was that you could bring but the next day someone else was going to come into that role. So just such a sense of relying on one another around strengths... because it was a school so it was a very formal kind of situation. In fact the school is a very

hierarchical kind of organization typically. But the principal of this school didn't get hung up in the ego of that, didn't get hung up in the position ... she didn't come through normal channels of how you get to that job. She wasn't a vice principal... she had just been a classroom teacher, didn't have her masters degree, just said "I'll do it" and basically the district said "Okay." And I think she felt on the very same footing as the rest of us, that she didn't have a lot of training to do this job but she built a whole sense of team out of that situation because we just need to rely on everybody's strengths to get through it.

Daily professional challenges were shared and experienced by everyone, including the leader, because so many of them were new to their positions. At this point Terry jumped back in and added:

There was very much a sense in my group too of equality; you triggered another point. There was very much an equality between whoever led... Now we would change roles ..., for various reasons... maternity leaves, whatever, but there was always an equality...

The final factor which Terry and Shauna agreed on was the value of having a challenging mandate. Shauna stated: "...we did have lots of fun, but it was still a really difficult situation because you never had enough resources to do what you wanted to do, or that type of thing". Terry then added: "You know, that is exactly what I was going to say. That ... the community had nothing for health care. There was nothing there... no infrastructure. You couldn't convince anyone to give health services any money. You must really be familiar (that) we were the church mice of health care in the '80s".

Here one of the other focus group members piped in: "But I bet that both your group and your group built something creatively. I bet you actually created resources and stuff..." Terry responded: "We created something out of nothing", which led to this final comment from the same group member: "Exactly, because you had the passion".

5.3 Trusting Groups that Support and Mitigate Loneliness

I have had heard many formal leaders echo Powell's earlier-noted comments about the loneliness of leadership (Harari, 2002). Powell's reaction to the loneliness was to accept "the midnight moment of aloneness" as a price of responsibility: "'Command is lonely'... The prescription seems to be to assume command and its corollary—with your eyes wide open... So make sure that you're comfortable having the buck stop on your desk, well before it actually gets there" (p. 246-7). The two stories that follow provide examples of a different way to mitigate some of the loneliness of leadership. The groups described in these two stories were both led initially by professional facilitators, who assisted the groups in establishing very clear rules that contributed to openness and listening. However, group members also clearly shared leadership responsibility at an early stage in the process of both groups.

5.3.1 Pam's Story:

From highly collaborative teaching and health care environments, we go to extraordinary displays of vulnerability in the intimacy of a women's support group which has met for 17 years. The group has two profound but also simple groundrules. Group members clearly believe in and scrupulously adhere to those groundrules. A sense (or field or aura) of common identity and a deep appreciation for the connection and psychological safety that comes with being with each other resonate throughout Pam's story. The group has experienced ever-deepening layers of trust over the 17 years. I found what they share with each other and the support they provide for each other to be phenomenal.

Pam's story about trust was the opening story told to one of the on-line discussion groups. Pam started out as follows: "this is an apt time to be talking [about building trust]... [As I write] the women in my women's group are sleeping peacefully in their various nests in my

home. We have been gathering for 17 years now. As people have moved into different locations, we've met less frequently but now have overnights – generally 2 or 3 times a year.”

The group started as a self-selected group: “17 years ago” the group “began at a women’s retreat – 6 participants and 1 facilitator”. There would likely have been a process focus initially, I would speculate, followed by the development of group rules. I would further speculate that group members took numerous risks in the course of that initial retreat. Risk-taking could have taken the form of a first personal disclosure by one member of the group followed by members of the group visibly respecting the disclosure and then providing their own disclosure. The result was that the “facilitator felt so connected to our group by the end of the weekend that she asked if we could start meeting regularly and if she could join as a group participant”.

The group has gone through changes in composition: “As groups go, I think we are extraordinarily stable and committed. Two people dropped out within the first couple of years; however, the five remaining women have always come, sometimes making arrangements to fly back from various parts of the world to make the gathering.” Pam described the degree of connection in the group in metaphoric language, as follows: “There isn’t really a question about it [us returning] – we just come, like migrating birds or returning salmon.”

The group’s process focus, supportive purpose, identity as a women’s support group and way of operating were described by Pam in her e-mail. The way of operating, involving listening, psychological safety and an open, learning attitude, was borne out through two simple but profound groundrules and the group’s adherence to those groundrules. Again, Pam’s description is best here:

... from the very first weekend we have followed a format where each of us take one turn at speaking, about whatever is there for that person to speak about. First there are some easy conversations over a meal and then we

gather in the living room of whose ever house we're at and we arrange ourselves comfortably with pillows and Kleenex and knitting and journals and whatever else is needed - and we settle in for however long "a turn" will take. Without any kind of process to decide whose turn it is, it is usually clear who will go first - a very organic system. One of us will start unwinding the story of whatever part of her life she wants to share - work, kids, partner, parents - whatever arises. There are only 2 rules - and this is where I believe the trust has been built - there are no interruptions and no un-requested advice. Also, each person talks as long as they need to. Sometimes we will sit 2 or 3 hours while a person speaks without interruption. There may be long pauses, tears, laughter...all of it without those "oh yeah, that happened to me too..." kinds of responses. There is something amazing and so unusual about being given the space to just speak until you have unfolded and unwound all there was to say. It is equally compelling to listen in that way - to give up the responses that ordinarily surface and just surrender to the story you are hearing, to witnessing... In this way we have heard stories of new love, passing love, addiction, children growing, educational adventures, houses built, grandchildren arriving, critical illnesses, books published, betrayal, new careers, bankruptcies...the gamut.

Pam also added one other thought on process: "One of our big connections is around good food, which I suspect is why everyone went to sleep early! Which leads to a question, has good food entered the discussion of how to create trust!?"

The leaps of faith involving testing trust through disclosure would have occurred, received an embracing and positive response. That in turn would have led to ever-deeper layers of trust and bonding each time someone told a story that they would not tell in other settings or would tell only to a very limited group of people.

Pam's summary of where the group has ended up in terms of connection is both extraordinary and elegant:

...There is a connection and something that I would call sacred about these times together. Something is invoked that for me goes beyond words like “groundrules” and “safety”. When I think of the “space” of trust that is held, Rumi’s beautiful words comes to mind: “Out beyond the idea of right thinking and wrong thinking is a field. . . . I will meet you there. . . .”

5.3.2 Linda’s Story:

Linda described her experience of being a member of a trusting ‘circle’ group while she was a participant in a Christina Baldwin and Ann Linnea-led PeerSpirit programs. Those programs involve learning circle by living in circle. Linda experienced both listening “from the heart” and shared leadership in a profound way while she was a member of the group. The Leap of Faith experience here is substantially different from other stories in that the risk involved was choosing to be silent and trusting that that would be acceptable to the group. Having experienced similarly trusting groups twice in PeerSpirit programs led by Christina, I added comments about one of my own experiences to the description provided by Linda.

Linda’s story revolves around “the gift of attending a PeerSpirit Circle Practicum for 5 days with Christina Baldwin and Ann Linnea”. The program is described on the PeerSpirit web site⁵² as one “that focuses on the axiom that it’s easiest to learn circle by living in circle”. The Practicum:

... gathers a small group of people at a retreat center for four-and-a-half days of intensive, experiential learning that blends council time with significant training. Each day’s teaching presents a theme. In addition to skill-building, the Circle Practica sets out to offer participants the opportunity to slow down and honor the need for replenishment with good company in a beautiful setting, remember our way back to speaking our thoughts in conversations that matter, and experience what it means to create communities of reflection, adventure and purpose

⁵² See: www.peerspirit.com last viewed on March 17, 2005

Early in her on-line entry Linda asked the question: "why is [it] that... I would say in my life experiences it was one the most trusting groups for me?" Her answer: the group "had agreements like ground rules... that create the container for people's behavior." She further noted her experience of the creation of trust space through a combination of physical space and shared leadership responsibility:

The physical setting of sitting in a circle created a space where there was equality among participants. There was shared leadership for everyone in the circle. It was collaborative versus competitive... The experience of the facilitators modeled how the ideal PeerSpirit circle functions... We worked on listening with our hearts versus our heads full of thoughts and past experiences. We were focused on the moment we were in and how the energy of our thoughts can impact the world.

Linda described a distinctly different type of leap of faith, deciding not to participate in the group for a period of time; in times of reflection we may wish to be silent because of the space that we are in at that time. Linda notes that "I felt completely safe and that I was not being judged. With this I always felt my contribution was valued even if I said nothing".

Personal journal: Perhaps my most profound experience when I first did the practicum was another instance of silence. In a note back to the discussion group, I described a group practice that really helped build the trust space: "I experienced ... Christina's gift of (an) extraordinary ability to call for group silence as a way of building group learning, bond, and trust. Using Tibetan chimes, Christina signals whenever the group is to enter silent space and when we are to resume". I added that I found making a very personal and heart-wrenching statement to a group and having it embraced by a temporary group silence to honour and reflect on what I had said "is one of the most affirming trust experiences I have ever had in a group".

Linda described the results of her session as follows: "There was a stillness or peaceful presence when we were in circle. It was one of those situations where I could say we experienced oneness with the world... We slowed down and worked on what our hearts were telling us... [relying] more on what Jaworski talks about [as] our primary way of knowing."

Linda also talked about self-trust being an important part of building trust in a group:

That trust is not just about the group commitment it is also about the individual and what assumptions/judgments I am prepared to suspend to support the group's work... Learning to trust yourself is about listening to your heart and not your head. This is also about being present in the moment, the now.

Linda saw layers of trust growing over the five days of the program. She notes that “in building trust with each other we became more self-aware and trusting of ourselves which in itself became a circle or a reinforcing loop continuing the building of trust”. Linda’s conclusion: “I remember walking away very tired yet very calm and mellow wondering how I would sustain this in the real world.”

5.4 Trusting Groups that Lead by Ideas or Direction

As noted in chapter three, today we expect our leadership to help us find the Next Big Thing and a sense of vision and direction. The four stories that follow involve groups that built trust while engaged in developing a new idea, service, product or direction. Three of the stories involve groups in the non-profit sector and the fourth story is about a group of private sector men chaired by a woman from a public sector organization.

5.4.1 Donald’s Story:

Donald’s story is one that I find truly heart-warming. In Donald’s words, the results were “miraculous”. Donald’s story involves a group’s use of one of my favorite books on leadership (by DePree, 1989) as a part of the development of group trust. The organization in question was a non-profit organization. The group in question provided leadership in the

organization through groundbreaking work, through creating a supportive environment and through modeling building trust. Donald, the story-teller, led the staff group in the non-profit organization through a group process that on the surface had nothing whatsoever to do with getting a job done. The process involved reading together and discussing DePree's book. That process resulted in various leaps of faith and the development of group trust. The group then prepared together a truly extraordinary document that has the potential to revolutionize the way we approach an important public sector policy area and a serious social issue.

Donald's story was one of those workplace stories of building trust that flowed directly out a focus group participant applying learning from the MALT program. Let's pick up the story where Donald goes to his non-profit organization with an idea at the end of his first year of MALT. The organization had twelve staff people. Donald talked over some of what he had learned with the staff people. He "asked them if they would like to try to incorporate the transformational leadership... model in the organization". They agreed, being "all really excited about the idea because they liked the idea of participating in decision making and to actually try something like this which ...they viewed as being quite respectful of their skills and abilities".

The group added one other important member, a summer student "who was hired specifically to document our journey". Donald enthusiastically described the reason that the summer student was so important to the group: "she would take all our notes and listen to all of our conversations". She was a "gifted writer". By the next week's meeting, she "would come out with wonderful things that [were] exactly what we meant." Any group which has struggled to record notes on wide ranging conversations, as distinct from decision-making meetings, would appreciate the value of this person on the group.

The group's focus was clearly on process, although they did have to do work by way of preparation for each meeting. The group met weekly as a group for a year, using Max DePree's book *Leadership is an Art* (1989) to prompt their conversations. The book is full of short chapters that lent themselves to weekly discussion. For example after the group

read the chapter on covenantal relationships, group members had what Donald called an “amazing conversation”. He noted that “two or three of the people in the group were quite religious and really took that concept of covenant from their religious viewpoint.... the neatest thing... was that we could have these conversations about your own personal religion in the work place and it wasn't weird”. Donald added that after that and other conversations, members of the group could say “‘Oh that's why you come at it from that point of view, because that is part of who you are.’ So it was quite neat.”

The group's process with the readings of the chapters went like this:

We took turns reading it and we would read a section... then we would just talk about what the concepts were and then the student would take it and translate it into our own language, bring it back to us and we would examine it and say yes, that's exactly right, or no it was slightly different.

What evolved with the group was what Donald called “a way of being with each other” where, when “new ideas would come forward... Nobody would ever say, ‘Oh, that will never work.’”. Donald added: “We would stay with [an idea] until something would happen”. At this point in his description, Donald jumped ahead to the results:

...we created a new model for personal support and the title of it is "Journey through Time"... it is a way of people, organizations or counselors or individuals or who ever wants to use it, to facilitate a journey, any kind of process; it's been used in drug and alcohol treatment centers and in various different organizations...

What was the leap of faith moment or series of moments that led to that remarkable achievement? There were three separate types of leaps of faith that were involved and described vividly by Donald: leaps involving consensus building, idea generation and the employment of the talents of the student member that built on the group's “way of being”.

Donald described a group success in hearing one another out and listening to each other's ideas. I should note here that I have observed many, many groups over the years say that they will hear everyone out. However, when push comes to shove, the vast majority of them go with a vote, have the chair make the decision or develop some other way of 'getting on with things'. Donald's group stuck with their resolve and thus involved the whole group in the leap of faith response that led to group bonding and, eventually, the new model. Donald describes one such leap of faith discussion around the definition of the word 'resilience' as part of the model:

An example of that would be [our work defining] the word "resilience"... How do you define that in a way that everybody can agree to and that everybody will feel comfortable using in their work with clients... what does it mean to you to tell somebody who is really upset, "Your resilience is part of what is going to get you through this journey." ...so we really had to struggle ... [and] to find a way to work together and come up with something that incorporated all of the ideas of what the word "resilient" meant to each of the twelve people. And we did it... [We] look back on it and we laugh because it was just brutal at times. It was torturous because, you know, some people had to get the definition exactly right and other people said "Well, it doesn't matter what we put on paper, the way we use it is going to make the difference," and so on and so on. So there was the test [between] task and process... going on again.

Each and every time the group met the test of balancing task and process in the way that Donald described, it reinforced and deepened the trust in the group. In a similar vein Donald added that "we could be open and we could embrace diversity. We could be courageous with putting ideas out. It just really worked really well".

Donald's group had the courage to put ideas out and the respect to value these ideas. Donald affirmed this group's exceptional success in embracing the ever-deepening spiral of safe and successful leaps of faith through this aside: "Even when somebody was obviously

ridiculous in their thinking we could say that was Okay, we learned from them as well. So it was good, very good... it was quite amazing. It was a great place to be."

The third example of ongoing leaps of faith was with the student. Donald noted that:

... the neat part for her, as she articulated at the end of her time with us, is that she was trusted to be able to do that too. We really did take a leap of faith in just saying, "Now go away and come back with it." That was her role and she said, "Wow, when we first said that, when the group said that to me I kind of went, 'I don't know,'" but she didn't show that, she just did it.

Perhaps the ultimate test of trust and the group's way of being came with an everyday occurrence in many organizations, the use of inappropriate humor:

... somebody [new] at one point in time came in... at a lunch time that we had together and told quite a racist joke. [Someone then spoke up about the inappropriateness of the joke.] And normal practice before we did this would have been to just kind walk away or look away or not say anything, but just not be very happy with it. But we were able, after that, to say in the moment, to be authentic and immediate, and to say, "That's not something that sounds like it is part of the way we are with each other," and to talk about it without shaming.

To return to the group's success, there was also a great deal of bonding that occurred in the group:

To get twelve people together for a year on a weekly basis was not easy, but we managed to do it. (We had a commitment to read Max's entire book together and we stuck to it.) So it [involved]... a great deal of commitment... [At] our last time together as a group doing that, we had a graphic artist come. She sat with us and we... debriefed the whole process and talked

about how we created this model... from that observing and overhearing our conversation she went away and that night... came up with the graphic that represents the model. Because she was so inspired she just said, "I just sat down and there it was"... [She] brought it back to us and there was just a lot of tears and a lot of joy ...because we just created something so miraculous.

“Miraculous”: not a bad description of the results of building such deep layers of trust in a group.

5.4.2 Donna's Story

This is a story about a health-sector group that built trust and achieved success through a conscious process involving extraordinary attention to selection of ' the right ' group members and through involving and shared leadership. The group paid early attention to purpose and process. The group agreed to operate on the consensus model and shared any and all communication. The report prepared by the group received high praise and members of the group later volunteered to continue on to do further work together. The group provided leadership through its product, through having a highly supportive environment and through modeling building trust in the group to the wider organization.

Donna is a mid-level administrator in a health-related organization. She talked enthusiastically about the extraordinary success of a trusting group she led in her nationally known organization. She describes one of the keys to her success as being how she learned about involving approaches to group process through MALT. Donna's method for selecting members of the group was as follows:

I was given the privilege of selecting my team and also how we were going to go about doing it. So I put out a call, I wanted front line staff and some front line or middle management people on the team, representatives of all six centres... [I said to the powers that be that they had] to identify money to release these front line staff... so that their colleagues are not carrying them

while they're away. And we have to have some travel time because we need to meet face to face...

Having done an extraordinary and all too rare a good job of the preparation, Donna then had the group look at its purpose before starting in on the actual work. She says: "before [starting the work] we identified what our vision was, what our philosophy was, and what our principles were going to be that we would measure all of our work against". She added: "that was done as a collective". Thus the clear focus in the group from the beginning was on being people and process oriented. Note, however, the clear reference to the work that the group was taking on.

The group developed a very positive way of operating and a clear identity. Early in her story about the project Donna noted that the project "was led from behind... using a lot of the methods learned from MALT" but without telling them "what I was doing" (i.e. the source of this approach). She noted that "My job was simply that of being the ringleader..."

Also essential to the group's development was the attention the group paid together to creating a trust space. The group was given an unambiguous message that the process was one of deep listening and shared leadership:

... we used a consensus model for agreement... I explained to them from the beginning, ... 'if you cannot live with the decision, we [will] talk about it some more, and we [will] keep working on it until you're willing to put your name on this, because this project belongs to the group, to the team, not to an individual.'

The method of selection of the group members all but guaranteed a healthy attitude to shared leadership: "...they wanted to be involved..."

Perhaps most significant of all were the protections Donna built in that provided a sense of reliability to countenance the vulnerability involved. In an environment that can often be highly secretive and protective of information, this group had a diametrically different approach. Donna noted that "there was nothing that was done outside of the group". She added that:

... they were part... of...[all] of the communication... We had an e-mail, group e-mail. Everything went to everybody. There was no work that was done just by myself ... the entire team was part of all of the draft agenda, all of the draft minutes, all of the draft information that went out. Information was asked for, feedback was asked for, and I made very sure that that feedback was reflected in the next rendition; and if it couldn't be, why it couldn't be...

Donna also checked carefully to make sure that everyone had a chance to be heard:

Using... some of the MALT stuff, if someone hadn't been speaking or making a point, I'd ask them, "So and so, we haven't heard from you. Are you uncomfortable with [this]? Are you okay with [this]? Does this fit in your organization, will this fit in your centre? If not, why not?"

With such a positive and people-oriented way of operating, the group could be counted on to come to meetings well-prepared: "...people showed up, they were there, they were ready to work, they had done all of the pre-reading, they were able to leap right into whatever the discussion was going to be...". The truly interdisciplinary project was significantly different from other projects and day to day work in the organization. Donna noted that the organization was a "stovepipe like you wouldn't believe... They will talk about being collaborative and interdisciplinary, but they're not".

Although Donna doesn't specifically identify it, I would speculate that such a dramatically different environment from the norm would have been challenged and tested by the group in

a number of 'leap of faith' moments. The test would have been intended to see if Donna was walking the talk. This test would have occurred any number of times during the course of the project and Donna's 'passing the test' would have constituted an instance of her, and the group, embracing of the leap of faith.

The results of the project were extraordinarily positive. In terms of getting the job done, Donna notes that: "we came out with a project report that went to our Practice Committee, which were very impressed... It went to a variety of places within the organization in the upper executive, and they were very surprised at the kind of work that we had done, and they've taken it as a model for the other disciplines..." As well, members of the group willingly signed on for a second phase: "there was not one team member that didn't come. No one chose to leave the team".

In summary, the group faced moment after moment where the foundations for group trust were tested and thus developed: in the original composition of the group, in the development of the vision, in the construction of agendas, in ongoing communications, in the composition of the Phase II group. I'll leave the final word to Donna:

...it was really exciting to watch these people feel as though they were able to move forward, and that they were doing something that will make a difference for the care to the patients that they look after... in comparison to some of the other work that I had seen done that sits on a shelf, this has life, this is dynamic, this makes a difference... firstly to the patient, but definitely to the user.

5.4.3 Joan's Story:

Joan's story fascinated me. Joan's story is about a non-profit sector organization that had a history of previously avoiding making certain tough decisions. The organization finally set up a group that came together with common purpose and that, like Donna's group, used a consensus model. The group then built trust and made the type of decisions which the

organization had previously avoided. Joan, again like Donna, employed her MALT learning in leading the group, although she modestly declined to emphasize the role of leadership in telling the story. One other note—Joan described herself as “a born again process person” who started out in her career as someone with a task orientation.

Joan is a leader in a non-profit organization in Metropolis. She led a senior management group mandated with making hard choices previously avoided in the organization. Joan was the group leader. She characterizes taking this on in a self-deprecating way as follows: “...So in a moment of insanity I said I would facilitate...” Joan noted that, in forming this group, the senior leaders in the organization were aware that the situation was different than it had been previously: “The difference that made us do it this time, when we didn't have to do it any other time was simple-- there wasn't any route out...”

Joan was one of several people in the focus group process, including myself, who were self-described task-oriented people born again as people-oriented and process-focused people in order to get the job done. As such, I would speculate that Joan would probably have led the group through an initial process that blended a people and process-oriented approach. In the meantime, I would again speculate, everyone involved could have been expected to be feeling one another out.

When it came to establishing a way of operating, the group adopted an agreement that would have fostered shared leadership, listening and psychological safety: “...we agreed that we would not stop the process until we've got agreement, because it was a consensus base that we can all live with. So we will work together to come up with a recommendation, a solution that we can all live with”.

Joan further noted that the group addressed previous hurts, which can also be a key issue in dealing with psychological safety in an organization that has been around for awhile:

So when people came forward and said, "Well, we'd love to deal with the allocation model but we're afraid we're going to be hurt," ... we said, "Tell us

more. Tell us more." So it was accepting that they had these fears, they had these concerns and we agreed that we would deal with them. So at the end of the day everybody felt that they could live with the results...

With regard to purpose and listening, the following statements from Joan summarize how the group operated:

... we used a lot of the [MALT] tools in terms of working through the process, in terms of working through the ground rules, the norms of behaviour, which were really important because it is a group that doesn't listen to each other. So that took a long time, and when I talk about the process, that took an even longer time to work through...we were able to set aside a lot of the fears and egos and agendas because there's quite a few different agendas in the organization to say, 'Okay, we'll put those aside for now, we have this goal because there was clarity on what this goal was going to be, and for this time with these ground rules I will trust you. I may not trust you the rest of the time, but for this small piece I will trust you.'

The leap of faith moment came about each time a decision had to be made by consensus and it actually was done that way. Joan notes that the group said that "We won't stop this process until [consensus]... happens" and added "we didn't stop that process until it happened".

The results of the group building a level of trust were revolutionary for the organization in question. Again I will let Joan describe them:

...so we were over about four months able to actually focus in and at the end of the day make a recommendation... Coming off of the high of that one, we were able to then go into the allocation model and use the same process again, which really... did help, and come to a recommendation on that one as well. And that one was hard because that has a number of different layers of

impact, so it was not only hearing the people that were around the table but also understanding that the people around the table had to go back to their group... and help them to understand why the decision was being made, because in some cases some units would actually lose money. So it isn't just theoretical, it's actually we will lose this amount out of our budget this year. And we were able to do that by the process, by really ensuring that people were listened to... on both of those issues we were able to come to decisions, put decisions forward, have them supported both at the board's level and at the board of governors level, and actually implement them. And some of that work has been... 20 years outstanding...

What did attention to process and trust-building accomplish for the group and organization in question? The trust-building process led to a completely different way of operating, for a while, in an organization that has been around for more than 100 years. Joan noted that she would describe her senior management group as “unformed in that we haven't worked out a way of working together”. She then noted that “... some people who've worked for over 20 years in the organization have said... [this] has been the only time where they've seen people work together as a unit, as a group, as a team”. The “rest of the time they haven't ever worked through [the organization's difficult and] bumpy pieces”, which are normally avoided because it's easier.

5.4.4 Erika's Story:

Erika tells a story of an economic development committee: a group of business men chaired by an exceptional woman (Erika). Early on in the story, there appears to be trust in Erika as an individual only up to a point. Group trust is lacking. Erika offers repeated opportunities for the group to develop trust through taking a leap of faith. She does so through reporting on an internal personnel issue. The group initially denied that the issue was as serious as Erika said it was and repeatedly went back to focusing on doing the job. In the meantime Erika worked with the group in building a trust space. Eventually, there is a showdown over

the internal issue (and thus a fairly dramatic leap of faith moment). The group affirms Erika and then comes together as a trusting group as it develops its report.

Erika's story, like Pam's and Linda's, was told on line. Once again I will leave much of the story-telling to Erika, who had clearly given a lot of thought to trust issues in writing her e-mail on this subject.

The organization in question was a newly-formed economic development council in a community in a Canadian province. Erika agreed to become the chair of the local economic development committee. She summarized her inclusion in the group as follows: "I think my general competence was trusted, through long term association, an existing position in the public sector, and through my expressed enthusiasm, interest, and commitment [as a fellow volunteer] to the organization." Other members of the group were a "group of businessmen who are very passionate and action-oriented." The group was "brand new, largely unformed..., charged with an important mandate affecting the future of the region". Erika further noted that "Local industry provided generous funding to kick-start the development, and the pressure was on for fast results. The stakes were high, in terms of the group's credibility – and in terms of the need for economic sustainability for all concerned".

The early meetings of the group involved what Erika called "optimism", a form of early group politeness. Mixed in to those meetings were both process and a real action orientation to respond to the external pressure. The group developed a way of operating and an identity as a very visible group in the community. Erika summarized this period thusly:

As a new organization there wasn't a sense of institution or organization. I found myself amongst a group of highly task-focused, action oriented people, and looked for effective ways to introduce process and policy. As time went by, we organized around governance, and a sense of trust through the institution began to emerge, but is not the most compelling source of trust...

The leap of faith process actually involved several leaps by Erika that were not dealt with, thus putting the group in a downward spiraling iteration of task-oriented politeness. Erika described this as follows:

One of the first major decisions we made was to hire an economic developer (and we were "miserable failures" in so doing owing to serious problems with the person who was hired)... It took more than six months for me to convince the group that we needed to re-think this situation. As I reported to the group my concerns, I was surprised by resistance and some perceived lack of trust towards me in terms of my judgment in this situation. There seemed to be concern that I was over-reacting (a stereotypical gender based response?), perhaps a personality issue, or that being so close to the situation I was lacking in perspective. Some combination of factors along these lines resulted in a perceived lack of validity with regard to my concerns.

Then there came a breakthrough where Erika took yet another leap of faith and the group responded positively. Erika described it as follows:

As time went by, trust grew, partially as familiarity grew, but one significant event enriched the trust.... [also] as time went by I became more factual and direct - I adjusted my style to suit the group, and my concerns were heard and realized more fully. The turning point came when my character was called into question by the employee, and my fellow directors moved quickly to resolve the situation.

The group's focus on task and its struggle to build trust was affected by events in the community. Erika's description of this process and of her own vulnerability as chair was very striking:

There were many passionate demonstrations of the need to move forward, with strong belief expressed in the value of the community. At times the

group was entirely unruly, from the perspective of a chair person. For example when the provincial government announced cutbacks at a local health institution it was near impossible to get any other topic on the agenda attended to. I will never forget those words “with all due respect Madame Chair (when they say that I know I’m in trouble...) if we don’t discuss this, there is no point in talking about anything.” This group of people has invested deeply in an isolated resource based community, their willingness to be risk takers in business carried over to our organization and to the community.

Erika’s further reflection on her vulnerability as she took repeated leaps of faith is instructive. She noted among other things the earlier-mentioned, very powerful concept of vulnerability shifting from her to the entire group as they made a connection and a difficult decision:

What kind of trust is this? ... I began with the benefit of a sense of trust regarding my general competence, but I had to work for trust in relation to my judgment. As a group, we started with a state of trust based mainly on having great optimism about our ability to move forward to achieve our goals, i.e. a state of favorable expectations. A deeper and stronger form of trust developed when I became more vulnerable in sharing my thoughts and feelings – although initially it caused discomfort and even distrust (a bit of fracturing occurred before the issues culminated in intensity to the degree that a decision was deemed necessary). Over the 6 month period that I built support for this difficult group decision, congruence between the information being relayed and the action required became painfully clear. With this decision came more vulnerability – however, now the vulnerability shifted from myself to the whole group.

Erika included in her story a number of further observations about building trust:

In this story I am examining trust as it developed towards me, in a challenging leadership position, as well as the way in which trust developed within the group. A question worth consideration I think, is whether we can work from the premise that the perceptions regarding trust that I experienced serve as an indicator for overall group trust. It would be interesting to gather the views of others in the group – another doctoral program perhaps?

When it comes to personal reciprocity – what surprised me is that I was not part of the business community, and found it difficult to understand why this group of dynamic business men thought I should lead. Perhaps in this case it was to ensure that our organization was not viewed as being based on personal reciprocity – or that these individuals were out to line their own pockets. There was great concern for issues of conflict of interest expressed, and perhaps my leadership served to neutralize those to some extent. The function of personal reciprocity seemed in this case to be represented by an agreement to forego personal gain in order to grow something larger than the individual interests represented.

Erika closed her telling of the story with a very strong statement emphasizing the importance of the group having determined a common passion/purpose:

In closing, I would like to link this back to (the focus group) discussion about process and productivity. I think that when there is a strong and cohesive group passion to work together on something, the way becomes clear more easily. Process does not need to become a major issue, it is easily agreed to because it supports the momentum under way. Conversely, I think that when a group struggles with their purpose, there may be a tendency to look to process to fill a gap, and the momentum of the group may be at risk of getting bogged down by process. I think sometimes we mistakenly look to process to provide meaning, rather than uncovering our true purpose. In this story, I have been blessed by the opportunity to work with clear purpose, and we

have been able to maintain a meaningful, results based approach, utilizing a healthy dose of sound process to support our work, but not to drive it.

5.5 Summary

The ten stories make 'real' what group trust can look like, sound like and feel like. As I read and reread the stories, what emerged for me was as follows:

I 'saw' members of the groups having positive and open body language; some people sitting in formal business settings and some in a more casual environment. Everyone in the group is facing and clearly paying attention to whoever is speaking. It looks like a group which is 'in sync'. To get to this positive-looking place, the groups had to get past some negatives: I 'saw' some people's body language saying 'show me' with Joan's and Donna's groups in particular. With Ervin's group I saw troubled moments with the belligerent person where people's body language was leaning towards the door and getting out of the room. When Erika raised her concerns about the staff person initially I saw very impatient, 'let's get on with it' kind of body language.

The 'sound' of the groups was the sound of one person speaking at a time, with no or very few interruptions and a respectful silence at times, especially in Pam's and Linda's groups. The voices reflect a whole array of emotions and thought patterns: excitement at new ideas and synergistic sharing, passion and personal commitment behind conversations about purpose; thoughtfulness in questioning each other and in building on one another's ideas; sadness and support when sad things are dealt with; determination to succeed and help one another. Earlier, the sounds of some of the groups would have been different: the angry tone of belligerence in Ervin's group, the questioning tone of voice (i.e. are you really committed to this consensus idea?)

in Donna's and Joan's groups, and the clipped "with respect" tones of Erika's businessmen when they wanted to move on.

The 'feeling' in the groups was one of joy, sharing and a strong bond; of everyone being emotionally involved in 'this', whatever it was, together; of this being a place that felt good to be in at the time. It also felt good to return to it in recounting the story years later. Again though, I 'felt' an array of mixed emotions earlier: of trepidation and angst wanting to do the 'right thing' with Terry and Shauna's groups, of initial hesitancy with Adrienne's group, of pent-up emotions released when the 'ball and chain' toxic person did not return to Ervin's group.

What also emerged from my reading and rereading the stories were certain patterns and sequences of behavior. The next chapter takes these ten stories, along with others, and describes the recurring patterns and sequences of behavior in the form of a model.

CHAPTER SIX: THE SYSTEMS MODEL FOR TRUST-BUILDING IN GROUPS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the model which emerged iteratively from my reading and re-reading the transcripts of the stage two focus groups and from my testing the results with the stage three focus groups.

The chapter has three substantive sections. Throughout the chapter, I note relevant references drawn from earlier chapters on the literature (chapter three) and earlier narratives (from chapters one, two, five and this chapter).

The first section is foundational. It describes, in a two-dimensional, logical-sequential way, a Six Element Model for building trust in groups. A generic diagram illustrates the model. Two situation-specific diagrams then illustrate the building of trust in relation to two stories. The first of these story-specific diagrams maps out the model in relation to Peter's MALT story (from chapter two). The second specific diagram uses the model to illustrate a UBC story that is an autoethnographic thread 'woven' throughout section 1 of this chapter. Both the MALT group and the UBC group existed for a relatively short duration of time (i.e. two to three weeks in each case).

The second section focuses on a third dimension of the model. The third dimension is systemic, reinforcing, and layered. In diagram form, the third dimension resembles a chaos theory drawing. A trusting group entering the 'third dimension' adds at least one additional loop or layer of trust. Once again, I provide a generic diagram and two situation-specific diagrams. The situation-specific diagrams illustrate the stories of groups that existed for several months. One of these is Erika's story from the last chapter. The second is the story

of Jeanie Cockell's Magic Group (Cockell, 2005) told in chapter two. Erika's group and the Magic Group are both more accurately portrayed, explained, illustrated and understood by this three-dimensional, somewhat chaotic representation of the model than they are by the flat, sequential two-dimensional model.

The third section summarizes the key points made in this chapter and looks ahead. It also cross-references appendix #9, which provides diagrammatic illustration of the nine stories from the last chapter not illustrated by diagrams in this chapter.

6.2 Foundational Description of the Six Element Model

The earlier-referenced definition of model (chapter three) noted that model "applies to something taken or proposed as worthy of imitation". The definition also listed the following synonyms for model: "example", "pattern", "exemplar" and "ideal". My fervent hope is that my model proves to be "worthy of imitation" and an example of how some groups could, in future, build trust. However, I must stress from the outset of this chapter that what I have drawn from my research is a model for building trust in groups. I do not pretend that my research has yielded the only model or approach which can be used to building trust in groups.

6.2.1 The Six Elements in the Model

The Six Element Model for Building Trust in Groups draws extensively from my research. Three areas of my research which are particularly important resources in understanding this model are the description of the faith element of trust (Mollering, 2001) in chapter three, the set of models and archetypes referred to in chapter three and in appendix #3, and the stories told in the last chapter and throughout the dissertation. The Six Element Model describes interconnected actions. In future you could take a group through these actions in sequence in order to increase the likelihood of building trust in that group. However, no-one can guarantee group trust. Nor can anyone predict the specific route through the model that any

group will take on its way to the development of trust. The idiosyncrasies of groups will be even more apparent when we examine the systems dimension of the model in part two.

Each of the six elements is briefly described in the paragraphs that follow and in Diagram 6-1. The elements are numbered one through six. As Diagram 6-1 indicates through its six directional arrows, the six elements are linked together in a cycle. The first two elements are part of the experience of virtually all groups, whether or not they end up building trust. *How* they are experienced holds one key to building trust. The first element, Planning and Initiating Preconditions for Trust, is often taken for granted when we first establish groups. The second element, Undertaking Activities to Earn Trust, is one where many of us have a prescribed 'right' approach. The key here is that there is no 'set' way to enter into this element of the model. While all groups undertake activities of some sort, those activities should be purposive and should fit with the strengths and 'drives' of members of those groups. Thus, the right answer is to do whatever is the right thing for the group in question.

Starting with the third element, Creating a Trust Space, we can separate out those groups that build trust from those that do not do so. This third element resembles the second element in that it involves activity. However, the activity is much less important to group trust than the four practices that accompany and enable the activity. These practices, if internalized while engaged in group activity, help the group to create a trust space, moving the group into the third element. The four practices also lead to the emergence of fields (see Wheatley in chapter three). The emerging fields, together with the internalized practices, contribute to a greater likelihood of a leap of faith where one individual moves the group into the fourth element. These fields are more fully developed after a group has been through the processes described in elements four through six and if the group cycles through the third dimension described in the second section.

The fourth element, Taking the Leap of Faith Initiative, is where Mollering's concept of faith comes 'alive'. The fifth element is Embracing the Leap of Faith. It is far from automatic with groups. The sixth and final element is Reaping the Trust Benefits.

Another way to see the relationship between the elements is to make the analogy to ground, path and fruition. Thus, group trust begins in the ground and represents the required groundwork for risk-taking (i.e. starting out through Element One and early activities in Element Two). Path represents the 'way' that we work together to develop in a group (Element Two as we work on group process and Element Three as we internalize practices). Fruition is the outcome of our development work and subsequent risk-taking (i.e. the early development of fields in Element Three and the full development of fields in Element Six).⁵³

Each of the six elements will be described in more detail below. As well, the research base for each element will be detailed.

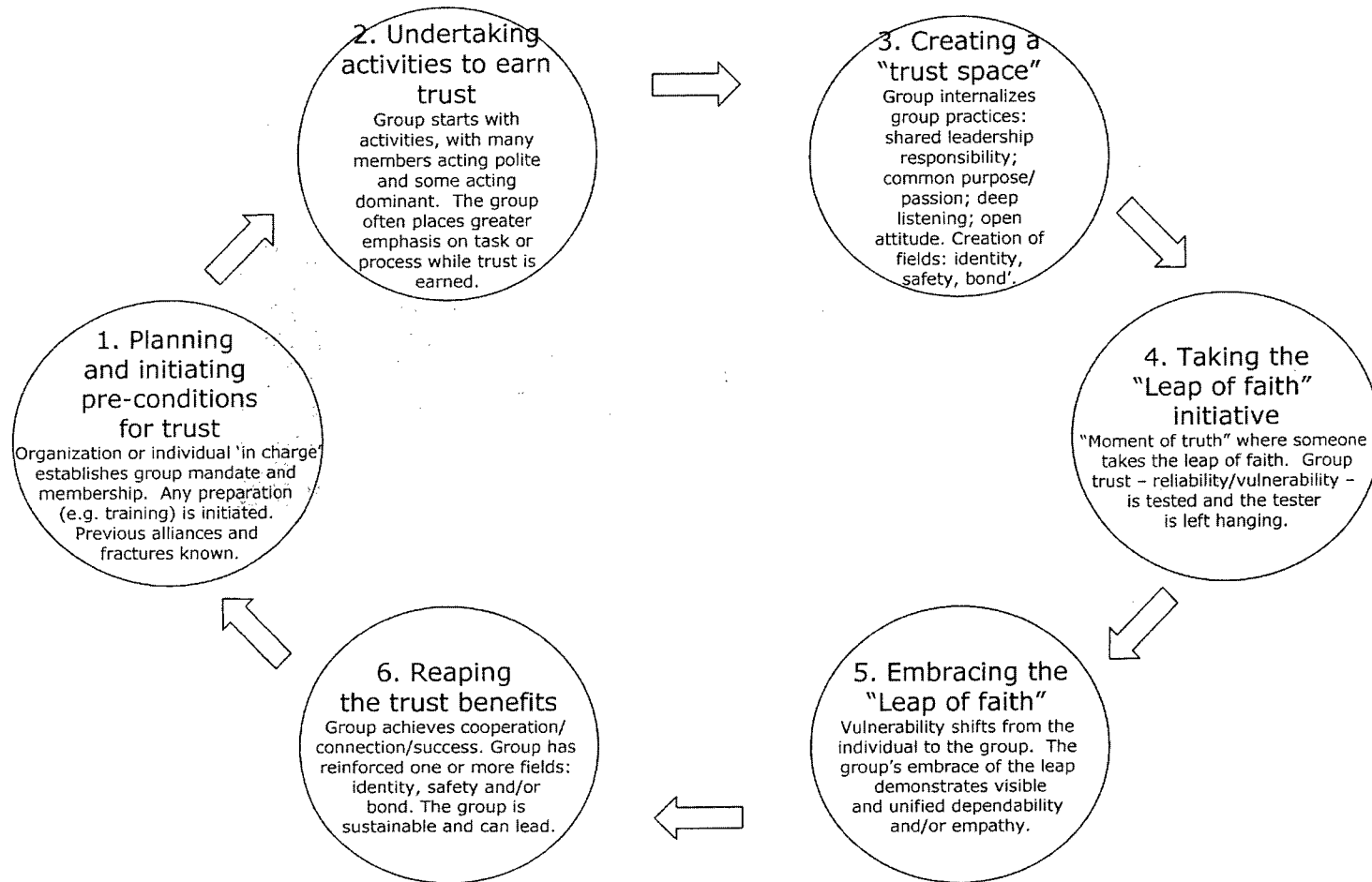
Sometimes, but certainly not always, a group on its way to building trust will go through the elements in the above sequence. The clearest example of this is Peter's story from chapter two. In such a situation, the group's progression is indicated by the directional arrows in Diagram 6-1 (below). Groups can also regress from any one element back to the previous element.

The impact of the layering will be clearer when you get to the second section and the second generic illustration of the Model. The arrows and curved lines in the center of the second generic diagram represent the layers. These typically upwards-moving, swirling, cyclical linkages differentiate the model from the step-by-step, linear sequencing that is a common flaw in the way many people understand, read and interpret the models of group development described in chapter three and in appendix #3. The exceptions to this linear sequencing pattern include all of Senge's archetypes (1990) and my earlier model (MacIver, 2001).

Diagram 6-1: The Six Element Model for Building Trust in Groups: Foundations (next page)

⁵³ I am indebted for these thoughts on ground, path and fruition to Daniel Vokey in some of his comments on an earlier draft of the dissertation.

The Six Element Model for Building Trust in Groups



6.2.1.1 Element One: Planning and Initiating Preconditions for Trust

The first element, it should be stated again, is often taken for granted. Where it is not taken for granted it is frequently implicitly ignored or undervalued. "It is surprising how many people assemble teams primarily on the basis of personal compatibility or formal position in the organization" (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993, p. 48). One of the stage three focus groups added that we must recognize the "importance of who to assemble and why". Thus, in order to increase the likelihood of building trusting groups with a capacity to lead, we must start by becoming more aware of this element, which is labeled Pre-stage 1 in Robbins (1991, p. 278), where Stage 1 is Forming.

There are many "learning disabilities" (Senge, 1990) and Dances of Blind Reflex (Oshry, 1995) that we must work our way past in order to do all that we can do with this element. We must, for example, get past the territorialism and protectionism signified by "the enemy is out there" and "I am my position" (Senge, 1990, pp. 18-19). We also must work our way past the cronyism and the glass ceiling ("the differences in women's and men's way of talking work against women"; Tannen, 1994, p. 134) that has shut women out from membership in and formal positions of leadership in many groups. Finally we must get past payback that sometimes determines these decisions (e.g., this person nominated me for an earlier group so I will nominate her/him for this new group).

The approach I suggest to Element One is, among other things, to "Select members based on skills and skill potential, not personalities" (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993, p. 120). We should select members of groups that could lead based on other factors as well. These factors include: passion and a sense of purpose (Terry's, Shauna's, Donna's and Erika's stories), a desire to be a member of the group (Donna's story), a mix of natural group roles and preferences (Belbin, 1994; Myers, 1980), the capacity to be creative ("with the right combination of people, the act of creation seemed effortless"; Belbin, 1994, p. 32), significant life experiences ("that might have sparked or furthered maturation"; Collins, 2001, p. 37) and the personal confidence to counter groupthink (Branden, 1998; Miller,

1981; Steinem, 1992). We should heed Collin's (2001) advice about a related matter, hiring for potentially great companies, determining "who" is "a simple idea to grasp... easy to talk about... and a very difficult idea to do" (p. 44).

An example of a diverse group from the chapter five stories is Ervin's group. The fact that it was a cross-functional group involving different departments would normally add to the group's diversity (e.g. with client-oriented marketing people, people-oriented HR managers, numbers-people from finance and so on).

Where you have no choice about members of the group (e.g. with Donald's group where it involved the whole staff of a small organization), it is vitally important to teach people processes to bring out and appreciate the diversity lying 'below the surface' with many groups. That very thing happened with Donald's group where Donald used his learnings at RRU and the Max DePree book to draw out different points of view.

What I have just described are some of the planning-type activities involved in Element One. Element One must also be *active*; it can and should involve more than just planning and preparing for a group. The word "initiating" was added to the earliest draft description of this element after feedback from a member of the on-line stage three focus group. That feedback underlined the value of a 'bias for action', as did those instances in the chapter five stories where MALT training played a vital role in the action taken by the person telling the story (e.g. the stories from Adrienne, Donna, Donald, Joan, and Erika). I will add more on the action part of Element One later.

Element One involves at least four key planning-type decisions beyond the just-described planning decisions about group composition. Those key decisions are group mandate, accountability, size, and leadership. Once again, these decisions are straightforward, 'normal', and even pedestrian or unimportant in the eyes of many people. I now examine each of these four planning-type decision areas in turn.

When it comes to decisions about mandate, one key concept is that the mandate or task for which a group will be accountable must be “a performance challenge that is meaningful to those involved” (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993, p.12). Indeed, “significant performance challenges” may “do more than anything else to foster teams” (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993, p. 175). It was clear in the stories told by Adrienne, Joan, Donna, Donald, Erika, Terry and Shauna that the performance challenge their group was given was both meaningful and significant. Mandate can also be a factor in arousing the above-noted passion.

However, once again, I would suggest that we invoke the Goldilocks Theory: “If a task appears to be beyond our capacity we tend to respond to it by feeling anxious; if the task is too easy we get bored... The ideal conditions (are)... when both challenges and skills are high and equal to each other.” (Csikszentimihalyi, 2003; p. 44) In all of the intense group-based programs in which I have taught since 1990, I and other faculty took great care to make sure the major team assignment was significant without being overwhelming. Each of the trusting groups on which stories #1-5 in chapter two was based was given just such a significant Goldilocks challenge. The same type of challenge was given to Peter’s MALT group.

In addition to planning the significance of the assignment, we should consider the “urgency of the assignment” (Katzenbach and Smith, 119) or the “sense of urgency” (Kotter, 1996, p. 35). However, we must not allow ourselves to be dominated by ‘the tyranny of the urgent’; we must keep our ‘eye on the ball’ of significance and meaning.

Accountability provides “a litmus test of the quality of a team’s purpose and approach” (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993, p. 61). It should be clear from the outset what the group is to be accountable for. We also must select individuals to be members of groups intended to lead based on their likelihood of holding themselves accountable as members of a group and as a group. To do so, they must be prepared to counter the “ingrained individualism” that “discourages us from putting our fates in the hands of others” (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993, p. 60). This matter of “putting our fates in the hands of others” is a vulnerability issue.

Group size is a third area where we can plan. On the matter of size, there are many differing points of view. One view is to have less than ten members, as a general rule (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993, p. 45). Belbin wrote about finding an “intermediate between the ideal command group [of ten people, referring back to Roman and Inca armies] and... a small, intimate circle [of four people] who can act and talk together in concert” (Belbin, 1994, p. 115).

Still another view is to take a more utilitarian perspective, focusing on results expected, diversity and size together:

...the optimal size for self-managed teams is usually the smallest number needed to do the task [here there is a citation of Sundstrom et al., 1990]... Smaller groups (e.g. six to twelve members) tend to be more cohesive. Having members with similar backgrounds and attitudes also increases cohesiveness but a moderate amount of diversity contributes to innovative problem-solving and the performance of different subtasks requiring a variety of skills (Yukl, 183)

We can also return to the earlier-mentioned diversity issue as it relates to size: “a group that is too small doesn’t work very well. If five or six people get together they can usually adjust to each other so that they don’t say the things that upset each other—they get a cozy adjustment” (Bohm, 2000, 13). There is value in a group with the right mix of intelligence and expertise and emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1998, p. 199): “Getting that mix right is the difference between ventures that achieve greatness and start-ups that are merely successful, or worse” (Goleman quoting Doerr, 1998, p. 199). These varying points of view are instructive and a useful reminder about avoiding absolutes: while I expect that the majority of groups that achieve trust would be made up of twelve or less members, account must be taken of the larger groups of forty or more with which Bohm achieved dialogue and quite possibly some high degree of trust.

However, in building into groups the maximum possible diversity, great care has to be taken to avoid the perils of labeling the people involved with whatever diverse traits they have that are factored into the group composition. As noted in the findings in chapter four, inappropriate use of personality typing, in team assignments for example, can result in closed, even judgmental approaches, simplistic labeling and a breakdown of trust.

The fourth planning area is that of formal group leadership at the outset of the life of a group. The challenge is, as Oshry (1995) suggests, naming as leaders people who are willing to let go of “burden” (p. 64), “fear of losing control” (p. 66), and the reality that “it is easier to simply do it yourself” (p. 66). We should name as leaders people capable of becoming “co-creators” who share responsibility for “successes” and “failures... in each moment and in the long term” (p. 68).

It was striking that respect for and trust in the leader was explicitly referred to as important in Terry and Shauna’s stories, in the story of the magic group (chapter two), and in the self-analysis of trust in my research focus groups themselves (see appendix #5). As well, there was skepticism that was eventually overcome in Donna’s and Joan’s stories when the formal leaders (i.e. Donna and Joan) announced their intent to be collaborative in their approach. Absolute consistency in following this intent was pivotal. In eight of the ten stories told in the last chapter, the person appointed as formal leader had some combination of collaborative competence and confidence. In addition to Donna and Joan, two of the leaders were appointed as leaders of the group after they had developed or honed their collaborative group skills in MALT (Adrienne, Erika). The leaders in Shauna and Terry’s stories were leaders who had a willingness to share leadership; this made them the kinds of leaders who were most likely to naturally empower others. Finally, two of the initial leaders were professional facilitators with well-developed collaborative skills (the woman’s group facilitator in Pam’s story can be presumed to have these skills; I can personally vouch for Christina Baldwin in Linda’s story as having these skills). It is not explicitly stated that any of the above individuals (other than the professionals in Pam’s and Linda’s stories) who were named to leadership positions were so named because of their having a certain background or skills. However, the stories provide ample grounds for contending that

naming a formal leader with the confidence and skills to carry off collaborative leadership is one type of factor that thoughtful organizations can consider in order to make it more likely that a group will develop trust.

No mention is made of a formal leader in the case of Donald's story but it is very clear that Donald played a key leadership role in the reading of the DePree material and in the group development that followed. As well, there was no formal leader in Ervin's story. However, Ervin noted the importance of the individual with highly developed group skills who provided informal leadership and 'safety'.

There is a very controversial side to planning group composition and membership. I would infer that Korsgaard et al.'s (2003) work suggests that it is important to know who not to name to groups where building group trust is expected to be important to the work of the group. Having as a group member a person with a history of attachment difficulties can be a negative consideration in group membership. If you go back to diagram 3-1 in chapter three, you will see illustrated in the diagram how naming to a new group a group member who had previously shown attachment avoidance behaviors (Korsgaard et al., 2003, p.123) could set that new group up for problems in developing identity and achieving group trust and cooperation. I would speculate, for example, that the belligerent person in Ervin's story could have had an avoidance-type problem as an underlying issue. Attachment avoidance also may have been a factor with one or more of the people I have worked with in the past that I used in describing the composite destructive person, 'Ann', in story #5 from chapter two. As well, having one or more members with attachment anxiety (Korsgaard et al., 2003, p. 123) could set a group up for failure in achieving group trust.

However, once again, there are qualifying considerations. The stage three face to face focus group cautioned me that, in naming members to groups, we must "be careful about exclusion". There was some debate in two of the earlier stage two face to face focus groups about the difference between those who exhibit "merely difficult" or opinionated behaviors and those who exhibit outright "destructive" behavior of the type referred to in the literature on destructive and malignant narcissistic behavior (Hare, 1993; Peck, 1983; Brown, 1998).

The nature of the group difficulties in the chapter two story about destructive behavior by 'Ann' and in the chapter five story told by Ervin underline the potential seriousness of the problems associated with attachment difficulties and with destructive behavior. I have noted two sides of this highly contentious debate in appendix #5.

Finally, on this difficult matter I should note that some groups cycle back to the Element One on their own after they are underway. They can do so, for example, by making an 'addition by subtraction', dropping a member who shows attachment difficulties or other problem behaviors or issues (see the RRU faculty story in the next chapter). A group also revisits Element One when someone simply 'goes away' as happened in Ervin's story. However, cycling back and reviewing and changing the membership could be problematic for some groups.

The final issue in planning and composition is seeking out relevant historical information, such as information about previous alliances or fractures among prospective group members. Too many people being in alliance or with a common and singular focus (e.g. task and getting things done) can make groupthink more likely. Unresolved fractures and even 'autistic hostility' that carry over from previous groups can result in permanent division or fracturing of a new group into subgroups (MacIver, 2001, pp. 117-18, 121-2). However, once again, balance is a key. Disqualifying people because of a past history of those people failing to collaborate could have been an inhibitor in the case of both Donald's group and Joan's group, but it wasn't. Past failures to collaborate could be argued to have provided an incentive, in the end, to Joan's group, once they experienced some success. Similarly, sorting through past differences was a key bonding activity for two members of the RRU faculty group described in chapter seven.

There is also an action side to the first element, as noted at the outset. Those who establish groups could help group members to prepare for the future time the group will have together. That preparation can include common training or common assigned readings (e.g. in group dynamics or team building, as in Blanchard et al., 2000; MacIver, 2001), a briefing

on the importance of and background to the mandate of the group⁵⁴, and more introspective activities like time off for mental and emotional preparation. This latter concept can take the form of what Covey calls personal renewal by “sharpening the saw” (Covey, 1990, p. 287), the organizational equivalent of taking time off to sharpen a saw before we cut down a tree. Covey suggests that making time for this vitally important but not in-the-moment-urgent function of personal renewal is a foundation for group interdependence.

There are forms of action support which can be provided as well through the assistance of facilitators and observers. In the two leadership by support stories (Pam’s and Linda’s stories), the initial leader in both cases was a professional facilitator (Christina Baldwin and the woman who facilitated the women’s retreat). Jeanie Cockell’s research (2005),⁵⁵ chronicles magical impacts on groups which decided to involve the right facilitator in training or in leading a group session. Trust-building can be one of those magical experiences.

Regarding observers, we can at the outset of a group’s life name a person to help the group out as a silent observer. The observer providing comments as part of a group debriefing can be yet another form of support (Stewart, 2004). For example, in the case of the earlier-referenced all-women’s group whose story is incorporated into Story #1 in chapter two, RRU faculty were consciously aware of setting up a group in which there was one lone person with a task focus. I was assigned to be the observer of the group because I was the faculty member with the greatest experience at successfully assisting groups in constructively dealing with any breakdowns of relationships.

A final action concept that should be considered as part of Element One is one from the Fifth Discipline. Senge (1990) suggests that we adopt the idea of holding practices (e.g. from sports and theater) and apply it to such processes as dialogue (p. 259-60). In the audio

⁵⁴ Sometimes when a group is underway and starts to debate different strongly-held positions, having had this kind of initial briefing is particularly valuable. For more on this see *Getting to yes* (Fisher, R. and Ury, W. (1991). Penguin Books. New York) . This book suggests that we can “negotiate agreement without giving in” by focusing on “interests, not positions” (p. 40). Interests can be identified when we receive a briefing on a mandate by asking questions like “why?” (p. 44). This kind of briefing could also reduce the incidence group splits identified by Oshry (1995, pp. 77-88).

⁵⁵ I was a research participant in this study (Cockell, 2005).

tape that goes with the Fifth Discipline book Senge (1994) suggests that we spend at least as much time in practice as we do in actual meetings. Three groups described in chapter five actively held a form of 'practice' where they tried on group skills. These were the group that started as a reading group (Donald's story) and the two support groups (Pam's and Linda's stories). In all three instances the practice may have significantly contributed to the building of group trust.

UBC moments from my journal:

Throughout this chapter I weave in quotes from my journal entries and related recollections from an optional course that I took at UBC. This course had a number of cohort members in it. Before the course ended I made a leap of faith in class and together the class group created a basic level of group trust. Thus, these entries trace and illustrate how one group 'lived' the six elements.

Our six cohort group members who were taking the course met to discuss the course in advance of the first class. We all had a common commitment to the subject matter and a very high regard for the instructor. We agreed, since we were so bonded, that we would consciously spread ourselves out around the classroom so that our group did not in any way dominate the larger group. Thus we took responsibility, through our pre-meeting, for initiating one pre-condition that we thought would contribute to a better group dynamic and a better course experience for everyone.

6.2.1.2 Element Two: Undertaking Activities to Earn Trust

The second element is analogous to what various group development models call formation or orientation. Thus a group, while in Element Two, can be described as activity-focused and generally polite (Tuckman, 1965; MacIver, 2001; Blanchard et al., 2000), dominated by one or more authority figures or strong personalities (Tuckman, 1965; Blanchard et al., 2000) and engaged in "civility that represses" (Isaacs, 1999, p. 262) and "shared monologue" (Isaacs, 1999, p. 261). Shared monologue is analogous to the "collective monologue" that Covey (1993) talks about in one of his video tapes. He says this is a fundamental challenge we have to master in practicing "seek first to understand, then to be understood".

This element also incorporates the essence of the earlier-referenced task and process chicken and egg proposition (see chapter three). For Tuckman (1965), some groups are focused more on task and some are focused more on support. This too is built into this second element. Finally Senge et al.'s (1994) notion of teams galvanizing individuals through a combination of personal results, business results and networking and diffusion (i.e. process) is also reflected in this element.

As the chicken and egg proposition suggests, the group activity in this element may be primarily task-focused. It also may be mostly interpersonal, people and process-focused. Alternatively, it may involve a mixture of both task and process. Whatever the emphasis in allocation of time, energy and self by members of the group, the group's identity and approach to procedural justice (Korsgaard et al., 2003) are developing and in flux here. This can be a conscious developmental process (i.e. expressly identified and worked on as such through such activities as developing groundrules and values) or it can be unconscious (i.e. the approach and identity emerging from the activities, unbidden).

Consistent with the chapter three descriptions of formation and orientation, if the group's activity is primarily process oriented, while a group is in Element Two the process is not yet internalized. When it is internalized all members of the group equally contribute to and fully believe in that process (i.e. what eventually happened in all of the chapter five stories). In other words, when a group is in Element Two, it experiences anxiety and tentative, conforming behavior (Blanchard et al., 20002, p. 30). The group process has not yet been embraced by all members of the group, has not been repeated often enough, or has not been repeated successfully enough for all group members to be able to wholeheartedly 'buy in to' the process while engaged in this activity.

In some groups (e.g. Erika's), the early activity is task oriented. A group may be together for a matter of hours and intent on completing a short term, immediate task (i.e. see the chapter three material on swift trust, a type of trust which is developed by some groups in the entertainment business, who may be together for forty-eight hours or less, "the organizational analog of a 'one-night stand'"; Meyerson et al., 1996, p.167). However, for

the majority of groups, which undertake assignments that require a longer time commitment than a couple of days, the likelihood of the group's success, its longer term replication of success and the final results of the group's work are all unknown or only partially known during its earliest meetings. In the language of the definition of trust, we may have emerging "favorable expectations", but the pattern of such behaviors is not yet sufficiently a habit or norm for us to be able to rely on it happening.

A focus on task or process-oriented group activity normally occurs in the first several meetings or gatherings of a group, although it may go on for much longer. This focus is also something that a group can regress back to (from Element Three) or cycle back to periodically. The first time a group goes through this element, there is often a spirit of anxious optimism (another paradox), as described by Blanchard et al. (2000). When a group cycles back to Element Two they typically would do so because some task-oriented activity has to be completed or some process requires reinforcing before the practices described in Element Three can be internalized. Thus, Erika's group kept coming back to the task of economic development work when Erika wanted the group to discuss issues with the assistant. Donald's group kept returning to its learning process through conversations about DePree. In both cases the groups concentrated primarily on doing the activity; eventually the groups arrived at a 'trust space'.

For those who are task oriented the simplest way to start to earn trust is by meeting an expectation often cited by senior leaders of SpawGlass of Texas⁵⁶: "Do what you say you will do". Thus the group can put effort into accomplishing or moving along tasks that are part of the group mandate or assignment. This can be done both between meetings and in the meetings themselves. In Adrienne's group, for example, group members can be presumed to have done the necessary preparation work for each meeting and to have drawn in the

⁵⁶ SpawGlass is one of my longest-standing clients. I have worked with the company since 1990. My work with the company is referenced in a book written for the company by Ashley Cheshire called *The SpawGlass Way* (2002). Austin, TX: Morgan Printing. The book included the following passage:

MacIver became a great favorite among SpawGlass people but only after they got to know him... Initially (after he was brought in by the CEO to 'help' on people-related matters)... some likened a chat with him to going for coffee with an assassin... Eventually he assuaged these fears... MacIver succeeded because people recognized him for the caring, trustworthy individual he was... (p. 181)

meetings on their past courses and programs. In the early days of Donald's group, doing what you said you would do would have entailed group members coming to meetings having read the chapter of DePree that was to be discussed that week.

For those who are process-oriented, earning trust can involve anything from developing group rules and a common vision to formal debriefing to simply conversing and getting to know one another better (see the six specific processes referred to in chapter four). If my experience with PeerSpirit programming is a reliable indicator, in Pam's and Linda's support groups there would have been some fairly significant personal disclosure by one or more members in the early sessions. This was also a factor in Jeanie's magic group referred to in chapter two. The disclosure in any of these three groups could have been the very same type of disclosure which led to a group rupture in "the group that sang" story (# 3) in chapter two. In the case of one of the real groups whose story is woven into that story #3, according to personal journals students gave me permission to cite, at least two members of the group were uncomfortable with a group in an academic setting being 'turned into' what felt to them like a 'therapy group'.

One key is that the work we do and the processes that we engage in fit with the people in the group. Another key is that what we do has the potential for that specific group of developing common identity (Korsgaard et al., 2003) and pride in that identity. Because this element occurs early in the life of a group or when a group has cycled back to activity in order to fix problems, get something done, or seek 'refuge', the activity in this element is not typically highly reflective. As we move to greater reflectiveness and associated higher consciousness and reliability we also move to internalizing the four practices in Element Three and starting to create a trust 'field'.

Of the eleven stories told in chapters two and six, I surmise below how seven of the groups approached Element Two. Five of the groups would likely have started with an almost exclusive focus on process (Peter's MALT group with their revelations, Linda's circle group, Pam's support group, Donald's group conversation about transformational leadership, and Donna's health sector group that primarily talked about principles and

process at the beginning). The simplest, best and 'right' solution, some argue, is to stop everything when a group first gets together and to get to know one another and to focus on process as those five groups 'correctly' did. This process clearly 'worked' for four of the groups. However, Peter's story is also instructive. Peter notes that "I felt overwhelmed by their apparent willingness to 'let it all hang out.' I am typically more comfortable letting trust and intimacy grow slowly over time". Thus in Peter's case, the so-called 'correct' focus on process did not prompt all members of the group to disclose with equal comfort.

In at least two of the stories there would have been an initial focus on task, with limited emphasis on process. Adrienne notes specifically that she was "somewhat task-oriented". With the skills that Adrienne brought to the group, subtle elements of process could have been built in to the group's early time together in such a way that they helped the group's development. In this corporate environment it would have been important to do so without frustrating Adrienne or other group members by being too 'touchy feely'. In Erika's story, Erika specifically refers to finding herself looking for "effective ways to introduce process and policy" with her very action and task-oriented group members.

To reinforce the importance of finding the situationally appropriate approach to starting out a group's time together, we can take as evidence Bill Clinton's experience with his cabinet in the early days of his presidency. Clinton describes a retreat at Camp David where time was "devoted to more informal personal conversations" including a session "in which we were supposed to bond by sitting in a group, taking turns telling something about ourselves the others didn't know". Some members of the group withdrew in reaction to this activity, which Clinton refers to as a "baby-boomer version of Chinese water torture" (Clinton, 2004, p. 489).

The point of view which rejects automatically going to process and intimacy as a part of group process is echoed by Vancouver Sun columnist Peter McMartin who wrote recently of a "subtle tyranny" that has taken hold in North America that "dictates... that we are

somehow less than fully formed humans if our emotions aren't worn on our sleeves... if we don't want to share our emotions openly. It's the tyranny of the teddy-bearists..."⁵⁷

What I found noteworthy about the seven stories in relation to Element Two are the very different routes taken by the groups to reach a level of trust that members highlighted as 'one of my most trusting groups experiences ever'. Thus we reinforce here the idea of there is always more than one way to start a group out on the way to the third element.

Katz and Kahn (1978) refer to this as equifinality, how a "system can reach the same final state from differing initial conditions and by a variety of paths" (p. 30). Bosetti (1976-81) repeatedly summarized equifinality as meaning "there is always more than one way to skin a cat". While some would consider my description of Element Two to be a relativistic approach and therefore a nightmare, Element Two requires that we find a way to begin the life of a group that works for the group in question. This approach is consistent with contingency approach where solutions "reflect situational or contingency conditions" (Robbins, 1991, p. 15) and the idea of fitting styles of leadership to the situation (Goleman and al., 2002, p. 55; Robbins, 1991, p. 360; Blanchard et al., 2000, p. 80).

UBC moments from my journal:

My journal entry, written the day after the course started, reflects on how, in any new group, the beginning of the group process can be very anxiety-ridden for some of us:

... So I did my best yesterday to overcome the shyness and introversion thing that comes up for me each time I'm in a new group situation where I don't know a lot of the people... I knocked over my water early in the instructor's introductory comments... I was semi-frozen, not sure whether to get up and get some paper towel to clean it up or just stay put (there was enough water to be an annoyance but not enough to be a flood; but then again it could have spread on the big conference table and wet other people's notebooks). Then 'George', who was seated beside me, traced a path with his finger, leading the puddle of water to run off the table in a spot in between us, where it could drop off to the floor without disrupting anyone and be cleaned up in the break... I never would have thought of doing what George did...

Each and every action we take can be magnified in the politeness part of the process, even spilling water!! And appreciation of diversity comes out in many different ways, including my marveling at someone figuring out how to create a run-off.

⁵⁷ McMartin, P. (2005, January 10). Daily column in *The Vancouver Sun*, p B4

Next, I recorded in my journal my thoughts about one small effort I made to contribute to group process early in that course:

Today I had to dig deep on group process. In this case I had to acknowledge that the attitude of two of my reading circle mates—always being negatively preoccupied with putting ‘down the (named) bad folks’ who are THE great evil of society—was really bugging me... I decided to do something to try to get the conversation back on track rather than dominating back at these two people... so I prepared differently, really, really focusing on the course’s stated analysis format of first defining the problem and then looking at solutions. In so doing I abandoned my earlier behavior of just looking at my notes on the ideas that I highlighted from the articles we were given to read. When I prepared my notes using this format, I was in a better position to guide the conversation back to something actually resembling an exchange on the readings rather than a tirade on something only remotely connected to the readings. I really want to have searching conversations about what the authors really meant and our views on the validity of that...

No-one said that starting to earn trust was easy!

6.2.1.3 Element Three: Creating a Trust Space

This name of the third element, creating a “trust space”, is drawn directly from Pam’s story. While in this element a group is involved in activities. However the activities are more focused and further along than they were. As well the group has a look, sound, and feel that are different than when a group is involved in the activities in Element Two. The group looks more orderly or settled, there is more listening with understanding of the other individual and it ‘feels’ as if people have gotten to know one another better. Moving from Element Two to Element Three is not guaranteed. As with the Katzenbach and Smith (1993), MacIver (2002) and Isaacs (1999) models we can get stuck in or keep cycling back to one of the elements, stages or spaces. Each of the elements, stages or spaces is “essential”; however, “it is the sustaining of movement through” the elements, stages or spaces that is important (Isaacs, 1999, p. 362).

The short description of what happens when a group reaches this element is that the group internalizes one or more of four group practices: shared leadership responsibility; common purpose/passion; deep listening; and an open attitude. Through the internalization, the group creates one or more of three fields: group identity, group psychological safety, and a group

bond. My description of this element draws from the literature about norms and fields. Norming is an area that has long been commonly understood (e.g. Tuckman, 1965). "Many studies in social psychology have demonstrated the power of the norms of the group over the individual" (Katz and Kahn referring to Newcomb, 1978, p. 389). System norms "make explicit the forms of behavior appropriate for members of the system" (Katz and Kahn, 1978, p.385). What is newer and less conventional is applying Wheatley's concept of field to groups. As noted earlier a field is a force "of unseen connections that influences... behavior" (Wheatley, p. 13) and an "unseen" structure, "occupying space and becoming known to us through (its) effects" (Wheatley, p. 49). The identity field then is "the degree to which individuals identify with the group" (Korsgaard et al., 2003, p. 113). Group identity, in turn, is "critical to fostering individuals' trust in and cooperation with their work group" (Korsgaard et al., 2003, p. 114). Together we create the trust space while engaged in activities through which we internalize any or all of the four practices, thus beginning to create any or all three fields.

An apt description of this third element may be Donald's, the development of "a way of being with each other". This way of being starts to become a part of who each of us is. We and the group begin to internalize the way of being. One of two development factors Korsgaard et al. (2003) identify as contributing to trust in their model is procedural justice (p. 114). I agree with Korsgaard et al. (2003) that identity follows or flows from procedural justice, among other things. However I see the beginning of each of the fields, including identity, as intertwined together with the internalization of the practices, including listening and openness through procedural justice, in the third element. I further speculate that internalization is a different matter than simply having rules. Moreover, the group can continue to develop and deepen internalization and the fields over time with the layering or looping in the third dimension.

The creation of fields through the internalization of norms is well described by 'Meredith', in a personal journal entry cited in the original version of Story #3, one of the stories which went out to stage two focus group members. Meredith refers to her group, by the end of its two week existence, as having achieved a different state: "I believe that we did as a team

start to feel our guiding values rather than simply comply with them at an intellectual level..." When we start to internalize, we begin a process of 'feeling' our procedural justice. Thus we would 'feel' our values and our groundrules, 'feel' the imperative to change as a result of debriefing (i.e. it goes from something that is nice to do to what we feel we should do to something that we really want to do), and 'feel' the importance of really stating biases in a dialogue and other processes. The field in the room of a group that had developed this 'feel' would be one of much strong and vibrant emerging identity, connectness and psychological safety, all of which would distinguish its field from the more lackluster and disconnected, even scary, field that would be present with a group that was stuck in Element Two or that kept returning to Element Two without ever fully internalizing the four practices.

Norming can thus precede and make more likely a leap of faith. To quote one of the members of the RRU faculty focus group:

As I review your model I can't help noticing that one of the things you are [might be] postulating is a reverse order of Tuckman's model from forming, storming, norming, performing to forming (#1 and #2), norming (#3 and #4), storming (#5), performing (#6) - with "storming" taking on a potentially new entity? I have always believed since the MALT experience that if more time was spent upfront with the norming phase [immediately following forming] that, in fact, storming might be entirely a new outcome?

However, norming and the development of the 'fields' can also be further strengthened following someone taking leap of faith (i.e. we can return to Element Three after either or both of Elements Four or Five), which is what the Tuckman models suggests.

Certainty is hard to come by with this third element, which involves the invisible and the intangible, at least to the human eye. In developing this model post-hoc the stage two focus groups it was impossible for me to completely separate out which of the internalized practices that prompted trusting behaviors were developed and significantly internalized

before the first leap of faith moment from those practices which were largely internalized afterwards. Later internalization would occur as the group in question cycled back to Element Three. A second challenge to certainty is the lack of tangibility and the differing perceptions we may have of the four practices and the three fields. Blanchard et al. describe a group that has fully normed or 'resolved' dissatisfaction in the following fuzzy language:

... who was the [group] leader? There did not seem to be one. The team seemed to move as a unit with different people taking leadership at different times. Dan [the observer of the group in this story] was puzzled (Blanchard et al., 2000, p. 46).

When it comes to 'proving' a field like group identity, we can sometimes cite contributing good work done for and by the group members that is documented in minutes and other records. As for a field like psychological safety we can point to the existence and documentation of group ground rules (e.g. "there will be no personal attacks"). However, having the rules and procedural justice is quite a different matter from 'feeling' that you can rely on that ground rule. Human connectivity in a group can be illustrated by having group members sit facing each other in a circle and pass around a ball of wool, holding on to the strand of wool each time that they pass it on to someone else in the group. However, if anything, it is even more intangible than the other two fields.

I will cite below instances from the stories of each of the practices and fields. These fields will be more fully developed and become more 'visible', reliable or consistent through the leap of faith moment and the embracing of the leap. However, in each story one or more of the named practices have been internalized and have contributed to the beginnings of the group field. The field is evident to one or more group members before the successful leap occurred. The creation of the beginnings of the field thus permits and enables the leap and the embracing of the leap by the group.

6.2.1.3.1 The Practice of Shared Leadership Responsibility

Shared, empowering leadership, which connects with Oshry's notion of shared responsibility, was the single practice that was mentioned most frequently. I interpreted it as being written or talked about in all eleven of the stories as well as in my own autoethnographic narratives. A formal leader sharing her leadership responsibility and empowering others was implied in the three stories where a woman other than the storyteller was the formal leader (see Terry and Shauna's linked stories and Linda's story). In Terry's story "we became leaders relying on one another". Similarly in Shauna's linked story "we were all of equal power" and together "we gave up our ideas of being inadequate". Linda notes that her circle practice took place in "a space where there was equality among participants". The role of an informal leader who gave others confidence was highlighted in Ervin's story. Pam's and Peter's stories appear to involve all members of the group sharing leadership, although in Pam's story the group initially had a facilitator. The facilitator relinquishing that role was part of the process of the group moving from taking a program together to becoming an ongoing group.

Where the storyteller was the formal leader, the storytellers seemed to me to be quick to downplay their leadership. However, shared responsibility was emphasized through the importance given in the stories to developing group trust in a collaboration process that genuinely involved everyone in decision-making. Donna calls herself "the ringleader". She talks about the group project being "led from behind". Joan talks about a consensus approach where the group would not stop "until we've got agreement". Adrienne's meetings were chaired by "nobody". "It was whoever had the idea". There is a 'backwards' reference to shared leadership in Erika's story about the early days of the group "at times the group was entirely unruly, from the perspective of a chair person". Donald's story involved a group in which people were "excited" because group members "liked the idea of participating in decision-making". In all five of these stories, this collaborative practice being at least partially internalized seems to have preceded the leap of faith.

Confidence and trust in a formal leader who was willing to share leadership responsibility was also a factor in building trust in two separate research processes described earlier, those undertaken by Jeannie Cockell and by myself (see chapter two and appendix #5 respectively). When we stopped to examine with participants the development of trust in Jeanie's research group, which she referred to as a co-research group, and in my focus groups, we were given essentially the same message. We were told that a belief and trust in Jeanie and myself, respectively, as leaders of the research process, was essential to trust-building. Jeanie and I both formally began and ended the group research processes and we clearly contributed to them. However, leadership responsibility also flowed amongst members of both sets of research groups. Leadership responsibility also eventually flowed amongst the group of four that Jeanie and I were part of that is referred to in chapter one. At an earlier stage (Element Two) of that chapter one story, the leadership 'mantle' rested largely with Doug.

6.2.1.3.2 The Practice of Determining Common Purpose and Passion

Common purpose or passion as a key practice contributing early to the building of trust space is most evident in four of the stories. Shauna is the most explicit about common purpose contributing to creating the trust space. She says: "I think the shared common purpose and commitment to the work did foster the trust". Erika also mentions the importance of a clear bond among members who were "very passionate" and who exhibited "strong and cohesive group passion". Erika concluded, among other things, that "when there is a strong and cohesive group passion to work together on something, the way becomes clear more easily". Donald refers to having a "commitment... and we stuck to it". Terry told of the group having in "common... real love of the work". Early common passion and purpose is implicit in at least one other story. Pam refers in her story to the group of five women agreeing to meet regularly by the end of their first weekend together.

Even in those instances where passion or purpose is not specifically mentioned, there was clear commonality about what the group was gathering to do in three other stories told in the

last chapter. Donna notes that her self-selected group members “wanted to be involved”. Joan refers to the importance to the group of “clarity” of goals, which preceded trusting actions. Adrienne talks about a group that was focused on “getting the program done”.

Finally, with Jeanie’s and my research groups, common interest in and commitment to the exploration of the subject matter certainly appeared to indicate a common purpose or passion. As one of my UBC dissertation committee members noted, it was truly exceptional for more than forty people to contribute at least eight hours to the focus group research process (J. Archibald, meeting, December, 2004). My experience of Jeanie’s process was that I became so passionate about the process that I made a complete change in the way that I constructed my working days. During the research process, I found myself starting every day by checking what had come in by e-mail from the others the previous evening because I “couldn’t wait to see what the others might have said”. This was the reverse of what had been my previous normal practice of leaving the reading e-mails until the afternoon.

In at least two of the eleven above-noted stories (i.e. those of Shauna and Erika) I would speculate that common purpose and passion may have been equally important to or even more important than shared leadership.

6.2.1.3.3 The Practice of Deep Listening

“People do not listen, they reload”—Isaacs (1999, p.18)

A practice of deep listening is specifically referred to in at least six of the stories. In Pam’s story, Pam emphasizes how compelling it is to listen in such a way that we “give up the responses that ordinarily surface and just surrender to the story you are hearing, to witnessing”. The suggestion is that an early version of this type of listening was one factor in the extraordinary first weekend that the group spent together. Further internalization of this listening has clearly contributed to the group continuing to come together to tell the stories in their lives that they might not normally tell to others. Linda writes about the circle

group “listening with our hearts versus our heads full of thoughts and past experiences”. My in-depth experience of two of Christina Baldwin’s circle groups is that an early internalized version of this extraordinary listening practice develops from the early activities of the groups. For Erika, the trust space was built over time and before she successfully embraced leap of faith. This internalization happened as her concerns were “heard and realized more fully”. Erika’s group had to overcome both an action orientation and possibly also a gender bias before they fully heard Erika. This gender bias would be quite consistent with Deborah Tannen’s research. Tannen refers to almost every woman she spoke to in her workplace research telling her of the experience “of saying something in a meeting, having it ignored, then hearing the same comment taken up when it is repeated by someone else (nearly always a man). She refers to this as a “Didn’t I just say that?” phenomenon (Tannen, 1994, p. 277). Ironically, perhaps, the group finally hearing what Erika had been saying for some time came when she was verbally attacked by someone else. Peter’s MALT group engaged in early disclosure and early deep listening, which Peter was aware of before making his leap of faith. This early practice being at least partially internalized by the group meant that after the pivotal moment of Peter’s leap of faith, the group was able to really hear Peter. Donna refers to talking until everyone could live with a decision and to drawing out those who hadn’t been speaking, both of which imply a high level of listening. Joan’s story contains a reference to how vital it was that they were “hearing people who were around the table”. The inference is that this was a group practice from the beginning so it could have become partially internalized by the time the first leap of faith occurred. Joan also talked about what a breakthrough this was since the group previously was one where the “group... doesn’t listen to each other”. The importance of listening internally in Joan’s group was reinforced by and modeled with the listening that occurred outside the group, when group members “really” ensured “that (outside) people were listened to”. Finally Joan mentioned as important how the group dealt early on with people coming forward by saying: “Tell us more. Tell us more”. The repetition reinforces the importance of listening to the development of trust inside and outside the group.

6.2.1.3.4 The Practice of Openness to Others

Openness to others is a key feature of at least four of the stories. Groups that wish to build trust can do so through establishing some degree of openness which will in turn prompt a risk-taking open expression in Element Four. Donald noted in particular the developing ability of the group to be “open”, to “embrace diversity”. He talked of the group having conversations in the work place “about your own personal religion... and it wasn’t weird”. The group also confronted closed attitudes in others, as in the case of the racist joke being discussed. Openness was clearly very hard-won but meaningful in Joan’s group where there were all kinds of “fears”, “concerns”, “egos and agendas”. Joan notes people setting these aside “for now” and with goal clarity and clear groundrules people saying “for this time with these ground rules I will trust you”. Joan’s story accurately reflects the reality that in existing organizations where people have worked together for some time, achieving openness is a challenge and is seldom a ‘blank cheque’. Donald mentioned a type of openness when he stated that when new ideas came forward “Nobody would ever say ‘Oh, that will never work’”. Openness came through the absence of judgment in both Linda’s and Pam’s stories about support groups.

6.2.1.3.5 The Resultant Fields: Psychological Safety, Identity and Bonding

Succeeding in establishing a ‘field’ or a ‘sense’ of psychological safety can be linked to the practices of openness and listening in particular. Ervin is the most explicit about psychological safety prompting trust, perhaps because of the presence of the belligerent person in the group. He wrote about the importance to the group of the “engaging intuitive leader” who “almost seamlessly” created “a psychologically safe environment”.

Absence of judgment, which was mentioned earlier, is also a factor in psychological safety in Pam’s and Linda’s groups. Pam mentions the group adhering always to the rule of “no un-requested advice”, which would make it safe for people to tell the kinds of stories to which she refers. Linda specifically refers to feeling “completely safe” and to “not being

judged". The rule in Pam's group was long standing and would have become more and more internalized as the group met over time. Joan notes the importance of dealing positively and sensitively through the norms of behavior with people who had a fear of "being hurt" and of setting aside "a lot of the fears".

The importance of a feeling of safety is referred to in Donald's story. Donald talked about members of the group developing through the conversation about the DePree readings the "courage" to put out ideas and the respect to value those ideas. This attitude held "even when somebody was obviously ridiculous in their thinking". No longer did people "look away or walk away" when threatening statements were made.

As for group identity, I saw in each of the stories an identity that emerged early in the early going of the group. For example, Erika's group was a group dedicated to action to "save our community". Joan's, Donna's and Donald's groups were little groups that 'could',⁵⁸ somehow get it done, groups that despite all odds were starting down the path of successfully addressing long standing and exceedingly difficult challenges, and groups that really talked. Pam's and Linda's groups were safe places for members of the groups to really talk and to be comfortably silent.

The third field, bonding, is implicit or explicit in all of the stories. In one of the most poetic metaphors in the focus group process, Pam wrote of there being no question about the group of five returning: "we just come like migrating birds or returning salmon". Adrienne, who is far more Spartan in her language than Pam, referred to having a "bond for life". Terry, just coming off a twenty-fifth reunion of her group, clearly also felt a bond. The list goes on and on. I would infer from the stories that the bond was emerging in at least some instances before the initial leap of faith.

All of the internalization and 'felt' fields can in turn lead to still more open expression as a group cycles back to Element Three after going through Elements Four and Five. This links

⁵⁸ Here I am referring to the little engine "that could", a small train engine that overcame all sorts of difficulties despite its lack of size; see Piper, W.(1930) *The little engine that could*. New York: Platt and Monk Publishers.

to what Tuckman identifies as occurring after storming, the group's "openness to other group members" (Tuckman, 1965, p. 387).

UBC moments from my journal:

Creating shared leadership really does make a difference. My journal notes about the role of the instructor in the earlier-mentioned course reflect a visible demonstration of just that type of sharing of leadership responsibility half way through the course:

The instructor asked for feedback at the mid-point of the course yesterday. S/he is probably going to change the requirements for the course based on the feedback, which is neat...

6.2.1.4 Element Four: Taking the Leap of Faith Initiative

The fourth element builds explicitly on Mollering's notion of the faith that is involved in building trust (Mollering, 2001). It also draws on Peter's story, which provides perhaps the clearest illustration of any of the stories of this moment.

Element Four fills in a significant gap in previous group development models (Tuckman, 1964; Blanchard et al., 2000; MacIver, 2001), although it does so only in relation to building trust. What this element answers is: what exactly starts a group down the path towards successful resolution through building trust of Storming, Dissatisfaction and Feeling/Frankness? This fourth element explicitly involves someone in the group making a decision, intuitively or rationally, to create a "moment of truth" by 'jumping' off a metaphorical cliff and making a clear and honest statement about something that matters to them, hoping that the group's trust space will protect them. The Leap of Faith can involve anything from an expression of joy and support to an expression of concern, fear or anger. Thus as Tuckman notes, the leap can involve someone articulating a "discrepancy between the individual's personal orientation and that demanded by the task" (Tuckman, 1965, p. 386). Tuckman also noted that group members "became hostile toward one another... as a means of expressing their individuality and resisting the formation of group structure" (Tuckman, 1964, p. 386). However, as I learned from a student in being convinced to change my description of Friction in groups to include also Felt Differences (MacIver, 2001), there are times when this moment simply reflects the individuality of differing

perspectives, orientations or experiences of group members. In some of those instances, hostility is not the issue.

I was really taken, when I was developing the model based on the research findings, by Peter's description of the leap of faith moment. As noted previously, Peter had the following experience leading up to and during Element Four:

By about the third day in the program, I felt that I was already at a turning point...What happened next was truly a leap for me: I shared my misgivings and my perceived shortcomings with my "team." I apologized for my lack of engagement and asked for their understanding that my natural tendencies (and my worries over a very serious accident in the family) had meant that I had not contributed what I felt I could.

A teaching story: I am teaching a class of mature learners, who are divided into two groups. One of the groups has visibly and openly gone through the 'normal' process of group members getting to know each other and establishing a 'trust space' through the first two days of their existence. Group members listen well and are sensitive to each other, while also being achievement- focused—they like to get the assigned group exercises done, and done well.

On the third morning, a member of the group is more than an hour late for class and comes in looking flustered. I speak to this individual and say that I delayed starting the morning's exercise pending their arrival. I am concerned at their state of mind and emotion, I add. "Go ahead", s/he says to me. The exercise proceeds, the group finishes what they were asked to do and the group then engages in what starts out as a standard debriefing. In the course of the debriefing the subject of the team member's lateness comes up. S/he says to the group, "I am so embarrassed. My son told me which bus to take to get to class this morning (the individual in question was from out of town and was staying with one of their children for the duration of the course). I missed my stop and went some ways past it before I clued in. I then had to catch another bus to double back. I felt so incompetent and downright stupid".

The group commiserates, sharing episodes of their own feelings of incompetence. They come back to the main teaching room united, a group that is now ready to have really open dialogue-type conversations and to work together to make sure that each team member gets what she or he wants out of the program. Later the group makes one of the riskier and more thoughtful presentations that I have seen in that type of program. Having theorized for some time that Frankness and Feelings (MacIver, 2001) did not have to involve the negatives and high drama that could be associated with storming (Tuckman, 1965), a

pseudo team (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993), or even dissatisfaction (Blanchard et al., 2000), I now had, through this group, one of the clearest real-life illustrations yet of how a feeling like embarrassment could get a group to the point where it had well developed fields of bond, identity and safety.

Another story which makes fairly explicit the nature of the leap of faith made by a storyteller himself was Ervin's story. Ervin went from being, in the beginning, not feeling "the need to share with others my challenges", to being part of a group where members shared "some of our deepest held beliefs and stories".

In all nine of the other stories told in chapter five, I inferred that there was an explicit moment where someone other than the storyteller stepped out and took the leap. However, this element was not completely evident from the way that each of the people told their story. Thus I checked post hoc on this moment with each of the story tellers. The nine story-tellers agreed with the above-noted speculation on my part regarding the leap of faith. I suspect that not recalling the exact moment of the leap while involved in the group process is typical unless you are the one making the leap or unless you have a group debrief afterwards. Why? I would speculate that unless we went into a group with an awareness of the importance of 'faith' or an awareness of this model, we would get caught up in the moment and not remember the specifics afterwards. However we would, as evidenced by the stories, remember the high trust that the group had.

Several examples will illustrate the leap of faith moment, as confirmed by the storytellers. With Adrienne's group of consultants, the leap probably occurred the first time one of the competing consultants chose to reveal truly proprietary information to the others. With Donald's group, there could have been multiple leaps. A group member would probably have taken a first leap by honestly disclosing his or her views in response to the DePree readings. This may have started with small disclosures and led to 'bigger' disclosures. Later leaps could have occurred in the process of consensus-building, idea generation and the use of the summer student. Alternatively, the DePree conversations may have all contributed to the creation of the trust space and the first leap may have occurred with the consensus-building. As for Donna's group, the group was assigned priority work. That priority work could have jeopardized the consensus approach but didn't. Somewhere in that process, a

member would have challenged the prevailing views and waited to see if the group really stopped its process and worked on achieving consensus together. Similarly, with Joan's story a 'leap of faith' test would have occurred when an important decision had to be made and someone challenged the prevailing view, waiting to see if the group would really continue searching for consensus.

The most 'different' of the ten chapter five stories when it came to the leap of faith moment was Erika's. Erika made several leaps in talking about her frustration with the staff person but there was no embracing of Erika's leaps by the group until Erika's character was called into question by the staff person in question. At that time, one member of the group supported Erika. I had the following e-mail exchange about this process with Erika, which is instructive in understanding this fourth element:

Erika, responding to my summary of her story and accompanying diagram: ... this is fascinating! ... the way that I recall it happening is that most of the group was at once alongside when my character was questioned. It may be that behind the scenes I was unaware of a lobby for support that one or more members initiated, but when it came time to sit down together to discuss the situation there was a clear and undisputed support that had seemed to shift somewhat miraculously overnight.

Sandy: ... What I [was trying to say in my recounting of the story and the diagram]... is that when your character was questioned, one of the members was first in supporting you—the others may have joined in seconds later but one of the group took the 'leap'/initiative to say something like 'this is inappropriate—we have to support Erika'. Conceptually, the idea is that in a group that builds trust we build and build towards a moment where there is a breakthrough. Something happens (in this case the attack on you) which places the group on the edge of the leap of faith cliff. In your case they were well prepared to leap, with all that you had done with them and the credibility you had built with them. But still, one member had to say something in support of you to 'break the ice'/start the process and the rest of the group chooses to join in or not (note: there may have been previous instances where

one or more people supported you before this but what makes this ‘character’ moment noteworthy is that the entire group joined in and you had that wonderful “group vulnerability”...). Is that accurate?

Erika: Yes, I would say that is accurate. It felt as if the whole group moved, but there is always one person who takes the courage to speak first...

UBC moments from my journal:

As Peter’s MALT example from chapter two illustrates, getting ready to make the leap of faith can be very personally disconcerting, not to mention emotionally exhausting. In the same class I have written about throughout this chapter I had a truly profound experience of both safety and vulnerability. The experience came towards the end of the class after the group of us from the cohort made a presentation to the others in that class about the development of our cohort process. We did so in response to a request by the instructor for class members to provide illustrations of the type of relationship-building activity that was the focus of that particular course. Following our presentation, one of the other class members made a statement that felt to all of us like a personal attack on us as people and as leaders. For a variety of reasons, the matter was not addressed in class that day. The next class the instructor created an opportunity for conversation about the previous class. We had requested this opportunity so once again the instructor was demonstrating shared leadership. After four class members talked but did not directly address the issue, thus avoiding taking the leap of faith, I took the leap...

What is most instructive, other than the result of the leap, which I reflect on at the end of the next element, was the agony that I went through before taking the leap, very much like Peter. Here again are notes taken directly from my journal, altered in their details to protect anonymity:

I am struggling with how to approach today’s class after the fiasco of what happened yesterday. The cohort presented using the fish bowl method (where you present by holding an unscripted meeting), at my urging. We got a bit wrapped up in talking with each other, as we do naturally when we meet—and made at least two mistakes... However—even with that I wasn’t prepared for the reaction from one individual—it sounded to me (with tone of voice added to the words) like the following—“I feel upset and pissed off because I went from subject to object because of what you just did as a group in your presentation”. Then came what felt to me like an attack on our cohort members’ collective failure as leaders to deal with/promote/get involved in certain issues Maybe the feeling of being under siege is accurate after all. In a way the whole thing underlines the power of the cohort, what a safe place it has been to be yourself and not have to worry about being attacked... You could also feel the aura of the cohort for the first time when we did the fishbowl. Prior to that we had consciously and deliberately spread ourselves out throughout the classroom...

I tossed and turned last night for hours about the feeling of violation what went with the perceived feeling of being attacked and what I want to say, if anything, if we have a round robin around the group today. Part of me just wants to retreat to the role of observer and let today wash over me. Part of me wants to make a clear statement of what I felt as the attacking statement was made about us and what I have felt since—as the statement was made I agreed with the first part of it but as ‘Hector’ started into the attack part I thought “where is this coming from?” and “how does this fit with what this class is about?”. ... One of the cohort members said as s/he was exiting that s/he felt like not coming back today. I felt like that last night as well, as my reaction grew stronger and stronger as the evening went on. Most of all I don’t feel like going in to today’s class, which is designed around another potentially vulnerable situation. We’ll see. Gail’s view was that staying away would simply underline that the others in the class who felt that the cohort group were separate from the rest of the class were right all along. It will be interesting to see what I decide to do...

6.2.1.5 Element Five: Embracing the Leap of Faith Response.

The fifth element is about a group taking positive and affirming ‘action’ in response to the trust test (i.e. the fourth element’s ‘leap of faith’ or ‘moment of truth’). This fifth element is the moment when the whole group actually establishes its initial or deepened layer of trust. The embrace by the group’s visible feedback thus creates a bonding moment. As noted earlier some groups will initially or forever fail to build on or react to the leap made as the fourth element. This happened at first and repeatedly with Erika and with Jill, both of whom persisted in making the leap.

The clearest illustration of this element is, once again, from Peter’s story: “my own ‘confession’ led to some much deeper exchanges on the part of a number of my team-mates as well, and it was at that point (in my recollection, at least) that we just took off as a team”.

The fifth element builds on Covey’s ideas of responding differently to presenting stimuli. In other words, where we may have in the past ignored a leap of faith by a group member, it is vital, in groups where trust-building is important, for one or more members to initially respond positively to a leap of faith. Where groups that do not build strong trust would revert back to working together on task or to a less-threatening process, the trusting group

provides what is clearly a very positive response. In so doing, to quote Erika, the vulnerability in the group shifts from the person making the leap “to the whole group”.

Thus, the embracing would have involved Joan and Donna and all other members of the collaborative groups embracing that first trust ‘test’ as to whether the group would really invest the time needed to continue the group process until everyone was in agreement. In the case of Adrienne’s group, a two-step form of response and reciprocity was involved—all group members being enthusiastic about the propriety information that was shared followed by all group members sharing their own propriety information as the process evolved. A similar process, but one about disclosure of emotions or critical life events, was involved with Pam’s group.

It may be argued that the risk-taker and the person requiring courage in this model is the person taking the leap of faith. The issue of courage, for some, leads to a question: are we most brave when we do something that seems scary or when we are not afraid of what others might find scary? For the purposes of this model, the fear that the person making the leap may or may not feel is *not* the issue. When someone makes the leap it requires risk-taking by all parties in order to achieve group trust. Risks are taken by the person taking the initial leap, the person or persons who immediately embrace the leap and the rest of the group who, as Erika notes, then join in taking on the vulnerability. In some instances, where the person taking the leap is a natural risk-taker, the greatest act of courage may be on the part of those who embrace the leap.

Before their eventual breakthrough, Erika’s group had numerous cycles through Element Four and then back to Element Two (in their case going back to a task oriented activity). These cycles underline the courage and risk issues involved here. After someone takes the Leap of faith, the group has a choice to move forward to Element Five or to cycle back to one of the previous three elements. In other words, they can grab ‘the moment’, thus making it a ‘turning point’ as Peter said. Alternatively they can leave the moment sitting, almost as if it never occurred.

Leaving the moment 'sitting' is an explicit part of the MacIver model (MacIver, 2001), where groups cycle back to formation after fracture, fragmentation, frank statements and expressions of feeling. What does it sound like when a potential leap of faith moment is left sitting? Various situations in story #1 from chapter two, where 'Jill' spoke and was effectively ignored by her group, illustrate what a group reverting back to Element Two without embracing the leap can sound like. Here is an excerpt from my journal notes that went out as part of Story #1, with my response at the time of writing my notes to what group members were saying and doing recorded in italic in brackets:

Jill interjects: Can I say something here? We haven't defined the problem yet.

We're not dealing with the issues. What is the problem?

Martha, the chair: Thank you. *(Note: I always find it astonishing that we can use an expression of so-called appreciation to shut someone down).*

Jill: What is the problem? How are we going to get at it?

Martha: I will hand it over to Gail.

Gail (who is following up on an assignment she took on for the group): I have prepared information for you... I had a lot of frustration around the phone calls to get this information.

Jill: I'm sorry I'm an 'S'⁵⁹.

Kathy, referring to an upcoming activity: Do we have the phone call at noon now?

(Note: Here I see that the team is going into full flight focusing on the results of their process; people are talking and no-one is listening or cross-referencing those who have spoken before)...

Once a group has experienced a leap to which there is a positive embracing response (i.e. through Element Five), it can cycle through Element Four again any number of times. This is consistent with the idea of trusting groups building layers of trust over time. The cyclical

⁵⁹ Here Jill is referring to a Sensing preference in Myers Briggs—someone who takes in information using the five senses, as distinct from the 'N', Intuitive preference, which was the preference of the people who made up the rest of the group. An 'N' is more likely to focus on taking in theoretical, abstract information. See Myers (1980).

idea expressly moves this Model away from the idea of there always being a single incident of storming or dissatisfaction.

UBC moments from my journal:

Having a group respond positively to a leap of faith is exhilarating. Here is what I wrote about a couple of days after the class:

The conflict thing from the other day—well the conflict thing worked itself out in a very positive manner. Prior to the class I wrote out several times my own description of the problem behavior and how it had felt to me. I actually studied this to make sure that I could be constructive in my comments if I chose to comment but I desperately wanted someone else in the class to address the issue, not me. The instructor... opened it up to the floor for discussion about the process in the previous class. S/he then said s/he was going to ask for written reactions if we did not get all of the issues out orally. I was bound and determined to have what needed to be said done orally... but I did not want to go first. So I waited through four statements. One of the statements in particular was touching but it did not deal with the 'elephant in the middle of the room'... I let the silence settle in for a few seconds after the fourth person spoke (it seemed like an eternity)... So I took a breath and plunged in, opening by saying that I had had lots of time to think because I had tossed and turned for hours about this... I then pretty much said what I had written out in my practice notes just in case I felt I had to speak... I turned to 'Hector' (and here my preparation coming in early and picking a seat near where I thought 'Hector' would sit paid off because I was right beside him) and said what I had to say about how it felt directly to him, keeping his gaze the whole time... 'Hector' looked pale and made it clear that it not been his intent to have the effect that he had... He and I had a very positive conversation during the break, building on our exchange earlier... Also after the break, one of my classmates told me that she had observed at least one member of the class holding their breath when I started speaking to 'Hector' and not releasing it until I had spoken for some time... I was spent after all of that... It takes so much out of me to do what I did but it absolutely had to be done by someone—the neat thing was the feeling of release by the class afterwards—there was a wonderful joyous feel to the presentations and questions which followed. The pall really was lifted...

6.2.1.6 Element Six: Reaping the Trust Benefits.

The final element is the one where groups achieve cooperation, connection and/or success. Here again I have combined two components of the model from Korsgaard et al. (2003), cooperation and success, and explicitly added an component, connection, which harkens back to the support groups in Tuckman and to networking and diffusion idea in Senge et al.

(Senge et al., 1999). It is noteworthy in the stories that the bond is referred amongst task oriented groups as well as in the two instances of 'support-type groups'.

The benefits are exemplified in references in each of the stories. Adrienne, the task-focused businessperson, talked about how the group produced "the best" of 70 or so different courses and also how "we became more than friends". Joan referred to twenty-year veterans of the organization talking about this being "the only time" where they had seen people work together as a team and to the group also getting done the job that they were assigned. Donald spoke of the development of a widely used new model and of creating something "miraculous" in terms of results and process. Donna's group came up with a report that was good on its own and that also provided "a model for the other disciplines". On the people side of Donna's group, everyone was so positive about the product, the group and the group process that everyone "signed on" for that second phase of work together. Ervin writes of success in both an assignment and in establishing enduring relationships. Terry's and Shauna's linked stories both had similar results: producing high value for the public sector clients and a strong bond. Shauna also added that "fun" was an important result.

In the support type groups, understandably, the process involved intangible results. Pam writes about getting to a place where they went "beyond right thinking and wrong thinking". The success of the group is also indicated in the support and therapeutic value that would come from group members telling the kinds of stories that she refers to as "the gamut". Linda took away stillness and self-awareness, among other things.

It should be noted that I deliberately avoided referring to high performance, the explicit focus of many people who work with the Tuckman model. The success component could mean high performance, depending on the mandate given to a group and the purpose established by the group. It could also mean completely redefining the task/mandate because of some of the insights gained through trust.

The resultant emotions, bonding and group success can follow after a group builds trust following the embracing of a leap of faith. These results are well-reflected in one person's

experience in story #3 from chapter two. The group in question made a very risky and successful presentation that involved two members of the group joining in song in front of a large audience. Dawn, who was one of the two singers, wrote the following in her journal:

Our presentation went well! Everything was smooth and led into everything else just fine. I was scared to sing with Harry—I still can't believe that I sang like that in front of all of those people... when the team told me not to worry because they were with me it helped. I knew that they were behind me [us] and that it didn't matter if we flubbed it... It went well. I really felt that we were all together and were confident and comfortable with our segments... sure, everyone was nervous but that tension was also a 'high'...

6.2.2 Examples of Part 1 of the Six Element Model

An important question in relation to the model at this juncture is what does the process of a real live group look like, put together in the form of the diagrams used earlier? In this section I will present diagrams for one of the stories told earlier, Peter's story, and for the autoethnographic story told in this chapter.

6.2.2.1 Peter's MALT Story

Peter's MALT story basically leads you through the six elements sequentially. Peter's story is the single story which aided me the most in initially developing the model because the steps are enunciated so clearly by 'Peter'. Many other factors make Peter's story noteworthy. They include the specific prior attention to group member diversity by faculty at RRU, the amount of explicit group preparation for trust through a plenary sessions on group work, and the presence of an outside observer/facilitator (i.e. me) to aid in of the creation or reinforcement of the 'field' of psychological safety. It is also significant that some early disclosure in group was a group activity that contributed to earning trust and to other activities which created the trust space.

Peter's MALT story and the Six Elements of Trust-Building in Groups

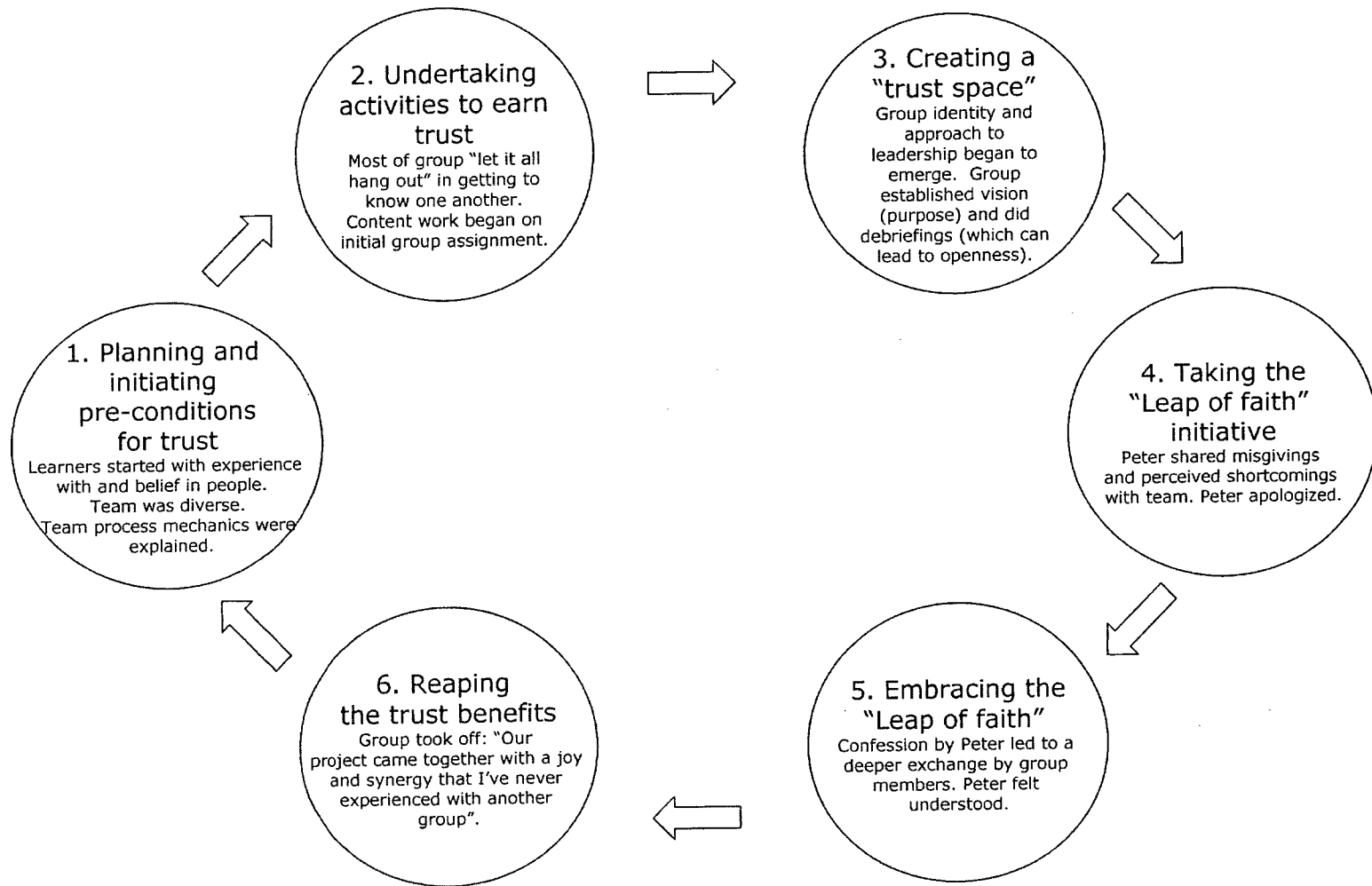


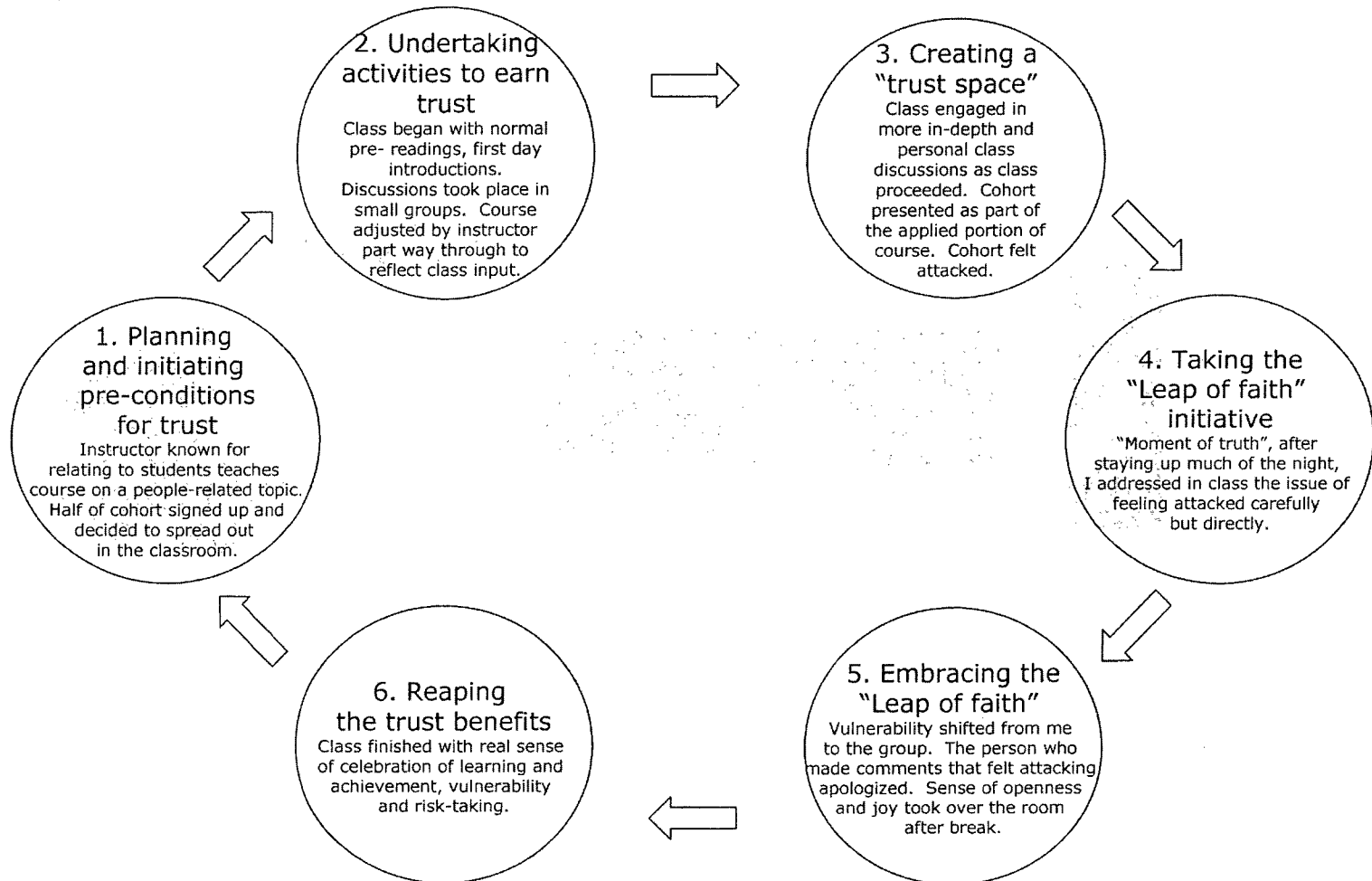
Diagram 6-2: Peter's MALT story (see previous page)

6.2.2.2 The UBC People-oriented Course Story

The UBC people-oriented course story was intertwined in this chapter. This story is notable in the way that it, like Peter's story, tells of the raw emotions that a person making the leap of faith may go through. In this case, the person going through the emotions was me. The story is also noteworthy in that it shows that a group can build some level of trust even if it is together for a relatively short period of time (three weeks in this case), it is regularly broken down into subgroups (i.e. the reading groups referred to earlier in the chapter) and it is made up of more than twelve members (i.e. there were eighteen members in this case). Like Peter's story, this story leads you through the six elements sequentially.

Diagram 6-3: The Story relating to my People-oriented UBC course (see next page)

The UBC People-Related Course Story and the Six Element Model



6.3 The Three-dimensional Version of the Six Element Model

Diagram 6-4 (see next page) shows many different curved and cycling arrows, which should be envisioned as a set of Senge's reinforcing loops, sometimes cycling downwards (Senge, 1990; MacIver, 2001), but eventually cycling upwards as a group builds layers of trust. I will explain in this section how this works and then use Erika's and Joan's stories to illustrate the cycle.

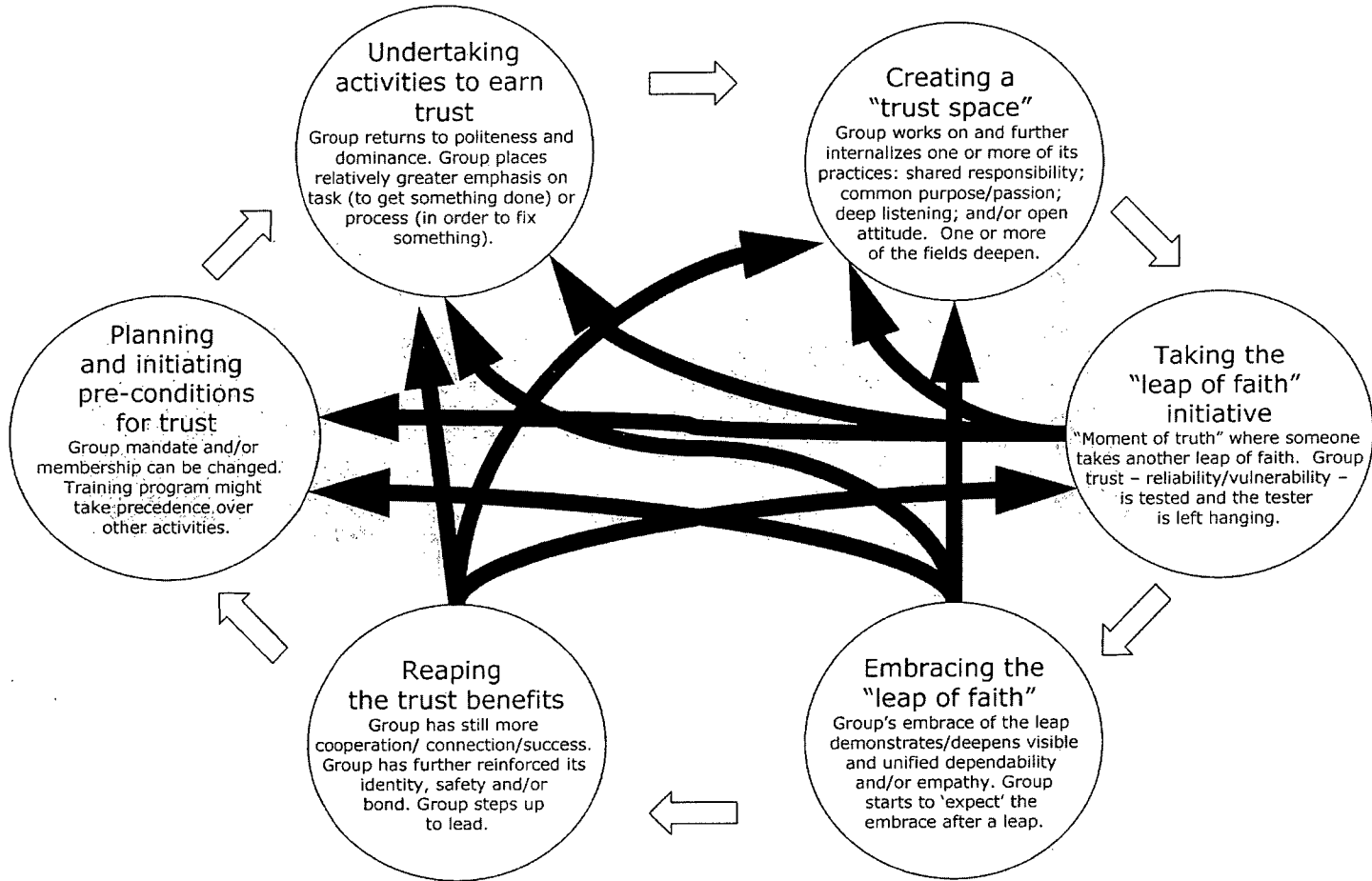
6.3.1 The Theory

6.3.1.1 The Key Concept: Systems Loops

The key concept in understanding how groups really deepen trust over time is focusing on these arrows in the centre as representing three dimensions, not two. These curved arrows in the center suggest the most trusting groups we experience in our organizational lives do not cycle around an orderly oval, but swirl back, forth, and around, forming a complex web. Thus once a group reaches the fourth element, the moment of truth, leap of faith opportunity it can either proceed on to the fifth element or it can move directly to any of the preceding elements. I should note here that upward or downward swirling, or a regression that stays 'flat' or goes downward, can start with an earlier element. For example, a group that finds its membership is not working early in the group process can go back to the first element and can plan and initiate anew pre-conditions for trust. The composite RRU faculty group described in Chapter six did just that. However, an upward swirl or a downward swirl that eventually leads to trust is more likely to start with the fourth element because it is in that element that a higher level of risk-taking is displayed than elsewhere. Thus, in Erika's story, the group swirled back repeatedly to Element Two activities after Erika took the risk of describing her concerns with the staff person. The downward swirl concept is developed in MacIver (2002), where reference is made to groups "spinning downwards in a vicious negative spiral of rumor-mongering, backstabbing, boss-hating" and the like (p. 116).

Diagram 6-4: The Six Element Model for Building Trust in Groups: Systems Loops

The Systemic Reinforcing Loops of the Six Element Model for Building Trust in Groups



What I will do now is examine alternative ways in which groups could move to one of the 'preceding' elements.

6.3.1.2 Examples of Groups that Countered Downward Spirals

There are some groups that cycle upwards in an organization that has been in a downward spiral. Joan's group did just that in an organization that had been in a steep downward spiral because of failure to complete certain tasks (i.e. where the history was that "making hard choices" had been "previously avoided"). For example, Joan refers to her group having a success making a recommendation (Element Six). The group then cycled back to Element Three: "we were then able to go into the allocation model and use the same process again". They cycled back with the momentum and positive feelings that went with completing a task in a previously downward swirling organization.

Other groups may cycle upwards when they change the focus of downward-swirling activities (Element Two) and start to move into creating a trust space (Element Three) while so doing. This was essentially what was happening in story #4 in chapter two, where I describe two groups that got caught up in task consciously switching to working on process. However, unlike Joan's group, which spiraled upward from Element Six in a downward-spiraling organization, these groups were in a downward spiral themselves before spiraling upward from Element Four. One group I describe in story #4 had several interesting exchanges in the debriefing process that marked their return to Element Two and that gave evidence of the downward spiral. The following comments were made early in the debriefing:

Nellie: ...When you feel the momentum [of doing tasks] going, you don't want to stop. You forget that rest gives you power. We became powerless..."

David: ...Respect goes beyond being polite—it involves really listening. We have to be more trusting of each other and put aside the ways we are used to doing [things]...

Peter: Regina had a great analogy "... just one more quarter and we'll win—[it was like] slot machine hour." (Peter is referring here to how addictive and seductive it can be to get completely absorbed by a task. In that state it is easy to convince yourself that you are accomplishing great things and that you can check things off your 'to do list')

The following exchange occurred later, about fifteen or twenty minutes into the debriefing. Please note in particular the mention of the 'chicken and egg' issue of process and product:

Regina: There is one thing about our process right from the beginning. We set priorities and went about jigsawing [sharing responsibilities] but not everyone [was] in sync. It would have helped me [to be in sync].

Roberta: It would have helped to clarify definitions. Peter, you had a different definition of action plans [from the rest of us].

Joanne: We lack a clear understanding [of what's expected of us in this program]. Is it all process? That's not clear. What is the importance of the final product?

Regina: It's both. We have to produce a product, incorporating what we learn. The key is going through the process.

Nellie: And debriefing...

Another example of a group that swirled downward before it headed upward is told in story #1 in chapter two. This is a story based on a group that for one focus group member was her most trusting group ever. That group cycled back to Element Two in the immediate aftermath of frustrating themselves. A 'lone wolf' in the group, Jill, repeatedly took leaps of faith that were ignored by the group (i.e. they moved through Element Four but did not get to Element Five by embracing her leaps). The group had paid attention to process in a way that more or less suited all but one of their members (i.e. Jill). They are described as conducting an orderly meeting that effectively ignored Jill. They began their upward spiral in responding, finally, to sentiments, voiced by Jill, who was the lone task-oriented person in the story. Jill stated: "We need to get focused. I'm in sheer panic. We don't know where we're going. We have [essentially] one day left". My field notes that were used to provide

all of the dialogue cited in this story show how a group can spiral downwards as it effectively ignores such signs of problems as nervous check-in comments, statements of concerns and even a member (i.e. Jill) absenting herself from the group for a period of time. All of this occurred before Jill's group came to really 'hear' her, embrace her leaps of faith and agree to move back to Element Two and focus on task activities. They then quickly moved to Element Three as they internalized a new way of operating and bonded as a group.

6.3.1.3 The Chaos Aspect in the Third Dimension

"Chaos is not bad. It is what it is" (Bergquist, 1993, p. 36). Some people would like any model to operate in a step by step fashion. Thus the model could appear true to the idea that 'good' groups simply go through the elements one by one and come out at Element Six, ready to be disbanded or have new members added and start the cycle all over again. Here is where I stress that the Senge systems reinforcing loops and the MacIver (2002) material combine to create a very different view of the reality of group process.

The MacIver model (see appendix 3, including a diagram of the model) notes that where one group member starts to talk frankly or with feelings to other members, the group can then go in one of three directions. One direction is a happy one, proceeding on to a full reflective or generative dialogue. A less happy direction is back to Formation for another round of politeness. When a group returns to Formation, the group members consciously or unconsciously 'forget' the 'incident' (i.e. that someone dared to express honest feelings—positive or negative—about the group or stated frankly what they thought of the group's progress). The third alternative is to go to Fragmentation where typically sub-groups gossip and complain about one another. A more severe and potentially disabling form of Fragmentation is Fracture, splintering into semi-permanent sub-groups that really attack one another. This state of Fracture, if carried to a dysfunctional extreme, can result in a group getting to the state of Foes. In the state of Foes the sub-groups or members are destructive and engage in autistic hostility in relation to one another.

The MacIver model in this aspect is like various Senge archetypes (see appendix #3 for more on the archetypes) that have balancing loops and loops that cycle downwards and upwards. These loops include the limiting actions of the limits to growth model (again see appendix #3; this archetype is the conceptual base for the entirety of the book *The Dance of Change*). The Senge archetypes also have side-effects loops which come out of previous action or inaction. The net effect of these multiple loops is that they can take positive momentum and reverse it or show how a positive direction can be sideswiped 'off course' by another loop. The only way of preventing these reversals in fortune, other than luck, is to anticipate the various negative loops and take steps in advance to counter them. One of the most basic examples of a momentum-shifting change is that we can be doing positive things in a group and forget a multiplicity of the small things that got us there (e.g. politeness and common courtesy to other people; taking the time for personal renewal). Then the group can be seized by the learning disability, the parable of the 'boiled frog' (i.e. things go wrong slowly, like a frog gradually being boiled to death and staying in the water because it is so gradual; see Senge, 1990, p. 22). Put another way, one or more small problem things becomes 'the straw that broke the camel's back', the small event that causes a larger collapse.

There are all kinds of possible 'swirls' in the Six Element Model. For example, if a group moved back to Element One from Element Four, the group could be disbanded and have members added to it. This can be done either in reaction to the group reaching this point (e.g. realizing that a leap of faith will not occur with this membership). New members could also be added in complete ignorance of the systems effect of adding new members (e.g. the normal ignorance of group process in many organizations, adding a member because someone in power thinks a new member would help the group or taking someone away because the member in question is needed elsewhere). The positive version of the cycle would have the group adding one or more members who have a capacity to help the group take the leap or shedding the truly destructive group member like Ann in Story #5.

Alternatively if a group moved to Element Two, the group can act pretty much like the group that moves back to formation in the MacIver model. The group thus acts polite and

focuses on being 'nicey-nicey'. Effectively the group ignores the danger and vulnerability associated with the moment of truth. In so doing they act like the two characters in the movie *Planes, Trains and Automobiles* (Hughes, 1987). In that movie, the characters back off dealing with uncomfortable issues, effectively saying "pew, that was close, we almost took a collective risk and/or approached collective vulnerability... glad we're back discussing the weather or the taxi ride we just had or 'how about the Bears football team?'"

As part of looping over to Element Two, many groups will focus explicitly on task in order to 'forget' and 'obscure' the frightening moment. This is possibly what Erika's group was doing after she pointed out the problem with the staff member. Some groups, however, can make this a conscious positive. A group's members, for example, on the verge of making a presentation or doing something else that is essential, can focus on task while explicitly committing themselves to a later process debriefing where they talk about the 'leap'. Others, in another upwardly swirling moment, can elect to place a greater emphasis on process work (e.g. to have a facilitator in or in some other way do the necessary preparing to make sure that they can approach the leap of faith in true psychological safety). Here one can visualize Evel Knievel⁶⁰ or some other stunt driver driving to the edge of his/her jump, almost leaping off but instead cycling back to make a better, safer approach to the jump. Groups that cycle 'back' or 'up' to Element Two and decide to have a greater process emphasis will, in many cases, succeed.

Some groups will move directly back or up from Element Four to Element Three. As part of so doing they will examine their identity, leadership or way of operating explicitly. Thus groups may make temporary or permanent changes in formal leadership (e.g. with someone with conflict resolution skills becoming chair), add new ground rules (e.g. "there will be no personal attacks in our group process" or "we will focus on/describe problem behaviors and never, ever label people as the problem") or even fundamentally altering their identity or purpose (e.g. "I think we need to be a risk-taking, process oriented group in order to get through the discussion that we just verged on having. Does everyone agree with this?").

⁶⁰ Evel Knievel was a stunt driver who was famous for undertaking supposedly impossible and death-defying stunts.

This model then, tackles any number of myths and stereotypes. One of these myths is the notion that you only get to make a first impression once; groups that build trust can add or subtract members and/or engage in more telling revealing conversations with each other (Elements One and Two) where they really do form a whole new ‘first real impression’ of one another. A second mythical notion is that you establish a vision or groundrules for all time. The suggestion in cycling back to Element Three is that we can benefit from preparation for the leap of faith. Yet another myth is that you always address a problem ‘in the moment’. Many groups need an overnight period of time in order to rest, pull their thoughts together or energize themselves for constructive conversation. However, when you delay dealing with a problem overnight it is also easy to just ignore the problem (i.e. to go back to formation).

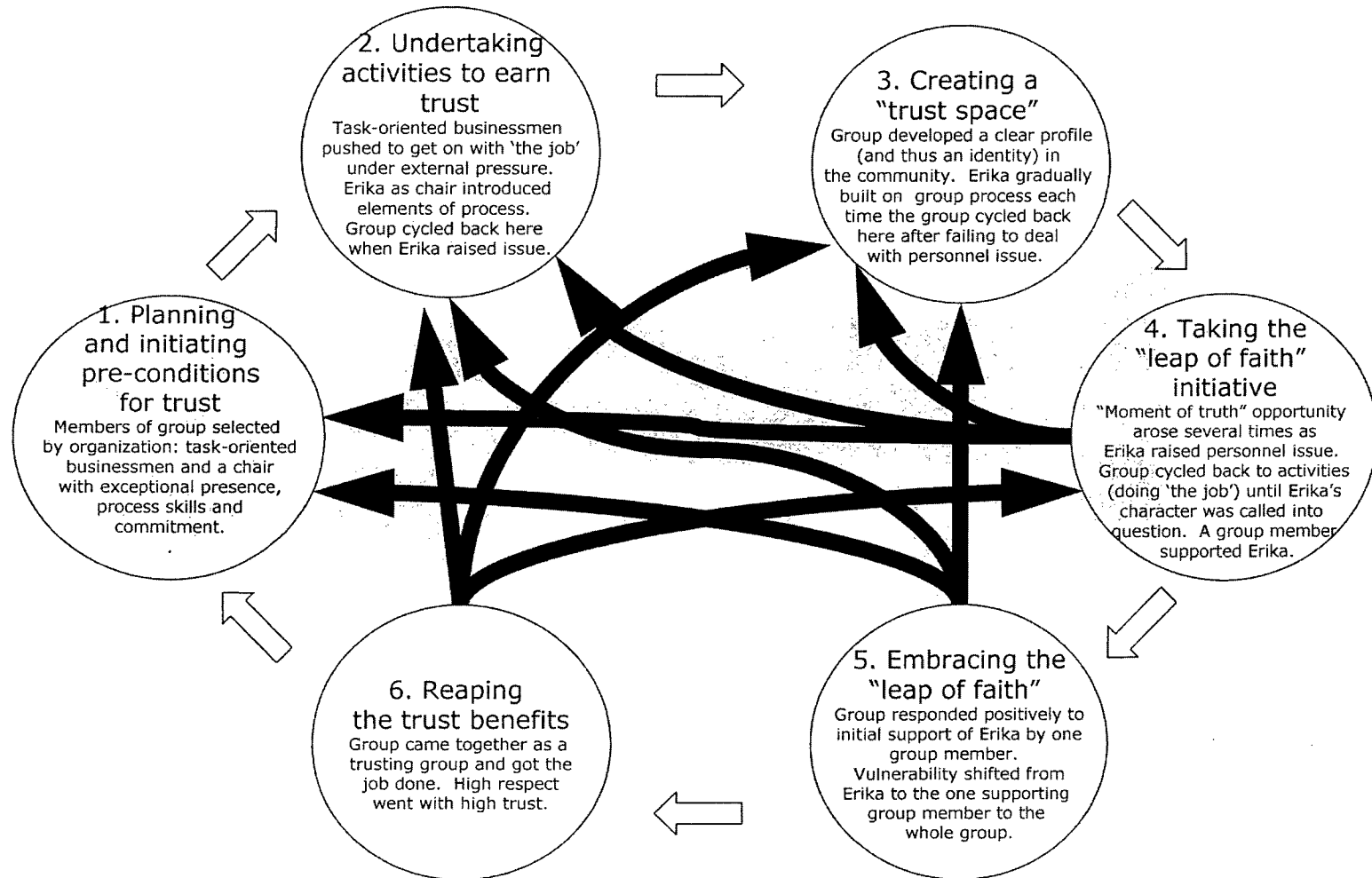
6.3.2 Detailed Examples of the Upward Spiral

6.3.2.1 Erika’s Story

There are many swirls to Erika’s story, which is particularly noteworthy for the number of times that Erika made the leap and the group failed to embrace the leap (thus going back to work, reinvesting itself in the task activities of Element Two). The group didn’t respond to Erika’s leap until after the intervening event of the hired staff member attacking Erika’s character when one member took the leap, saying that he now realized that Erika had had a point all along. In the diagram, then you should visualize a number of swirls back from Element Four to Element Two. The group would then move to Element Three as Erika helped them improve their process and as they finished more tasks and felt better about group progress. Then Erika would raise the staff issue and off they would be back to Element Two again.

Diagram 6-5: Erika’s story (see next page)

Erika's story and the Six Elements of Trust-Building in Groups

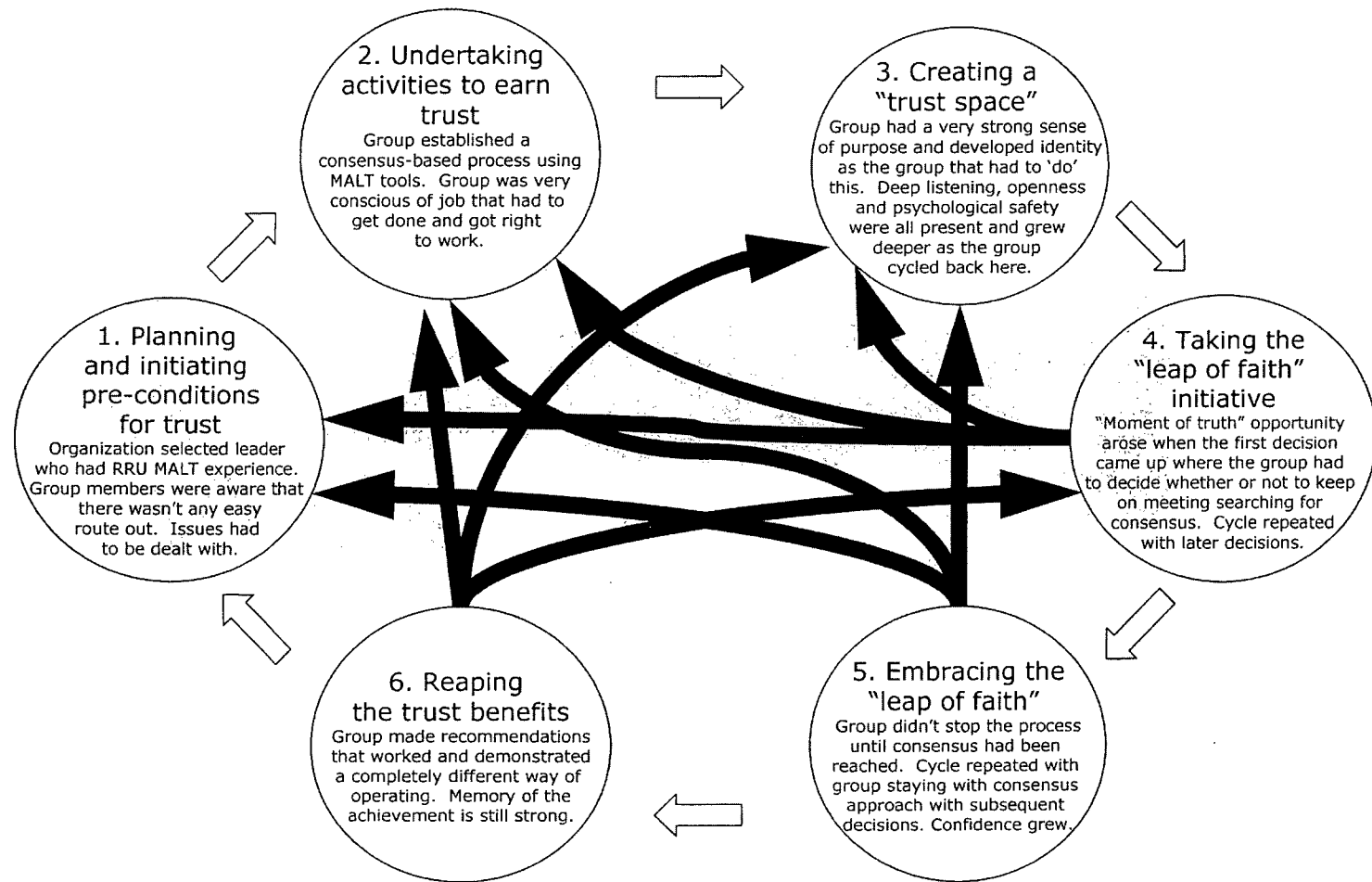


6.3.2.2 Joan's Story

Where Erika's story featured a group that repeatedly cycled from Element Four back to Element Two before finally making a breakthrough, Joan's story features a group that make experienced repeated Element Four leaps of faith that were responded to positively with an Element Five embrace by Joan and/or the rest of the group. Each of these leaps involved a test of the resolve of Joan and/or the group to stay with the collaborative process despite the pressures on the group to get its job done. With each succeeding leap of faith, the trust would have gotten deeper. As seen in the diagrams in appendix #9, the dynamics of Donna's and Donald's groups would have been similar around different team members testing the collaborative environment and having trust affirmed by the group embracing the challenge to that environment by hearing them out before moving on. A major factor in all three of these examples is the group making the time to do the necessary collaborative work. This work would typically take much more time than a simple vote or a decision coming from the chair after s/he heard people out. It would also have *commitment*, which was such a key part of the success celebrated in each of these stories.

Diagram 6-6: Joan's story (see next page)

Joan's story and the Six Elements of Trust-Building in Groups



6.4 Summary and Where to From Here

This chapter described the six element model. Specific ideas from the literature and specific components of the nineteen stories told in various places in these materials illustrate the model. The nineteen stories include: the five stories prepared for the stage two focus groups, the eleven stories taken from the stage two focus groups and three of my autoethnographic stories. Of particular importance are the specific examples and quotes from the stories, because they are intended to make the model real through the real live dialogue taken from my field notes, storytelling by focus group participants, and my own stories. The examples hopefully also make the model clear enough that they set the stage for the next chapter, in which the model is tested in 'real' life situations and in which the third dimension is illustrated even more clearly.

CHAPTER SEVEN: LIVING MY LEARNING: THE MODEL AND ITS APPLICATION TO RRU FACULTY AND THE UBC COHORT

7.1 Introduction

This chapter has great personal meaning for me. In this chapter I describe the two most remarkable groups of which I have been part. One of the groups is several groups, being a composite of the best of my many RRU faculty teams. The second is the UBC cohort of which I am a part and to which I have referred previously.

Erika, in telling her story, noted that “it would be interesting to gather the views of others in the group” in order to get a fuller picture of building trust in her economic development group. This chapter does just that. Because of my membership in, and my continuing access to participants in the groups described in this chapter, I was able to secure multiple and differing perspectives on the building of trust in the groups in question.

I have two other reasons for telling the stories that follow. Since I was part of both of these groups, I could bring to the story-compilation and story-telling my detailed knowledge of the emerging model. As well, both groups were of relatively long duration. Thus, as I pored over all of the possible stories I could tell, I found that these groups provided the very best illustrations I could find of the specifics involved in the deepening and layering of trust in a group over time.

I have an important caution to this chapter. My re-telling of the stories of both groups undoubtedly reflects even more than the previous chapters my own biases (e.g. in the choices I made as to which oral statements and which e-mail correspondence and the like to include). I suspect the biases in this chapter are quite consistent with the biases displayed in earlier chapters, including my deep desire to be part of groups that make a difference, my desire to relate to others emotionally, my struggles with my introversion, my commitment to

work through conflict and my belief that teachers should live the subject matter that they teach.

I should note as well that my reflection on these two groups was not the initial focus of my work. The reflection that follows was an outgrowth of my work on my dissertation, my regular practice of journaling, and my realization that these two groups exemplified everything that I was trying to describe. Here is how the stories I am about to tell were compiled. I first told an earlier version of the composite story of the RRU faculty to the stage two on line focus groups. I did so in order to illustrate and role-model the vulnerability involved in story-telling about trusting groups in which focus group members had participated. I knew also that MALT learners would be likely to have a common interest in and would be likely to relate to the experience of MALT faculty. I then shared an earlier version of the composite description with members of the teams that together made up the composite group. In so doing, I secured significant and helpful input. In the case of the UBC cohort, I had an idea in mind starting in the summer of 2003 that I would like to tell parts of our story in my dissertation. However, this remained just an idea until the day I made a presentation to the cohort in the early summer of 2004 as part of a day when we each outlined our most current work. In preparing for the presentation, I decided the best way to illustrate the early version of the model to the cohort and to secure meaningful feedback about the validity of the model was to match it against my understanding of our experience. On getting positive feedback on that presentation from the cohort, I began to collect more information from cohort members as a part of the stage three focus group process.

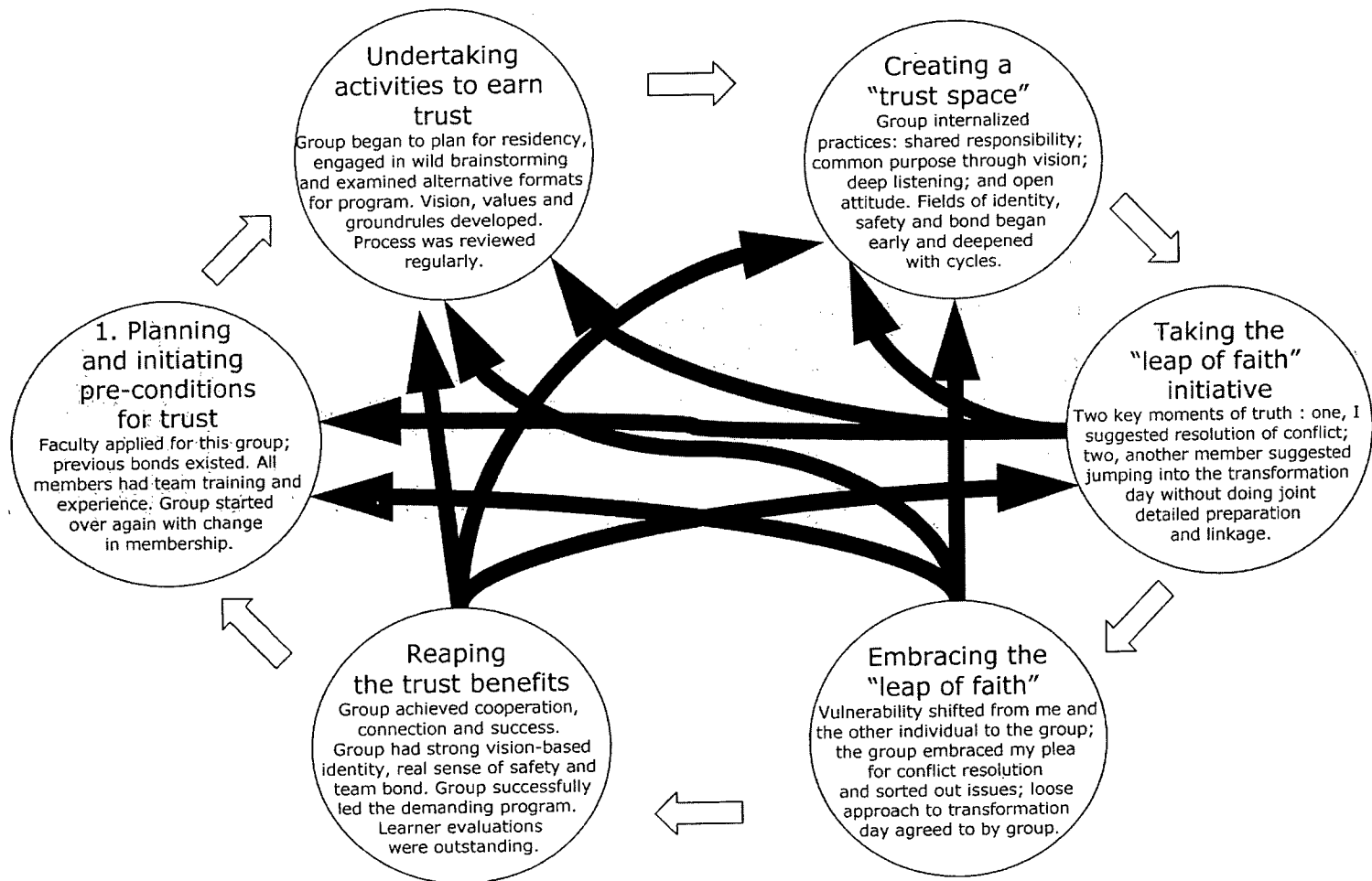
Personal reflection: Authenticity and courage are two of the values I hold most dear. Congruity between what I say and teach and the way I live my life is one of the standards to which I try and hold myself. The epitaph I would like on my gravestone is: "He really, really cared". All of that said, there are days when I say to myself, "Living my life this way is a lot of work, even though I believe in everything I do. Sometimes I would like my life to be a whole lot easier". Being a part of faculty groups and a cohort group that built trust was a lot of work in the early going but ultimately made my life both easier and infinitely more fulfilling. Investment in building group trust in the right groups is one of those investments that keeps on paying off for life!

7.2 RRU Faculty: a Real-live Illustration of Layering

I sought to live my learning and teaching about groups throughout the five years that I taught at Royal Roads University. In those five years I was a member of at least twenty five different faculty groups, seven of them for the five week summer program and the remainder for week-long executive programs. The best groups embodied the six element model. Below I draw on and reflect on my peak experiences as a faculty member in MALT through describing a composite group of the best of those faculty teams. Each of those groups invested significant time and energy and group members invested of themselves in preparation and in learning how to work together long before we had learners on site. Each of those groups thus earned trust and built a trust space. Eventually the trust was tested through several leaps of faith, two of which I highlight below. The second of those leaps of faith built on the first, thus resulting in a layering or deepening effect. The end result was the delivery of highly successful programs, as assessed by the learners of the day, and a bond that lingers to this day.

Diagram 7-1: RRU Faculty (see next page)

RRU Faculty Story and the Six Element Model for Building Trust in Groups



Element One:

The best of the MALT faculty groups I was part of embraced our mandate to build a learning community made up of all faculty and participant learners. Our givens as MALT faculty were that we were to provide in the first residency and executive programs a team-based leadership program that incorporated leadership challenges and four instructional seminars into competency-based learning. Although permanent staff (i.e., those rare individuals in those days who worked full time at the university) were relied on for information and connections, we resolved to have shared leadership responsibility in each of the best of the teams of which I was a part. Our size was a positive factor as well. We numbered between four and five members in the summer program and up to nine members in the executive program. All of us had chosen to teach in the program, most of us having heard about the program and taking the initiative to inquire about the opportunity to teach in it on our own.

The most trusting of the faculty groups had some additional Element One factors 'going for us'. I combine those factors in the composite description of the faculty group:

We had many aspects of diversity built in to what we did and who we were that daily tested our ability to work well together as a group. Ultimately, this was one of our major sources of trust as well. We had a real mixture of head and heart, with two of us being highly intuitive feeling types and the other three being more objective thinking types. We also had three highly extraverted types and two deep introverts. The extraverts came to respect my introversion in a way I really appreciated, saying something like "oh yeah, you need that alone introversion time, don't you?" when I indicated a desire to be quiet. One of us was really focused on time and deadlines and I, and one of the others, could blissfully ignore time and deadlines. One of us was a natural off the wall idea person and an expert in techniques which could spark ideas. Throughout our time together we were constantly challenged to believe in and spark off our diversity as a source of trust and complementarity rather than as a basis for second-guessing and blaming.

Each of the five of us had a high degree of situational self-confidence in what we did as teacher learners. However, interestingly, at least two of us also were situational Imposter Syndrome types. That meant those two of us at times felt like a 'fake' being regarded as an expert in the university environment. We were all risk-takers as instructors and were willing to go out on a limb. We had a truly, truly extraordinarily high degree of personal commitment to the 'cause' and ideals of the Royal Roads Leadership Program and everything it stood for. We all wanted desperately to provide the ultimate in learning experiences and to create a real sense of community. We were willing to subordinate ourselves to and trust in the other faculty in key-decision-making moments, but that is getting ahead of the story...

I sent an earlier version of the above description out to members of the groups that made up the composite group. One of the team members commented on membership factors that this individual felt were important preconditions for trust:

One [of the building blocks for trust between faculty members] was the willingness to deal with issues on an interpersonal basis outside of the team as well as inside. You and I meeting at your house, for example, and discovering a deeper congruence of purpose than we may have ever discovered in the team experience. I would also emphasize the power of the up-front investment of time in creating the framework for the team. I have found over and over that the more investment you make up front, the greater the capacity to deal with emergent issues.

This same MALT faculty member added later in the same note: "one [pillar of trust] that I see sometimes as a hidden element—is competence, or ability. The realization that the other person is capable and therefore I can rely on them to do what they said they will do..."

A second faculty member, an Imposter Syndrome type,⁶¹ referred to our common purpose in writing about dedication and meaningfulness of what we were doing:

⁶¹ For more on this see Clance, R. (1986). *The Imposter Syndrome*. Toronto. Bantam Books.

I would hunch that the strong, indeed magical, tone of MALT (mostly) from a faculty perspective is wrapped up in fear/anxiety of not being up to the task... Working with others ups the uncertainty variables in whether or not the thing will work, and there is a tremendous bonding (ego face-saving) in pulling it off... An aside: This is a variation on the Musketeers' all for one and one for all. That is, if somebody screws up, everybody wears it, or, conversely, all goes well and we experience the upsiness (new word, dedicated to Dr Seuss) of buckling our swash... Whether the Bard or Senge, relaxing into the fully present moment is only possible when your colleagues look good (or don't screw up). Those present moments (minor mind altered states) are so poignant that they conjure up the magic you seek to explain...

One of my most difficult moments as a MALT faculty member came when we changed the membership of a team. We did so on the way to becoming one of the most trusting of the groups that made up the composite group. This was a situation where a group started in on Element Two activities like establishing a vision and talking about the program. When we had the membership crisis we then almost immediately reverted back to Element One while we settled the membership issue. The membership crisis revolved around the perception that one among the five of us was going to struggle to be present for the learners during the residency. Dealing with this situation was a key contributor to earning trust and establishing trust space in the group. One of the members of that group wrote me the following about our Element One handling of the situation:

The key was that two members of the team were willing to display an unusual amount of both authenticity and sympathy and that the other members listened in. Key was framing the situation in terms of kindness... to not suggest to the member in question that this might not be a positive experience would have been unkind, given the highly charged and intense nature of total immersion summer institutes. Dealing up front, with a difficult human resource issue was an amazing opportunity to bond, to do the tough but honest thing and to be rewarded by a grateful person who knew in [their] heart and mind, there was a mis-match. The major lesson

learned: a crisis can be a valuable springboard for clarifying and solidifying core values...

Element Two:

Getting underway, while establishing the situationally appropriate balance between task and process, is one of the key aspects of Element Two. For example, one of most striking meetings we had as a faculty group was the day where we said going in to the meeting that we did not have time for all of the items on our morning agenda. We had had training in Christina Baldwin's approach to circle, which constitutes Element One-type preparation. Two of us proposed at the outset of the meeting that we use the circle method to open our meeting. Initially, there was resistance since this was adding another item to an overly full agenda. However the two of us persisted, saying that we should role model this kind of activity. It would improve our meeting and we would also be able to talk with learners about using it and do so with integrity and authenticity. This process of circle discussion, which took about an hour (Element Two), was critical in the group eventually developing a real internalized commitment to and use of this process (Element Three). Through circle, we, as a group of five, slowed ourselves down, listened deeply to one another and transformed our process. It turned out that we had more than enough time for our agenda items after we had started the meeting with this deep listening experience together.

Another important and early Element Two activity undertaken by this group was some of the wildest brainstorming of any group I have ever been part of. We agreed that we would use the rules of brainstorming that all ideas are OK but challenged ourselves to go even further by using the Stone Soup or 'What if' approach. Ordinary brainstorming presents all of us brought up in the rational and judgmental tradition with a challenge to silence judgment and the inner critic. However, 'what if' brainstorming ups the ante as group members are to blurt out deliberately impossible positive future possibilities, all starting with the words 'what if...?' Several things helped us to spit out the truly wild and crazy ideas that come with this type of brainstorming and a true quest for innovative ideas. This group had enormous faith and buy-in to our group values, our vision and our ground-rules. We were really committed to providing involving leading-edge learning experiences. We also were self-confident enough to be able to engage in silliness together.

At the start of the process we identified as our focus issue (i.e. what we were brainstorming in order to solve) that the early successes of the program could cause us, as highly experienced faculty in the program, to become complacent and lose energy around the program. We wrote down “avoiding becoming complacent” as our focus issue. We then brainstormed about a dozen pages of wild and crazy ‘what ifs’ that addressed that focus. The most outrageous ‘what if’ that we picked from the dozen or so pages read as follows: “WHAT IF dead leaders from the past came into the program?” There was an initial moment where we were stumped as to how to turn that ‘what if’ into something that would actually work. Someone eventually said: ‘we could have a dead leader’s social where we have people come in costume as a dead leader from the past’. Someone else said ‘and we could ask them to act out the part for the duration of the social’. And still another person said ‘and we could do it in the third week of our program when people have come to know one another and need a break from the intensity of the program.’ We went on to incorporate all of those things into the program. In an evaluation done by participants at the end of the five week program, the Dead Leader’s Social was one of the most highly rated aspects of the program

Element Three:

A whole series of factors, then, contributed to our group having a repository of earned trust early in the process. They included our group’s dealing with the membership issue, our handling of what if brainstorming and our agreeing to such confidence stretching approaches as the fish bowl technique (where, as noted earlier, you hold faculty meetings in public in the moment). We also had an emerging identity as a really good group of learners and instructors who could do something special together that summer. Together we built on our deeply held passion for learning and our sharing of responsibility for group leadership. We listened deeply to one another and had truly open conversations.

Personal reflection: I wrote the following about the ‘feeling’ of the group which emerged for me. This was a group where I can personally remember feeling that I could propose the most radical ideas around the program to the group and have it be OK and non-threatening. In the past, it had been amazing to me to discover how threatening some of my ideas were to otherwise seemingly very competent individual professionals. That was not the case with this group. I can remember believing in the group enough to suggest something heretical

that I had been playing with for ages but had never enough moxie and trust to propose. That heretical idea was having a problem study or leadership challenge or whatever we called it at that time take place from mid-week to mid-week and over a weekend rather than our traditional Monday to Friday approach. I can remember having a strong feeling that this was a group where I could safely put forward such a 'radical idea'.

Early in the student residency we had one other example of internalizing the trust space and our 'aura'. This occurred when the cohort of student learners challenged us in a community meeting to put on a presentation. This was to be a presentation where we acted out the reaction of the animals of the Royal Roads University forest to this new age programming taking place on the campus. One of the more dramatic among us immediately said 'yes'. I remember my immediate knee-jerk personal discomfort with what we had just agreed to. I also remember wondering how in the world we would rise to the challenge. Early in our subsequent faculty meeting, I must admit to a feeling of silliness in being enrolled to play the part of a deer in the forest. However, with our increasing internalization of the trust space, I was able to quell my doubts. What happened? The theatrical three basically said "follow my lead" and the other two of us did. Our performance was another success, immortalized in a memento the learners gave each of the five of us at the end of the summer. This success, in turn, led to a further internalization of our identity and our willingness to be open to each other.

Elements Four and Five:

The brainstorming, the discussion of risky and different program proposals and the play, among other things, earned the trust and built the trust space that was then tested by two separate leaps of faith later during the five week residency of this composite group. I see both of these examples as involving someone leaping, the rest of us embracing the leap, us then experiencing success and us then going back to our daily activities while deepening our trust space with each other.

It was in two of our most difficult moments in the residency that one of us made a leap of faith and the rest of us embraced it. The first of these moments occurred the Friday morning that we fell apart as a group. The reason for our falling apart is lost in the mists of time (although if I look hard enough I suspect I could find it in a journal) but the reality was

that we disagreed vehemently over something in our staff meeting that morning. We 'spat' at one another in the civilized fashion of many groups and went into the morning community meeting thoroughly fractured. I can remember still looking around the big hall and seeing the five of us in the hall but physically as far apart from one another as we could be and still be in the same hall—my own words echoed in my ears— “a sure sign of a group that needs to work on conflict issues is all members of the group being in the same room but being as physically far apart from one another as they could be”. In this case I was the one to take the leap. Even with my deeply held belief in the importance of conflict resolution, actually doing it in a group of which I am a part is always a challenge. I circulated around the room and whispered in the ear of each of the other four. I said something to this effect: “I am going to ask you to go with me on this. Everything I know about groups tells me that we need to meet this afternoon after the session and take as long as it takes to work out our differences”. Despite aching to go home after the long week the group embraced my leap. We took the almost two hours that it took to surface and deal with the issues and went home with our trust in one another reaffirmed.

The second and perhaps greatest challenge to our trust was in putting together a morning presentation on 'personal transformation and how to apply this stuff back at work'. The presentation, which was to engage and involve the learners, was to take place in the fifth week in the program. We had, from the beginning known that this was a key day and one that we wanted to make special, have a big impact, help transform people's lives and ultimately be practical. However, it did not make it to the top of our agenda until just before the week itself. That in itself was a source of tension for the finisher amongst us. The other reality was that, as highly able teaching professionals, we had a standard that we prided ourselves on maintaining. We got only so far in our preparation before we ran out of time. It was then that the faculty member who was the lead presenter took a leap and suggested that we had done enough. What we needed to do was leave it to the abilities of each of us to do our part and our skills at linkage and just go with it the next day. Once again we embraced the leap, deciding to just 'go' trusting that each of the others contribute to a highly professional job and that it would all be integrated in the ways that we had conceptually integrated it in the planning.

Element Six

I have a picture of this composite group that I look at still and enjoy, living the feeling of having been a really trusting group. The bond within this group lingers still and is reflected in the outstanding contributions that four members of this group made to the compilation of this description of our time together and to the focus group activity involved in stage three.

MALT faculty groups had a maximum 'life' of eight to ten months. My association prior to MALT with individual faculty members went back as far as nine years with one individual. There were two members I had never met prior to our being put together on a faculty group. I hope to continue my association with each of the members of the highly trusting team for life.

7.3 My UBC Cohort: a Real-live, Present day Illustration of the Model and of Layering

To give you perspective on what the development of a trusting group looks like over a period of years, I now turn to describing, using the model, the group to which I am now closer than any other group I have been part of, the UBC cohort group. My description of the cohort group and its living the model starts with the cohort members before the group formally came into existence, when the group was a bunch of total strangers to me. My description ends with the present state of the cohort (i.e., at the time of writing). Cohort members all contributed to the descriptions which follow, which makes this the most comprehensive examination of a group in the dissertation. Those cohort member contributions are in the italic type.

Our first cycle of trust-building: First forming as a group and confronting a learning dilemma

Cohort Journal: I am honored in the UBC EdD program to be a member of a 12 student cohort (the '01 or Buffalo Cohort) of true lifelong learners. As a group we have chosen to

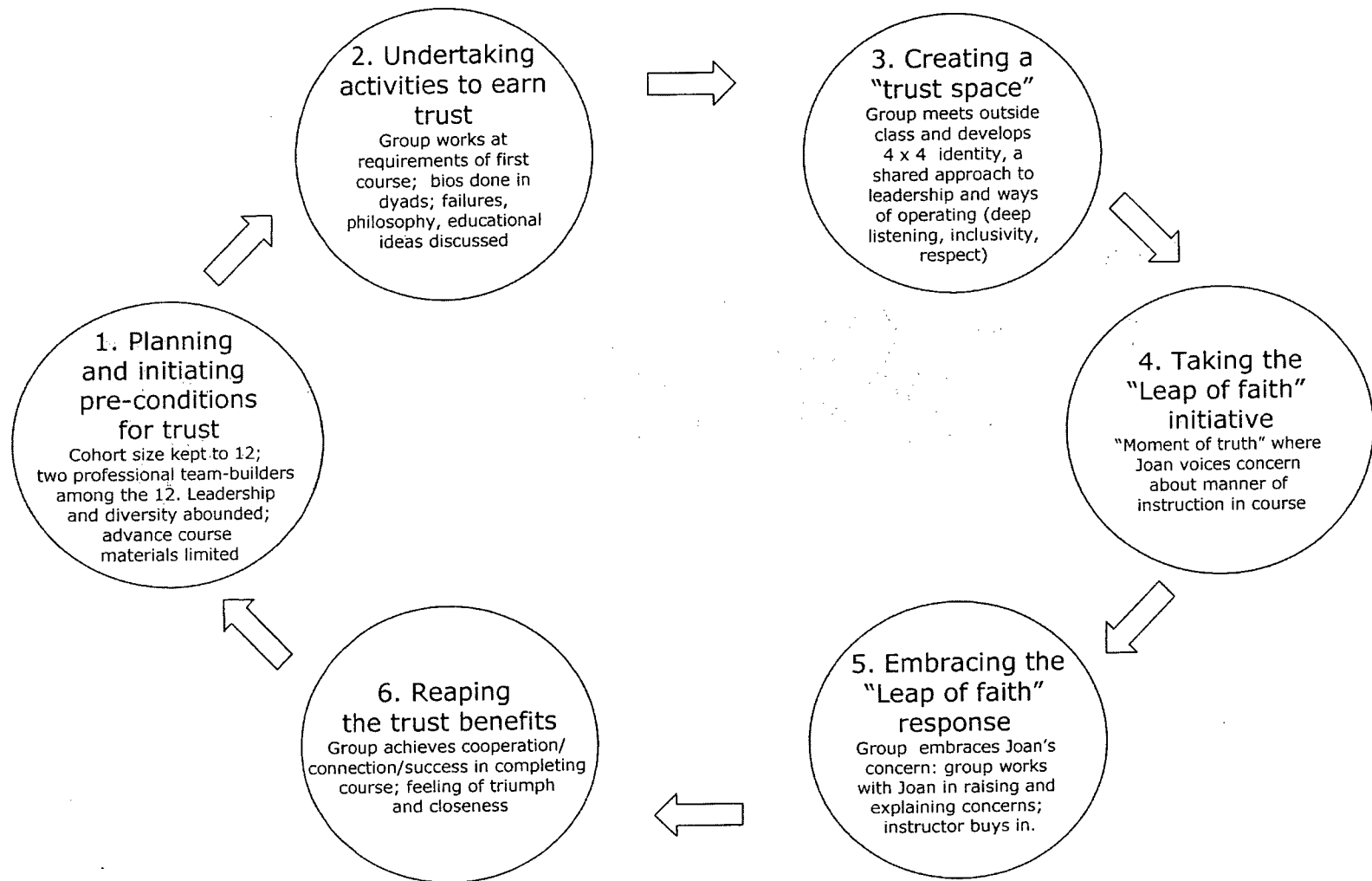
invest significantly in time, in energy and, most significantly, of ourselves in our own process. We have had a clear purpose and we have clearly articulated our values. We have set personal time aside and built group cohesion through our adoption of our own version of Christina Baldwin's work on circle. We have seized and taken advantage of in-class opportunities to deepen our trust. Through our hard work together and our processes we have become what we all have concluded is a highly trusting group.

In all of our minds, we stand apart from the four other cohorts that were previously formed in the EdD program. We seem to be much more pro-active in taking responsibility for our own group process and learning than the other groups. "You know," one of my colleagues said to me after one especially disconcerting meeting involving members of all of the cohorts where our group experience was denied and 'pooh-poohed': "I think we're just weird as a cohort..." Another member of our group, Barnabus, presented a humorous take on our being 'different' to members of the other cohorts: "we (in the '01 cohort) are not a cult"...

For me personally, some of my greatest learning in the process of being in this EdD program has occurred with this group of people. I will now diagram the beginnings of the group process using the six element model and then describe our beginnings.

Diagram 7-2: UBC Cohort round 1 (see next page)

First Cycle of Trust-Building in '01 Cohort



Element One: the preconditions for trust

The twelve cohort members were selected from one hundred plus applications, with what we understand was a deliberate attempt to achieve diversity in the cohort. Eight of the cohort members were from highly diverse places in the post-secondary system, three from the schools sector (note: one of the post-secondary people served on a school board as well) and one from the health sector. Seven cohort members were women and five were men. All cohort members had occupied in the past or were occupying at that moment management positions where some form of leadership was expected. One cohort member was at the chief executive level, six had one or more distinct units that reported to them (a vice president, two deans, two principals, a unit head in health), three had relatively independent functions (two consultants who also taught and a counselor) and two reported to others in a hierarchy (one at UBC, one an instructor in the interior of BC). In a Myers-Briggs sense (Myers, 1980), we had everything from exuberant and excitable extraversion to my very profound and sometimes depressed introversion. We were all do-ers but some of us were clearly deciders (judging types in Myers-Briggs language) while others amongst us, me included, could come up continually with a multiplicity of options for any occasion (which can be referred to as perceiving personality type, according to Myers-Briggs). Leadership potential abounded in the group. One background factor I consider to be particularly noteworthy: at least six members of the cohort came in with extensive experience at leading collaborative team-building type activities (the vice-president, one dean, both of the principals, the two consultants). A second factor that may be noteworthy is that two of the previous three cohorts had had fifteen members. This size places them outside the twelve member maximum for an effective team referred to by Yukl (1994).

Before we formally came together in July of 2001, various members of the cohort did what was necessary to free up time for the six consecutive weeks of class that first summer. Our advance preparation was limited to reading about the program itself and whatever people chose to do physically, spiritually, emotionally, intellectually, or otherwise to get themselves in the right learning space. Our course preparation was affected by the decision of the first instructor to provide us with the binder of readings for the first class when that class began.

Cohort journal: In reflecting on what enabled us to build trust in the cohort, one of the cohort members indicated clearly that s/he had started with intrinsic trust. S/he stated: "I think that unconsciously I just come to groups... in a trusting way. I believe that what you give to a group will be returned to you. That was how I approached this group." S/he was the only one of the twelve of us who took this approach to the group and s/he was a highly valued, trusted and trusting member of the group.

Element Two: activities to earn trust

We fairly quickly moved into activities such as introducing ourselves to each other and doing and discussing assigned readings. Thus, we began to get to know each other. The instructor provided clear directions on the way to operate in class from the beginning: sit somewhere different every day, do the readings (this was implicit) and engage in deep and searching in-class conversations about the readings, both in designated small groups and in the entire cohort. With us switching seating places daily and our small groups being based on where we sat, we met in differing small groups every day and thus had small group conversations with each other. The first written assignment, a biography of the educational life of a classmate, was done in dyads. There was some candor in what was revealed in the biographies, as there had been earlier in our introductions to each other. However, the candor was clearly shown to be partial candor by subsequent events. I, for one, glossed over the upbringing I had had and focused on ways I had learned, presenting myself as an accomplished person who took on all manner of learning challenges. Over time, we also discussed in class such rich, personal and varied topics as our failures, our personal philosophy, and our ideas about education.

Our time outside class contributed as much, or more, to our development as a group as our official time together. Meeting after class in our same classroom, we dedicated ourselves to process and to finding common purpose. We agreed to mutually support one another through the potentially lonely life of a doctoral student. We talked about specific ways of supporting each other through the dissertation process. We also used this time we chose to spend together to get to know one another better and to define a way of operating. In this latter task, we were also imminently practical, drawing on the extensive experience that several of us had with group process. We agreed to common values of inclusivity, respect and personal responsibility and a groundrule around deep listening.

Cohort journal: The risk-taking process in the cohort started slowly where we wrote biographies about each other's learning experiences. We then shared those biographies throughout the group. The biographical stories included information that we refer to still: one of us jumping out a second floor window without a parachute at a young age and one of us overcoming extraordinary physical challenges as a child. These shared stories started to inform our group sense of humor, our sense of us being special, and the beginnings of our identity. Outside of class our earliest risk-taking was around sharing and acknowledging the difficulty we would have in completing the program without support.

The significance of these early in-class activities and of the way that we came into the program was well-described by one of my colleagues in the cohort as follows:

For me [trust-building] started with us coming into a program that was based on our practice. We were like-thinking as a result and soon learned that about each other. Regarding the institutional factors, I think it was important our first instructor set a tone—he got us talking with each other and comparing notes with each other. We did this talking with a focus on our practice and we assumed that others would do the same. And since we came into this program at middle age, this was a natural area of focus and reflection for us—we were thinking about and reflecting on our practice with each other and that led to trust. We also drew on our first instructor's values about education. When we got to the problem solving piece with the instructor [see element four below] and other things that we had to sort out, we messed up sometimes. That built trust for us too—we learned that in this group you can mess up and it's OK with the group. Another thing that was important for us in developing trust is that we have a willingness to take ownership for our process and for our learning. You don't see that often in adult groups. We came to this group with an interest in education, a strong belief in the learning process. I am inspired and rejuvenated every time I spend time with you as a group...

Element Three: Building the trust space

We now started to internalize our identity. I saw us going gradually from being individuals admitted to a doctoral program to a group of doctoral students. The searching nature of both in-class and out-of-class conversations led us to see ourselves as participating in defining our own learning. We started calling ourselves the 4 x 4 cohort (the fourth cohort in the program with a common commitment to finish our dissertations by 2004) and began to 'be' that cohort. We shared leadership responsibility in class and outside class, with various people demonstrating leadership behaviors in everything from asking really searching

questions and calling a spade a spade to preparing original and fun material for presentations. We choose to spend time outside class to prepare for our second course and to practice our value of inclusivity. We discussed how hard it is to break into tight groups and jointly decided to individually send 'greetings' e-mails to the instructor of the second course. In those e-mails we were to write about our experience of the first class and what we had learned. We felt pretty good and confident about ourselves as a group and our living inclusivity and respect for each other.

Personal reflection: Our in-class activities provided opportunities to earn trust and to move towards being more vulnerable. We went further into conversations about challenging philosophical material, acknowledging that none of us fully understood it but finding that together we could make an approximation of understanding it. Our comfort with vulnerability and abandonment of judgment grew further as we engaged in exercises such as talking about our greatest professional mistakes. My feminist colleagues were quick to inform me that that kind of conversation was a typical occurrence in groups of women. However, it was relatively new for me to have that kind of conversation in professional type settings. However, the types of activities I have just described were common to all cohorts. So that leads to the question: what might have made us more trusting than some of the other groups? As it happened immediately after our highly successful development as a group in the first course we were to get a completely unbidden opportunity for vulnerability, uncertainty and risk. This opportunity and our reaction to it are described in the section which follows.

Element Four: Joan takes the leap of faith

As a cohort, we talked several times about where someone first took a significant leap of faith in the group when the group was together as a whole. Initially several of us, including me, saw us taking a leap with our biographies and with such activities as talking about our learnings from our biggest failures.

Cohort journal: I specifically asked cohort members where the cohort trust came from. Initially, three of the twelve members of the cohort focused primarily on our experience of trust-building very, very early in the life of the group. One said that "Where one of our first activities in the cohort was writing a story about each other, it built that individual trust between us. And then when we came back to the group we all went around the circle and told our stories. That gave us a tremendous start." Another one stated: "From the beginning we exhibited trusting behavior with each other. It's like we have from the beginning been taking responsibility for ensuring the well-being of the group." And a third referred to the institutional role (see earlier material in chapters two and four on sources of trust) of the first instructor in the program: "Regarding the institutional factors, I think it was important our first instructor set a tone—he got us talking with each other and

comparing notes with each other. We did this talking with a focus on our practice and we assumed that others would do the same. And since we came into this program at middle age, this was a natural area of focus and reflection for us—we were thinking about and reflecting on our practice with each other and that led to trust. We also drew on our first instructor's values about education”.

The issue of deeper levels of trust and of altogether different normative trust space is illustrated by the contrast in the experience of these three cohort members who experienced trust very early in the process and a cohort member who had an experience of ‘not belonging’ in the early going. Contrasting the trust experience is not about ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ in a group but it is about the individuality, thresh-hold, space, safety, and depth issues that are essential to understanding the complexities of the trust experience in a group.

Upon further development of the model and further reflection, I have concluded that the vulnerability involved in those activities, while present, was not such a risk-taking stretch for the self-confident people we are to construe the full leap of faith contemplated in the model.

The first big-time opportunity for vulnerability was one that could not have been predicted. This opportunity arose through a combination of serendipity and preparation. The serendipity part was the coincidence of our being the first cohort that had someone outside the tight EdD faculty group teaching the mandatory second course in the program. The preparation part was our building our trust space inside and outside class.

Cohort journal: One of us summarized the linked experience of these first two opportunities thusly:

...Another part of building trust was when one of us said ‘let’s build some parameters into our process’. That was a major step for us. Then when we started the class [where we had to constructively confront an instructor], we immediately ran into problems that we had to deal with. We used our parameters and in a caring, professional trusting way we solved those problems...

We met after class two days into that second class together that first summer. We had experienced what we felt were two days of ‘old-style’ lecturing and were not happy. Early in the process, Joan took a risk and said something like “Am I the only person who is struggling here?” Joan’s question was the ‘leap of faith’.

Personal reflection: I have called that leap of faith moment the “are you sleeping in class too?” moment. I was clearly distressed at the way the class was going and was having trouble staying alert and interested. That I didn’t say something until Joan said what she did could be labeled a missed leap of faith opportunity on my part.

Element Five: embracing Joan’s leap

Our embracing response to Joan’s question was immediate: all of us agreed that we were unhappy with the conduct of the class. However, we were faced with a dilemma: how could we confront this and match it with our agreed-to values? We then talked in very real terms about our expectations for the class. We agreed to take a concerted joint approach to changing the class from within. We did so because we all still wanted to live our value of inclusion. Thus, a formal protest and going outside the group were not options. We concluded that we should work with the instructor. Thus was born an active strategy to respectfully work together to bring the instructor on board. We resolved to start the next day.

Cohort journal: We had an early success the next day when Joan took yet another risk and made a suggestion to the instructor. The instructor’s response will live forever in cohort lore. S/he asked: “Are you trying to socialize me?” to which Joan replied that yes, we were. Coming then from our respective places of vulnerability, together with the instructor we negotiated a whole new way of living student-based responsibility to navigate the course materials. We would take the lead in in-class conversation about new materials and the instructor would follow with items we missed and emphasis on certain key points from her/his perspective. Throughout we would be working with the instructor’s readings and questions. We also agreed that instructor should intervene at the end of any of our discussions to advise us of parts of the readings that we had missed or possibly not well or fully interpreted. While we were at it, we took a risk in the area of marking (“Oh, by the way, while we’re talking about changing the course, we’d all like the same grade, whatever you decide it to be”).

Element Six: experiencing group success

There followed a class which was a true joyful celebration of learning where we and the instructor reached a new level of in-depth analysis and interpretation of challenging readings and topics. We ended the first summer closely connected, with lots of learning and success in cooperating that gave us a foundation for the future. We each took home a sheet of flip chart paper from our courses that summer that had particular meaning for us.

Our second cycle: Deepening trust through institutional factors and through course content

Element Two: activities to earn further trust

We returned to 'work' in the fall of 2001. We did so in the one weekend, once a month mode of instruction that is practiced for our program's fall and winter courses. The courses were a challenge; we were fragmented by the pull of our jobs, homes and families, business travel, and illness. Thus we settled into a primarily work-oriented mode and focused pretty much on getting through the courses.

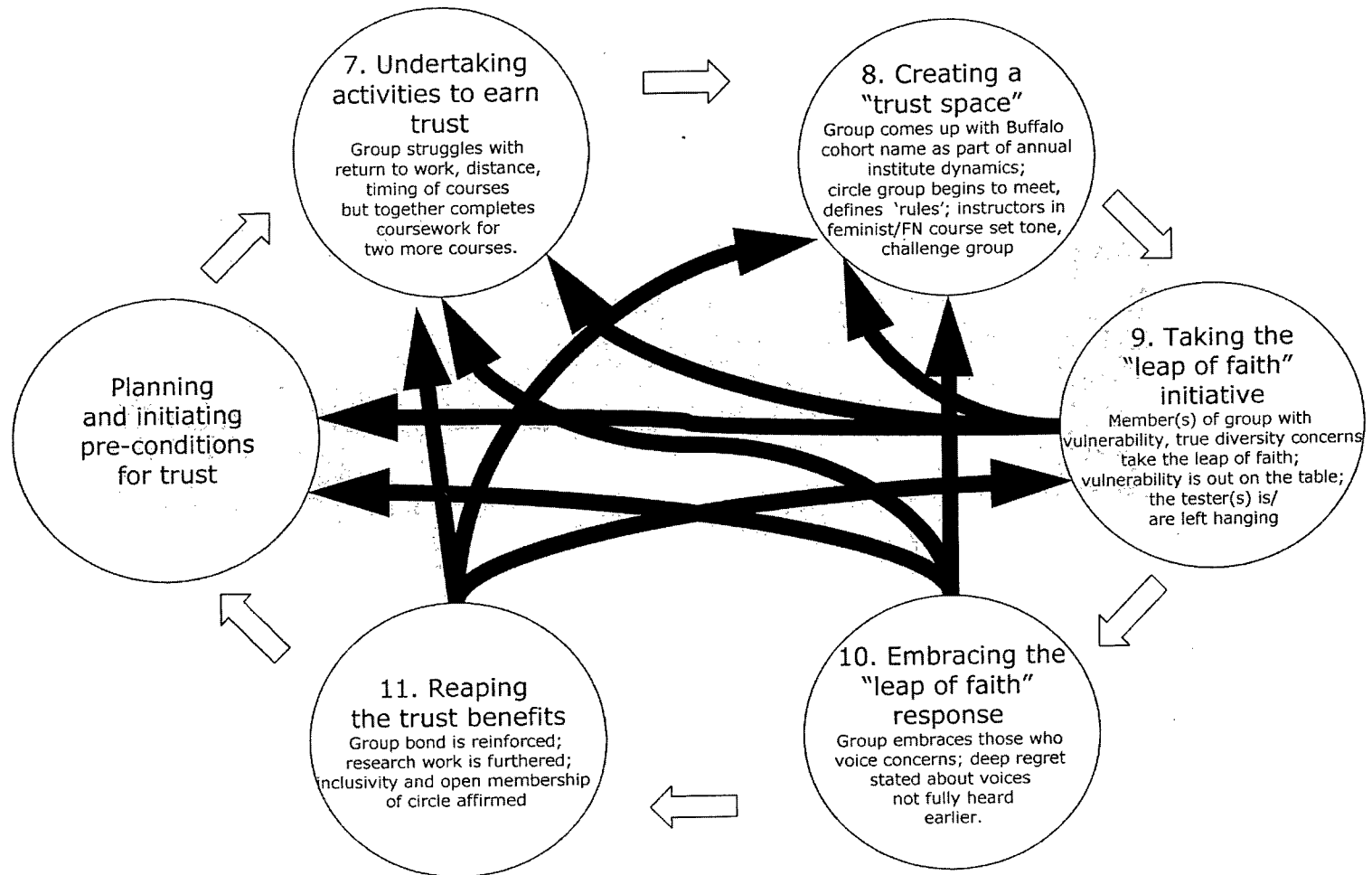
Element Three: deepening our sense of identity and the trust space

Our identity, which had started out with us as the 4 x 4 cohort, was furthered by a trust story that Barnabus told at the fall institute in September of 2001. The story, illustrated with a remarkable photograph, came from Barnabus's just-completed travels in Vietnam. The photograph was of a boy crossing a body of water crammed with water buffalos. He did so by jumping from the back of one water buffalo to the back of another water buffalo, showing tremendous trust and risk-taking as he did so. Thus the Buffalo Cohort was born.

As we got further into the academic year, we did things that furthered our value of inclusivity and we developed our new identity as the Buffalo Cohort. We put our leadership energy into various activities. We had a small circle group which initially discussed directed readings. That group furthered the values of inclusivity, opening itself up to participation by any cohort members. By the summer of 2002, many outside the original five who had constituted the circle group had attended one or more meetings of that sub-group.

Diagram 7-3: UBC Cohort round 2 (see next page)

Second Cycle of Trust-Building in '01 cohort



Cohort journal: Consistent with our commitment to joint support and learning, we agreed to the creation of a class sub-group of those interested in pursuing directed studies. Initially the function of the five person group was to discuss the readings for those directed studies. Soon after it began that group morphed into a group that set out to discuss what we were working on and reading generally. The group then morphed yet again the day that one of us took yet another risk and said something like "I haven't read a damned thing since we last met but I'd like to talk about what's going on for me". At some time not too long after that point the five of us in the original group decided that we had something going which we could and should open to the rest of the group, consistent with our value of inclusivity.

All of the conversations in what started as the directed studies group were in the container of our own version of Christina Baldwin's circle method (Baldwin, 1998). We agreed that we would open by determining how much time we had. We then started with everyone sequentially having the floor (using the model of the talking stick where one person only speaks at a time unless s/he specifically asks someone else for input). Each of us felt free to say whatever we wanted, including any needs that we had. We would then have open conversation for most of the rest of our time together. We closed with the sequential one person at a time process being re-enacted, this time with closing comments and any thank you's. There was some risk in adopting this method as well: it was new to several of us and a distinct change from the more 'free for all' approach that we had had in class. Moreover, one faculty member who was invited to sit in on one of our early meetings dismissed our method as "unduly restrictive".

We had been calling ourselves the Buffalo Cohort for some time when Joanne had Buffalo cohort brooches made for all of us. That furthered our sense of identity. With the eventual return to summer weather and daily attendance at the university, all of us being physically together, the successful inclusion of someone from another cohort in the class and the challenge of the readings in our research in feminism and First Nations course, our self-confident identity that had dimmed a bit with the activities in the fall and spring returned stronger than ever. Our inclusiveness and sense of purpose was furthered by the inclusive approach of and the subject matter presented by our instructors in the Feminist and First Nations research course. As will be described later, one group member in particular felt that we had a new level of safety and trust space that was introduced through the institutional trust space created in this course.

I should note that we had at least two missed opportunities for a leap of faith in the second cycle. The first one was in circle. It followed the earlier-referenced situation where an invited faculty member put down our circle method of introducing and ending our meetings as too 'unduly restrictive'. We let that opportunity pass. The second came after we had a

visitor to one of our classes. This visitor chastised us for not doing the requested readings when we were unresponsive in class to this individual's questions and musings. Some of us talked afterwards and found that we had all done the readings. However, we had all found that the visitor's questions and musings missed what we considered to be the most engrossing and instructive of the readings, which we were more interested in discussing. However, we said nothing at the time and we did not discuss this as a whole group. Thus we avoided two clear leap of faith opportunities.

Elements Four and Five: making and embracing the leap of faith

In hindsight it is difficult to pick out the exact moment when one of us took a leap of faith in the second cycle. What is clear is that when we were both supported and challenged to be 'real' and searching and reflective in the research course, the leap of faith moment happened at least once. It could have been when we had to self-identify as feminists or not, when we were engaged in group discussions about the personal nature of feminist and First Nations qualitative research or when we were making and responding to very personal final presentations where our personal disclosure reached new heights. In actual fact we may have cycled back and forth between our new stronger and deepening sense of identity and safety (Element Three), a leap of faith (Element Four) and an embracing of the leap (Element Five) numerous times in a three week period.

Whether it was one moment or several we grabbed the ring and embraced vulnerability together in that course. We responded collectively with insight, learning and reflective thought expressed out loud. Thus, any leap of faith by one person was matched with embracing leaps by the whole group. Deep regret was voiced about the concerns of one particular group member not being fully heard or understood previously.

Cohort journal: We had an extraordinary opportunity in the summer of 2002 to take another leap forward as a group. This opportunity came through our joint involvement in a class on Feminist and First Nations research. We were challenged respectfully but firmly by the two instructors of that course. Part of the challenge was intellectual but the other part was a challenge to bring our emotional 'selves' to the table as we talked about qualitative research methods that were revealing of self. This provided us with an-institutionally-generated opportunity to give voice in a positive way in our research and our lives as students to all parts of ourselves. The parts which eventually came out included some parts

which some among us, including myself, felt were not being fully heard. The container and content of that course freed up several of us, again including myself, to candidly say some difficult but freeing things about some of our practices and perspectives as a group.

For a number of us, there were two parts to our being freed up. One was the provision of an environment that felt safe and where there was a clear process, including the use of circle by one of the instructors. The other was the opening up of certain issues that went with the course content, including issues relating to feminism and personal risk. Both the safe environment and the opening up of issues built on what we had already accomplished as a group. With the two instructors in the power position that they were in, their approach and their material provided what one of my cohort colleagues called "a legitimization to challenging the dominant discourse" that we had had up until that time. Together they provided a foundation for a real breakthrough to another level in our trust-building process. It was here that I would speculate that we had the greatest single breakthrough of all. More than any other course, I feel that this one course allowed us to acknowledge and bring into the open some of our differences.

In my case, surfacing differences involved two things. One that has already been referred to in chapter one was the small group I was part of with Jeanie, Doug and Jean. Equally or maybe more significant was my saying to the other men in the cohort that at times I felt we acted sexist and patronizing in a far too typical male way. I added that I would be more comfortable having a conversation about feminist principles with the women in the class, who were in a separate room from the men. One of these men later cited my statement in his oral comprehensive presentation as one of his greatest learnings thus far in the program.

Two of the cohort members wrote about the importance of valuing of difference in the cohort in e-mails to me. They did so in ways that reinforced the importance of the trust-building that we did in that course. The first one addressed in a general way the result of valuing difference (i.e. where we got to in terms of positively reacting to difference). The second one talked about the true vulnerability that was in evidence in this process.

The more general e-mail read as follows:

Why has it worked for us? Well I think the one thing... is the fact that we have acknowledged difference in a way that has allowed us to tolerate and celebrate those differences at key moments in our journey together. We don't necessarily agree with each others' points of view and opinion, but we have been able to respect all voices, understanding and at times honoring where it has come from. We also have some tendencies within the group and everyone has assumed a particular role and function that they seem comfortable with. I believe this has allowed the cohesiveness to continue as it has. We do not judge one another on our own expectations of what we want, but rather, it seems as if we have allowed each of us to decide for ourselves how we want to relate to the group and to each other. That permission has been implicit throughout and has kept the cohort relationship fluid and dynamic.

The most powerful single statement of all about addressing vulnerability and valuing of difference in that specific course was in the second e-mail. Please note the references to the pivotal role of the two instructors, who were an 'outside resource' to us as a group:

For me, trust developed out of trusting individuals, risk taking... For me, Risk taking is knowing one can trust oneself to survive the responses of others- i.e.: able to rely on that and Vulnerability is the only way to be real and to actually realize that the response doesn't matter. But certain things happened in the group at the very beginning where I experienced not belonging - this actually undid the sense of openness I believed I came into the room with, it ruptured the sense of trust. I recognize that I was often a porcupine as a result. I knew I could not trust, or could only trust the usual to occur, or could only trust one or two. Recognizing that what we think will happen, does happen, I know this probably got into a reciprocal cycle (of negativity) despite my efforts. It took me a while to work through the disheartened feelings, and it helped that I knew there were a couple of individuals I could trust. It helped too when two of the instructors actually caused an upheaval in the solidity of unquestioned positionings; .i.e.: when the institutionally designated authority could combat what I was experiencing as the solidity of entrenched notions being lived out. Throughout, it was a time of personal learning for me to let go of my prickliness, (that defensive posture against what others would never understand as an attack for it is the norm, or often meant kindly) and for me to keep on reminding myself to return to my spiritual practice and see the other as myself, extend care to myself and other, and thus let go. I worked at trust, and at openness. I am sure others had to do that with me too. What facilitated that were those breaks when the circle actually started for real, when there was shared risk taking and actually the institution undoing institutionality. I opened up in that class with the two instructors as the space felt wider, when I was more able to let go of my own stories about what was happening. It's a practice. Through that I began to believe I could rely on the group to hear more and so trust the group, in a sense.

What emerged very clearly, as the above comments illustrated, was evidence of how our trust was deepening and how for some of us it is only as the layers deepen that real trust emerges. This course clearly supported and prompted the further development of myself and others surfacing, valuing and even cherishing some of our most profound inner places and differences.

Element Six: further success and bonding

The result of our progress in making and responding to leap(s) of faith were exceptional. We became much better in our individual and collective research capacity. We truly began to spark off each other in discussing our research. We deepened significantly our

connection as a group. Our response to our final presentations, complete with the description of high vulnerability in two of the subgroups in the class (for the class assignment) and our bonding through circle as part of the final class reached new heights. We experienced a tightness that came from our high levels of personal disclosure, challenging each other to recognize biases, and interpreting, discussing and working with readings that challenged us to define who we were as part of the research method.

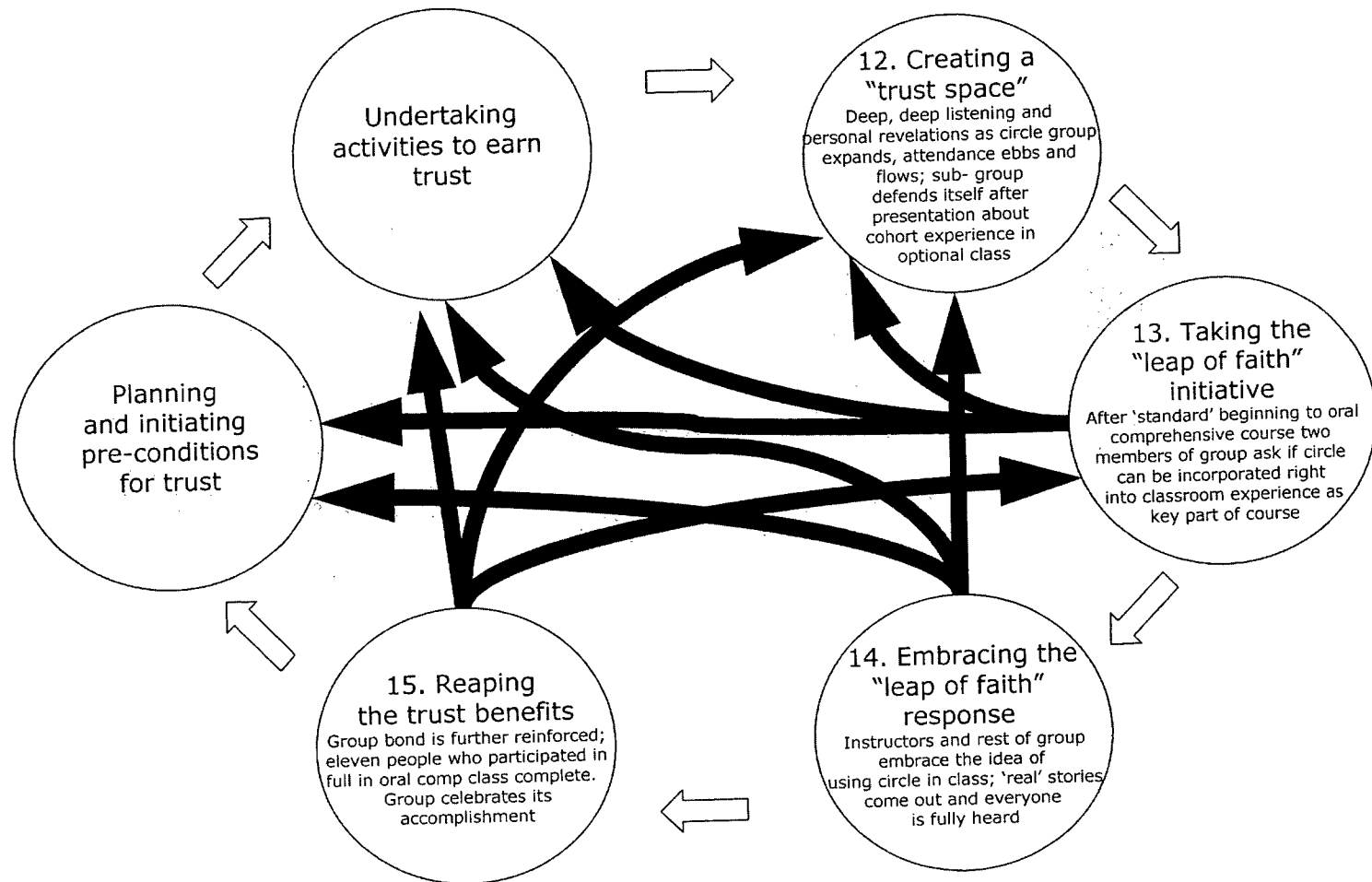
The third cycle: Increasing still more our levels and depth of trust through the incorporation of circle into our final seminar

Element Three: Deepening the trust space

We had a whole series of experiences that deepened our aura and our identity as a bonded cohort group. We experienced deep, deep listening and personal revelations as the circle group continued and expanded. Attendance ebbed and flowed in the group but we always assumed that the people who needed to be there were there. A sub-group of the cohort defended itself after a presentation about the cohort experience in an optional class (see chapter six). Every time we got together, whether primarily for work or for support, this aura went with us and our partners and significant others noted that we came home with a different aura after being with the group.

Diagram 7-4: UBC Cohort round 3 (see next page)

Third Cycle of Trust-Building in '01 Cohort



Personal reflection: My wife Gail made an interesting comment to me around this time. She said that even if I hadn't told her in advance of a cohort meeting that I was meeting with cohort, she would have been able to tell. The telltale sign was my demeanor after each cohort meeting. "You come home after each meeting with the cohort a different person", she said to me many times. I was calmer, more confident, extraordinarily open, peaceful and brimming with quiet energy. My visible change in demeanor fits with the concept of dialogue, that we do not remain the same person when we engage in dialogue.

Element Four: another leap

We then began a course intended to prepare us for our oral comprehensives. We started on a Friday night with fairly standard introductions. That night Jeanie and I couldn't sleep. The two of us acted together and took a leap, talking with the instructors and the class about us incorporating into our class our circle practice, with both our method of practice of circle and its affirmation of our values, being essential. That two of us took the leap together is another instance of how we had come along as a group.

Element Five: another embrace

The group and the instructors responded extremely positively to our suggestion. We reminded everyone of our 'rules' for circle and began the class over again. As we went around the group, our statements were deeply personal, an affirmation of us as people, and also related where appropriate to the specific work we were engaged in while in this component of the program. We laughed and we cried, not exactly the normal behavior of doctoral students in class.

Personal reflection: It remains with me still, the contrast evident between the highly vulnerable 'real self' and the always-insulated 'successful self' that we presented as we introduced ourselves to each other and to 'outsiders' throughout our time together in the UBC cohort. The contrast was always there, lurking about, but was most visceral in the 24 hour period during which we started the course that involved preparation for our oral comprehensive exams. Asked to introduce ourselves by the co-instructors on the first night of the course, we trotted out our titles, our accomplishments, our busy lives, our early and authoritative-sounding ideas for our dissertations. It felt awkward, wrong and disconnected but is oh so typical of our polite and careful selves.

I couldn't leave the feeling of being disconnected behind when I went home that night. As it turned out, neither could Jeanie. Jeanie and I conferred the next morning and asked the cohort and the instructors if we would agree to switch to our circle mode as an integral part of the class process. After the discussion, we then agreed to 're-start' the class process. In so doing we attempted to secure a greater degree of connection through doing our by-now

standard first go-round in circle. This is the go-round where we usually state where we are at and how we are doing, really. In effect, each time we reminded ourselves of deep listening and no interruptions when we went around we were re-creating our group's 'trust space'. We also clearly moved out of the realm of judgment that so often comes with success stories—in circle, the key act was 'being, not doing'.

Out poured the uncertainties, the challenges, the 'real' and vulnerable person behind the successful person we had portrayed the previous evening. Also out came the tears and chuckles associated with such real stories. To listen to the words we used and the intimate emotional timber of our voices you would never have known that it was the same group who had spoken less than twenty-four hours before. We went on to do circle each and every time we met in that class, including a short circle we held immediately before doing the actual oral exam.

Speaking for myself, as we in the cohort came to trust one another more and more, I felt that we evidenced less and less concern for the risk involved in our life as a group. And what went with this evolution for me was just what Peter the MALT learner referred to earlier: a feeling of something which was "scary but such a rush".

Element Six: more success

Our work and group bond benefited from the deep personal honesty and emotion as we engaged in similar levels of loving candor in our critiques of each other's dry runs of the comprehensives. Our actual presentation of the comprehensives was a celebration of the learning of the eleven of us who participated, with all of us stimulating interesting discussion. All eleven of us active in the cohort passed and celebrated our accomplishment together. We remained in contact with the twelfth member.

Cohort reflection:

The key and positive role of circle was reinforced by our use of it in class in this third cycle. This role was affirmed by an exercise that Jeanie and I undertook in mid-2003. The two of us had just done a course together with Christina Baldwin, right after our oral comprehensives. We took the initiative to gather information about our practice of circle amongst cohort members. We were doing so for publication in Christina Baldwin's on-line publication on circle.

The results of Jeanie's and my information-gathering confirmed how real the risks were that we were taking in circle and how significant the support was that we were providing for each other. The e-mails that we compiled on this subject included a series of statements recorded in part below. These statements specifically described the impact of our practice of circle on risk-taking, vulnerability and uncertainty. Ultimately I think we can conclude that our practice of circle was one of the most essential contributors to a high degree of group trust, and how deeply layered trust it was!

One statement started by describing the EdD circle as "a place to speak freely". This person added that "It's wonderful to be listened to and to listen to others so completely". A second person echoed the elements of risk and support involved, saying the circle was "about intimacy and connection—the importance of connection and intimacy in a environment where you can easily fall adrift and get caught up in the impersonal nature of many academic pursuits; the power of connection and intimacy in its many forms as we tell and hear our truths". Many groups would reject such 'scary' words as "intimacy". A third person underscored the ability of group members to be uninhibited: "...The circle is the place where I can truly be myself. It is safe; it challenges my head; and it fills my heart. I feel more able to go out into the world to do "good"."

The review of the circle process also affirmed our method as being a useful one for building trust. One person stated the following about our agreed-to circle approach "... I have found it helpful not to be challenged or distracted until I have completed whatever thought it was I was attempting to articulate". A second person added: "...The circle has provided a space that is different from the usual group formats that are task oriented. It offered each an opportunity to speak personally about whatever was relevant ... to listen to the real person and appreciate the diversity of thought. The circle of listening is an act of respect that provided a space of openness and appreciation..."

The fourth cycle: Affirming everything that happened previously and applying it to dissertation work

We meet still as a cohort in circle, doing supportive things and doing substantive work on our dissertations. Our depth of knowledge of each other continues to build. The elements have taken the following form. The trust space has been furthered through the group affirming 'buffalo' identity and bond at the annual EdD institute in 2003. We added to our regular supportive circle process all-day sessions where we furthered our dissertation work through deep listening and constructive critiques. Leaps occur as group members take real risks in presentations to each other about our dissertation ideas, progress or lack of progress. We embrace the leaps regularly, with all of us playing honest, critical and supportive roles in each other's dissertation development. Everyone is fully heard as our circle openings and closings continue. What do we have to look forward to and what has been accomplished already? We have a group bond for life. And group members have done dissertation presentations successfully with as many cohort members as possible in attendance. We hope to continue to do so as long as any of us who are dedicated to completion continue with the process.

Fourth Cycle of Trust-Building in '01 Cohort

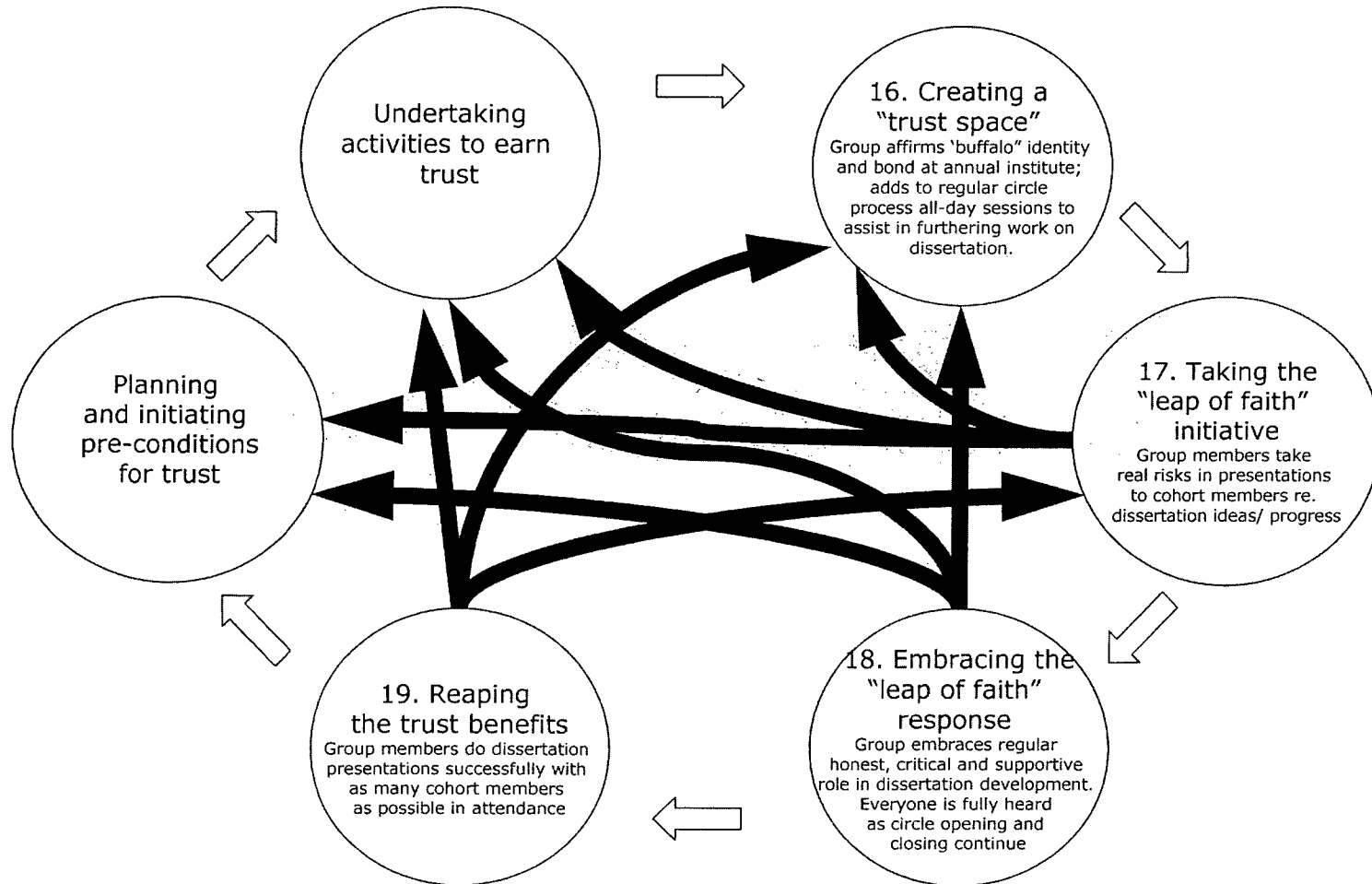


Diagram 7-5: UBC Cohort round 4 (see previous page)

Personal reflection: One of my most profound learnings about the impact of the cohort on my life came after the earlier-reference situation where a cohort sub-group took an optional course together and felt attacked while making a presentation about the cohort to the class (see chapter six). As I drove home, I understood fully in a new way the intensity of my connected feelings for the others in the cohort. That was what had kept me up so late that sleepless night after what felt like an attack. I took in how upset I was about members of the cohort being hurt and how deeply, deeply I cared for all of the cohort members... I realize now that, although it felt like I was taking a risk in saying what I said to 'Hector' in that class, I was carrying the cohort trust space with me when I spoke. I had had a profound feeling of safety with and support from the other cohort members in the room when I took that leap of faith...

Cohort journal: The same UBC colleague who added the 'caring' item to my list of factors that contributed to trust sent me an overall summary of how s/he felt my list of sources of trust applied to us:

I think we have group trust for all of the reasons you listed: reciprocity (giving to/receiving from each other), institutional (researching our practice is valued, supportive professors/advisors, allowing us to take charge of our learning...), risk-taking (we allow ourselves to be vulnerable), intuitive (we trust...), leadership (we are all leaders who take responsibility for our cohort's ongoing success in a diversity of ways), moral belief (we are all good people) and I'd add caring as a factor on it's own. I think we love each other."

As noted earlier, members of the cohort added reference to two other factors. One was "...for us the reciprocal part has another piece to it that was really important, forgiveness. We were willing to forgive each other..." The second was a reference to a common denominator that echoed the ethic of care we had studied: a common denominator to them all has been caring. We built and built and built caring into what we did with each other and that created trust....

Personal reflection on my first week as a member of the '01 cohort; July, 2001:

Stress and questions...

Stress. Getting lost going to the first class. I can't stand it. Why didn't I find out exactly where it was? Why am I in this program? Why am I doing this to myself?

Stress. An introvert meeting eleven complete strangers. What will I say? How will I introduce myself? What will they think? My shy self almost completely overwhelms me.

Stress. I was 'the teacher' at the front of the classroom for 16 years. I am once again 'the student' in the chair. Some of my teaching colleagues at RRU don't think I will be successful in making the change. Before I had a base of power, however much I chose to share it. Now I have limited power. Can I make the adjustment?

Stress. My ever-sensitive lower back, my first stress barometer, has let me down. I can hardly stand. I'm crippled. This is only the first week. How am I going to make it? Why can't my body keep it all together?

Stress. My second stress barometer kicks in. A migraine headache to end all migraine headaches. My head feels like it is splitting in two. Do I really want to be here? Can I cope?

Various cohort gatherings between July, 2001 and December of 2004

Earned trust. Trust space.

Vulnerability. Risk. Uncertainty.

Fear. Joy.

Leaps of faith.

Embracing each other.

We lived them all.

We laughed.

We cried.

We were one.

Reflection on the cohort, looking backward and forward, early 2005.

Trust. We talk openly with each other. About who we are. Our joys and successes. Our fears and agonies. The real person....

Trust. I was tense as hell in the weeks before the oral comprehensives. A 'bear' Gail would have called me in one of her kinder comments. As soon as the cohort gathered together the weekend of the comprehensives, I was OK. Safe. Secure. Caring. Cared for.

Trust. I got lost at times and struggled desperately. Depression reared its ugly head. I felt understood in my struggles every time I voiced them to the cohort..

Trust. I needed academic redirection. Firmly, critically and lovingly I got that redirection. I challenged myself and was challenged by the others; I learned as I had never learned before. I risked as I had never risked before in an academic setting.

Trust. I got weary with the dissertation. So weary that at times I had no clear idea why I carried on still. I wavered. I could so easily have fallen and not gotten up, a casualty of my own inner demons. My cohort colleagues encouraged me, praised me, helped make me whole. I trusted them and kept on going.

Trust. Through trusting and being trusted, I am going to see this program through to completion, more alive and more of a risk-taker than I was when I started out....

Trust in the cohort helped get me to where I am. What a privilege and yet also what a reflection of what I gave to the cohort...

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION AND THE ROAD AHEAD

8.1 Introduction

"To what extent can we, and should we, 'trust' trust to make a difference?" (Gambetta quoted in Kramer et al., 1996, p. 377)

As I lived my life over the course of working on this dissertation, I began to see the word 'trust' everywhere, including in political campaigns on both sides of the Canadian-American border and in such recent popular movies as *The Perfect Score* (Birnbaum et al., 2004):

The plans of six become one...

Anna (Erika Christensen): I'm not sure I'm comfortable with this...

Francesca (Scarlett Johansson): You know what the fatal flaw is in most heists—it's trust in the team...

Kyle (Chris Evans): Everyone has their reasons for being here...

Matty (Bryan Greenberg): Maybe we should all say exactly why we're here...

Kyle: We can do this. We can all get what each one wants to go but we've got to trust each other...

Desmond (Darius Miles): You talk a good game but you sound like your mom is going to come in with snacks. This is serious. Some of us have a lot to lose...

Matty: I think that we all have a lot to lose...

Kyle: Alright. Just hear me out—anyone who doesn't like the plan can walk... [silence] ... OK, right...

- From the dialogue in the movie *The Perfect Score*

I begin this concluding chapter by revisiting my personal journey and commitment, including my 'trust' that trust will make a difference. I summarize my major conclusions and suggest implications of my research for future research. Then I turn to a very personal call for action addressed to you as the reader of this text. This call for action embodies my personal idealism, my action and task bias and my belief in people. I conclude by reflecting on the challenges involved in moving to a new paradigm of leadership through groups and in each of us taking personal responsibility for contributing to the building of trust in every committee and group on which we serve which has the potential for trust.

8.2 My Personal Journey and Commitment

Researching this dissertation was very personal for me. I grew up in a house where there was little foundation for trust. It is one of the great victories of my life that I have spent the last year almost entirely focused on researching why and how to build trust in groups. My personal journey and search for trust and trusting groups started with a task orientation, charismatic leadership, and innumerable successes leading groups as a teenager. Then, starting in my late teens and extending over a period of twenty years, I learned and relearned what groups were capable of, both good and bad. I did so largely working with groups in academic, government and non-profit organizations. I saw first hand the value of 'doing as I said I would do' and of 'saying what I mean' as a risk-taker in group process. My confidence in my experience and knowledge grew as I studied group process as a master's student. As a student of administration, I extended and confirmed my knowledge of groups and organizations by reading key texts (particularly Katz and Kahn, 1978; Selznick, 1957).

At the end of this twenty year period, starting in the late 1980s, I switched my focus to groups and organizations in the private sector. I advanced my theoretical and applied knowledge of group process through six years of observing and coaching mostly private sector groups in organizations all over North America. I followed this applied learning laboratory experience with five years of in-depth work in an academic environment. I did so by coaching hundreds of teams and being a member of dozens of faculty teams at the new Royal Roads University. One of the reasons I involved myself so intensely for five years at the new university was because of the opportunity to live my knowledge about groups in faculty groups that I myself was a member of. In the meantime, when I wasn't in the academy, I had a mixed practice of private, public and not-for-profit sector work with groups and organizations.

Starting early in the 1990s, I further developed my capacity to contribute to trusting groups by getting my personal house in order. I determined my life priorities and worked on the esteem and other personal issues that were holding me back from personal disclosure and

from fully abandoning blame and self-protection in group settings. Through the personal work I changed. I was prepared to be more trusting and trustworthy in groups than I had been previously. I was more open and honest. I led better from within. I was more vulnerable and more of a risk-taker. I lived regularly with greater uncertainty than I'd ever experienced. In sum I was more alive.

I was to become more alive still, as I noted at the end of the last chapter, after I enrolled in the EdD program in 2001. I enrolled in order to secure an organized, structured and accredited opportunity to take my study of groups to a higher level. Reading extensively (see chapter three) was a key part of the opportunity. Over the last year in particular, my research gave me an opportunity to draw on thoughtful contributions and incredible giving of time and energy by almost fifty research participants from Royal Roads University. I also relied heavily on the counsel of, and my group experience with, the other eleven members of the cohort of which I was a part at UBC. The stories of how and why I undertook the research the way I did and of my biases, as I have come to understand them, are told in chapter two. Key findings from the research are reported in chapters four and five.

Why do I 'trust' trust to make a difference? Because of the stories people told me and because of my own experience at living my learning. Over the last year I have compiled, gathered and told stories dozens of stories about trusting groups. I have continued to constantly challenge myself to live congruously and authentically with my learning while doing my research. One key story I was gifted with is retold in chapter two. Ten more stories are recounted in chapter five. These are stories that pushed me outside of my stated biases about trust coming chiefly through the resolution of conflict and groups getting past a preoccupation with task (MacIver, 2001). While solving group conflict and improving attention to process were clearly part of the group trust equation, I learned that building trust was richer and much more complicated than I had previously surmised.

Where did the richness and complexity come from? Seven different times I was part of faculty groups that 'released' fifty plus learners back into their organizations at the end of a summer residency. Busy person that I made myself, I had not yet bathed in the joy of stories

like those of Donna, Donald, Joan, Erika and Adrienne. These four individuals took the learnings of the summer residency, mixed them with the skills that they brought to the program, and translated the combination of learnings and skills into reflective and generative collaborative processes. They did not need the stress of conflict and undue attention to a task focus to move things along. While I had twice experienced Christina Baldwin's residential circle groups, I was helped by reading Linda's story. Through that story I reminded myself of the simple but complex power of having a center in group process. Pam's story was the one that may have grabbed me the most. I can still remember sitting at my computer reading the story, awestruck with the power of a group living two simple but profoundly meaningful groundrules, with nary a conflict or a 'task' in sight. The result: incredibly rich, extraordinary conversations about all of 'life' taking place over almost two decades.

Even where I found some of my expected conflict and task issues (e.g. Erika's story), there were power nuances that I delighted in (e.g. Erika's suggestion of gender issues in the male-dominated groups of businessmen chaired by a female public sector employee). Moreover, in seeking the experience of others in my cohort, I learned as well. I learned that it was really important for one of our members to have us occasionally depart from formally going around the circle. I also learned of the depth of emotion one cohort member felt before the leaps of faith that we took and embraced in our second cycle around the model. That cohort member and I had a long one to one talk about those feelings that was one of the best conversations I had in the course of doing this research.

The stories I chose to retell do all have an 'everyday' quality to them. What the eleven focus group storytellers achieved in terms of reaching trust could fall within the reach of most people who read these pages. These everyday stories were also remarkable in several ways. One was in the respect with which they were greeted by the rest of the members of the focus groups to which they were told. Another was in the way they prompted others to recall and tell their own stories. Most importantly, all eleven stories were remarkable in the vivid and joyful way in which they were recalled and in the triumph of trust that emerged in each case.

My personal experience at building group trust required me to look at myself in the mirror. Based on that look in the mirror, I retell some of my recent group stories, warts and all. These stories are told in chapters one, two, six, and seven. I refer in these stories to my fear and my joy, my anxiety and my exhilaration as a member of groups that came to trust each other. I demonstrated an expanded view in the chapter seven stories. Those stories drew on the thoughts and reactions of other members of the groups in question instead of a single storyteller.

When I put the stories together with the literature, particularly the timeless writings of Gadamer (2002), Bohm (2000), Tuckman (1965) and Senge (1990) and the recent breakthrough writings of Mollering (2001) and Korsgaard et al. (2003), I developed a model (see chapter six). The model unifies and extends my learnings about one way to go about doing more to build trust in our groups. The model draws explicitly on the Mollering concept of the faith involved in trusting. Thus building trust in groups involves uncertainty, vulnerability and risk. The model can be applied to many different group situations but can never be scripted⁶². The process of layering trust over time is illustrated with the autobiographical group stories I recount in chapter seven.

I leave this work committed to doing further research, to speaking to, and learning from, as many people I can about my research and to continuing to attempt to live my learning with caring, courage and curiosity on an everyday basis.

8.3 Major Conclusions

I brought to my original examination of group trust a central question and a related central supposition, both from Pfeffer (1998). My central question was: Do our organizational practices “convey and create trust or do they signify distrust and destroy trust and respect

⁶² Note in particular the multidirectional arrows in the center of diagram #2 in chapter six, signifying the many different routes to building layers of trust in groups

among people”? (p. 62). My central supposition was that trust “is a commodity in short supply” (p. 79).

My conclusion, at the end of this study, is that, far too often, our present-day practices do convey distrust and destroy trust in groups. The research participants who told the stories about trusting groups told them as the exception, not the rule, and as remarkable experiences in their lives that they wish they had more frequently. The intensity of the commitment, involvement and story-telling of my focus group participants, including my cohort at UBC, made it clear to me that we all cherish finding ways to extend group trust further and to make it more part of our lives.

The other major conclusions I arrived at through my research are, for me, straightforward. We live in a globally competitive and challenging age (Heenan and Bennis, 1999; Drucker, 2002; Senge et al., 1999) where there is a “substantial increase in the proportion of human beings who work in conjunction with other people” (Bergquist, 1993, p.42). In that age we need to work at achieving trust in, and better leadership through, key groups in the service sector organizations of which we are a part. This will make us more effective and more efficient. We can achieve group trust through a combination of joy, fear, and vulnerability, each of which is linked to taking and embracing a leap of faith.

The joy is the rainbow that comes after the storm of fear and vulnerability. As I re-read and recorded my angst in the stories I told in chapters one and six about two of my groups at UBC, I remembered again the tentativeness, sleeplessness, upset and trepidation that went with my fear and vulnerability. I also remembered the feeling of release and the lightness of spirit that accompanied the joy, a joy that followed the leap of faith being embraced by both groups.

Building trust in groups requires as many of us as possible who are privileged to be in the service sector academic, consulting and organizational worlds to recognize and do more with our privilege. We must respond to a call for action and live the paradox of being both involved and highly reflective in key groups in our lives. These key groups include the

committees that provide leadership and direction in the academy: tuition, admission, tenure, Senate, and policy groups of all types.

How do we become involved? We can start by expecting, asking for, and contributing to higher levels of trust in selected groups. "Almost everyone dreams about the power that could be harnessed by groups of people thinking together" (Isaacs, 1999, p. 48). Our power in groups can be harnessed through generative dialogue, discourse, better conversations, synergy, flow, fused horizons and common consciousness. One route to harnessing the power is through preparing for and initiating trust, undertaking activities to earn trust, creating a trust space over time and taking and embracing leaps of faith. That route is described in chapter six.

8.4 Implications for Future Research

If my research is to have reach and influence it is important to extend beyond the limitations of my research population and to address more fully some ideas, questions and possibilities that I have merely opened up. In terms of further research, I suggest six areas of possible further work.

First and foremost, work could be undertaken focused specifically on sectors and populations I have not dealt with. Such work could determine if my conclusions have limited or broader application. For example, work could be done with various sectors involving people with limited or no university education, with sectors where people are proportionately more task-oriented than my research population and with more male-dominated sectors.

The concept of leadership by groups requires further examination. This examination can draw on such rich bodies of work as the literature on groups, on dialogue and discourse, on change, on leadership, on distributed leadership, and on high performing groups. As well, there would be value in expanding the way that I look at leadership to include the feminist

critiques of the framing of leadership concepts, particularly where so many of the participants in my research were women.

There would be value in doing an applied study on multiple groups that lead and build trust in a single organization. Such a study could be linked to Gladwell's (2000) work on *The Tipping Point* and could provide us with ideas on how critical mass and 'spreading' trust like an "epidemic" (p. 7) can work.

At the applied end of research work, comparative work on procedural justice (Korsgaard et al., 2003) and on participative methods to build trust could suggest additional specific methods for building trust.

I see great potential for more focused work on the nineteen intriguing questions asked by my research participants (see appendix #6). The two questions that I would suggest for immediate work are the two that had the greatest visceral impact on the focus groups (see chapter four). One was: "If we were more comfortable with the development of the process [through the creation of trust in the group], would we invent less to do?" The second was: "Are there members of a trusting group that you would not trust as individuals?"

Finally, I would urge that there be further work in the most potentially controversial and difficult areas touched on in my research. The research task is determining which, if any, behaviors by people make building trust in a group impossible. Repeated behaviors which might disqualify a person from membership in a trusting group are behaviors associated with attachment avoidance, low esteem, and destructive or malignant narcissism.

8.5 Implications for Members of the Academy and Others: A Call to Action

"... we fall back on... habits [and] protect ourselves... and cling to our views and defend them as if our lives depended on it" (Isaacs, 1999, p. 6).

It would be easy for some of you who are members of the academy to stop paying serious attention after reading the research implications section. After all, research is one of the primary foci of a university and that section is the last section with research in the heading. However, I would urge all of you who work in groups in professional, service sector organizations to keep on reading. Research, for example, is deeply impacted by research committees and funding committees of various sorts. Thus, a broader focus is necessary to appreciate the full impact these findings could have for the academy.

All of us who are members of service sector groups can take specific steps to build group trust. To start with, we can work on our ability to trust and be trustworthy, to be vulnerable and to live with risks and uncertainty. We need to pay attention to how we conduct ourselves as initiators of, members of and external resources to groups. We need to selectively let go of the ways we protect ourselves in groups; deliberately choose and embrace vulnerability, risk-taking and uncertainty over defensiveness in the right groups; and live fuller and more satisfying group lives as a result.

Many of you who have read this are members of existing committees, executives, task forces, academic senates and other groups. The questions that follow are for you.

The first and most basic question for members of existing groups is: Can we in this group perform a leadership, climate-setting or support function for our organization? Leadership should be defined as including direction-setting, aligning, motivational and front-line information-gathering activities (Kotter, 2001), including finding the Next Big Thing (Heenan and Bennis, 1999). Climate-setting should be defined as anything that contributes to the 'fields' (Wheatley, 1994) or culture in which the group exists. Support includes networking and diffusion (Senge et al., 1999) and helping people to feel better about themselves (Branden, 1994).

If you answer 'yes' to the first question, the second question is: Am I willing to make an effort to initiate trust, to undertake activities to earn greater trust, and to work with others to

create a trust space? Some of the many approaches which you can use to go about initiating trust, earning trust and creating the trust space are described in chapters four through six.

We then come to a paradigm-shifting question: Am I ready for myself or someone else in my group to display vulnerability, risk-taking and uncertainty? In other words, am I ready to take a leap of faith or to have someone else take a leap that I will embrace? Such leaps can occur through asking open and challenging questions, making assertive statements, and voicing frustration and passion, concern and joy.

If the answer is yes to all three of these questions, that leads us to the penultimate question: When and where will we choose to begin? That question in turn takes us further down the road towards the very last question and the possibilities for the future, which is where I will end.

8.6 Where to from Here? Seeing and Exploring the Possibilities...

The woods are lovely, dark and deep.

But I have promises to keep,

And miles to go before I sleep,

And miles to go before I sleep.

- Robert Frost, Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening⁶³

Much remains to be done as I type the last lines of this dissertation. There are three fundamental shifts required to move to the approach that I have identified for building trust in groups that lead. The first is to acknowledge and embrace in public one of the things that many of us fear most: vulnerability, uncertainty and risk. This fear is especially prominent in work environments where we may feel that our present livelihood is on the line and in learning environments where we may feel that our future livelihood is on the line.

⁶³ From www.everypoet.com/archive/poetry/Robert_Frost/; last viewed March 20, 2005.

The second shift is from thinking exclusively about individuals in formal leadership positions providing leadership in our organizations to thinking about formal and informal groups also supplying leadership.

The third shift is away from two opposite extremes in thinking about group development. One is the purely scientific, black and white, step-by-step thinking approach to group development that is in search of the 'one right answer'. The other is 'let it all hang out, it is all in the laps of the Gods' thinking that says that we should simply put groups together and 'trust the process'. Rather, I am asking you as reader to embrace the idea of groups consciously following a model involving situationally-appropriate ways of preparing and initiating trust, engaging in trust-building activities and internalizing trust-building practices. Following this model is one route to achieving generative dialogue, shared horizon, common consciousness and other demonstrations of the tremendous power of groups.

I would like to see all of us pursuing the possibilities and the potential of selected groups of which we are a part. At the root of pursuing the possibilities of trusting groups are taking personal and shared responsibility (Oshry, 1995, pp. 51-127), working smarter (Drucker, 1992, p.97), concerted effort (Putnam, 2000, p. 90) and showing as much vulnerability as we can muster (Mollering, 2001). I personally shudder at the thought of once again showing and responding positively to vulnerability in future groups of which I will be part. This will drain me physically, spiritually, intellectually and emotionally. However, I shudder more at the consequences of not showing and responding positively to vulnerability in the most important of the groups I choose to join in future. This would represent a triumph of learning disabilities (Senge, 1990, pp. 17-26) and the Dance of Blind Reflex (Oshry, 1995, p. 54) and a failure to take advantage of opportunities for success, cooperation and bonding.

The one caveat to all of the above is that we must all pay enough attention to personal safety that we ensure we do not leave ourselves open to inappropriate and damaging emotional wounding (Brown, 1998; Hare, 1993; Peck, 1983).

Where I leave off is with the shared responsibility involved in getting away from our reflexively and blindly destructive ways of operating in groups and in moving to building trusting groups that lead:

There is no "We",
There is no "Them,"
There is only You
and Me
and all of Us.
(Oshry, 1995, p. 120)

The next move is yours, and mine, and ours.

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APPENDICES

Appendix #1: A Summary of the Five Stories Sent to Stage Two Focus Group Participants

Story #1: "The serenity and purpose of groups whose members trust the group enough to deal with their 'stuff'".

The story has composite and disguised elements in it. I opened the story with the following quotes:

Exchange #1:

Jill: *The basic problem is... [she states what she thinks the problem is].*

Jim: *I think I finally hear you. What you're really talking about is... I've heard you say it often...*

Exchange #2: [after a short break where other matters, including elapsed time, are discussed]

Jill: *[Such and such a solution, as stated by someone else] ... may not be the best.*

Kathy: *I hear what you're saying and I agree with you.*

Exchange #3 [about half an hour later, during the debrief]:

Jill: *... I don't feel I have to talk (in this group).*

Gail: *It was the separation statements (when you separated yourself from the rest of the group that concerned me).*

Jill: *I do feel that your issues [to the whole group] were dealt with more than mine... [so I] couldn't contribute.*

Kathy (forcefully and aggressively): *I was trying my damndest... I was trying to satisfy your sense of urgency.*

Jill: *You guys feel that I was trying to alienate myself. Normally I would have pushed far faster and harder [than I did here]. I felt [my statements were] heard and not acknowledged.*

- the first two exchanges occurred within two minutes of one another with two members of the group saying that they could 'hear' the least-heard member of the group; the matter of not being heard was confronted about half an hour later during the debrief, which in turn led the way towards profound breakthrough

The story revolved around a group where there was a conflict about whether to focus on task or on process and people. This group reversed the equation I have frequently seen in working organizations, the people-oriented people outnumbered the lone task oriented person (Jill). The story documents the many ways in which the group essentially ignored the concerns of Jill and ploughed on with a pre-agree process and a people orientation. The instances where the group was most obvious in ignoring the concerns were in a group check-

in (where Jill and another group member voiced concerns) and in a situation where Jill left the group for a time.

Here is what I recorded and noted to myself about the check-in:

Gail: I'm tired. I was up late last night working on my integrated paper. Time to get to work.

Darla: I'm energized. I have questions. I'm ready to get to work.

Jill: We need to get focused. I'm in sheer panic. We don't know where we're going. We have [essentially] one day left.

Jim: I was up late. Time to get down to task.

Kathy: Time to get down to task but we have to look at the big picture.

Martha: I'm anxious.

After the check-in the meeting started but with no special reference to or discussion of emotive words like "panic" and "anxious" raised by a couple of group members. It never ceases to amaze me how we can have these kinds of words mentioned in a check in and then pass them by as if everyone had said "I'm fine".

I drew the following from my notes and recollection of Jill's departure:

Jill (with her voice rising as she speaks): While you guys finish this, I'm going to the washroom [She leaves the room].

The group then continues brainstorming as if nothing unusual had happened. The thoughts are written on the flip chart... I am absolutely mind-boggled at this point. My note to myself in my journal reads 'Why not talk about Jill leaving?'. The unmentioned 'elephant in the middle of the room' feels so enormous at this point that even in my removed corner spot I feel I can reach out and touch it. The group brainstorms for some time, switching from standard markers to 'fat' markers in order to read the ideas better. At one point Gail says, "We need to [hear] what Jill says". This is the only reference to Jill during her absence. The group starts to analyze the brainstormed ideas.

The group began the process of dealing with the 'elephant' with the group observer's comments that followed this session. After the group broke up following the observer's comments, the development of trust was furthered by two developments that occurred outside the group. One was that 'Jill' asked me for advice as to what to do as we walked down the hall after the meeting. I coached her to do three things: "to suggest that the group's process issues are not yet finished and need to be discussed further, to listen intently to what the others say without forming answers in her mind before they're finished, and to be true to herself in whatever she says back to the group".

The second development was that I had an opportunity to put the group situation in context for a very caring member of the group, 'Fred', through what I taught in a systems seminar that two group members attended before their next group meeting. I described this context-setting activity as follows:

(Between one and three members of each of the eight teams in the cohort were in each of the four seminar groups in the program.) Fred and one other member of the team I was observing were scheduled to attend the upcoming systems seminar, where I would talk about finding root causes of problems using systems principles. The method I taught for doing so was by repeatedly asking 'why'. I make a decision, based on reasoned intuition, to break the seminar class into four sub-groups, and to invite each subgroup to pursue the root cause of the problem study for the week or to look for the root cause of any problems their team in the program might be having. I wondered if Fred and one other group member, whom I deliberately separated into different sub-groups might raise the problem of the group dynamic, which was so raw at that moment.

Lo and behold, Fred does so, stating that the group's problem is something like: One of our members is separated from the rest of the group. Fred's group says: let's explore that. One of members of Fred's group writes: "why would one member of a team become separated from the rest?" The group engages in spirited brainstorming of possible answers, and turns to Fred for the decision as to which is the cause. Fred picks one of his brainstormed answers as the cause: Because one of the group members has his/her own agenda. The class sub-group member dutifully writes down the next 'why' question: Why does one member of the group have his/her own agenda? Again the group brainstorms and turns to Fred for guidance. Once again he picks one of his own answers: "Because s/he is wrapped up in him/herself."

By this time I am hovering by this group while keeping an eye on the rest of the class. I am cautioning myself not to intervene... I find it takes a very strong act of will. Profound learning is potentially occurring here about the building of trust in groups and I don't want to interfere prematurely and interrupt or pre-empt the learning process. Fred's group prepares the questions for the next level: Why is s/he wrapped up in him/herself? Here the brainstormed answers from Fred start to get very, very personal: Because s/he thinks s/he knows better. Because s/he is a selfish person and so on.

Finally, I interject myself into the group process. "Please stop for a minute. I would like you to do some learning from what you've written down. Sometimes what we can learn from the 5 why's lies not in the specific answers, level by level, but in looking at the patterns and looking holistically at all of the answers. Fred, as the person in the group who is the 'authority' on what is happening in the group, would you please take three steps back from the flip chart paper and look at the underlined answers (the ones he had picked out as the answers to the previous 'why' questions. Then I would like you to focus on your two answers to the last 'why?' question. When you've done all that, why don't you have a 'go' at telling us what you think the root cause of the problem is. Take your time."

Fred takes the three steps back and looks fixedly at the sheet of paper. There is dead quiet in this corner of the room. Then Fred's complexion, normally a healthy ruddy

color, goes completely pale. He puts his hand to over his mouth. "The root cause of the problem", he says in a voice barely above a whisper, "is that we have had a fracturing occur in the group and we have pinned the blame for that entirely on Jill. And I am part of that blaming".

Fred and Jill both took what they had learned back to the group that afternoon. I deliberately absented myself from the group owing to my gut feel that the group was OK and had a solid basis to build trust and to my awareness of the observer effect noted in the text of the dissertation. The group went on to be one of the most trusting groups that I have ever observed, evidencing high degrees of vulnerability and risk-taking in their meetings and ultimately in their presentation.

As it happened, two different participants in two different focus groups, who had read stories other than the above story, spontaneously talked about one of the groups on which the above story was based. The first one made a very brief but profound comment:

I really enjoyed the MALT experience and learned a great deal about conflict as I was in an all women's group that fractured. Remember that [Sandy]? I think that surprised you as much as it did us because we were all women. That was probably the single most important experience that I had. I have thought back to that experience many times and I find it intriguing to try to remember how we re-built trust.

Here is how the second person told the story:

I have one [high trust team] that comes to mind. It was here [at RRU; the focus group was held on the campus]. Sandy, you were observing. It was [a] problem-based learning group and it was all women... the other piece that was very interesting was out of, say, hypothetically the eight of us, seven of us were process people and one lone person was task. That ... was a reverse of ... many, many circumstances that I found myself in where I would be the process person and everyone else in the room would be task... Over the course of the five days...we moved through a lot. We fractured, insomuch that the lone task person just felt that she was being smothered. She was feeling so immensely frustrated with us wanting to interact in the way that we were, and she couldn't see that there was any commitment on our part to complete the task. So it ...created more and more anxiety for her to the point where things just basically ground to a halt. We required some intervention from... Sandy... if memory serves me correctly. Because this woman said, I can't do this. I can't be in this group....she experienced immense frustration because she would say, okay, let's just get on with it. You know..., we have things to do and we're not going anywhere. So she was quite vocal about it, so she was immensely frustrated by the fact that we weren't getting there quickly enough for her...[To gain perspective took] ...outside support ... the observer [Sandy] would mirror things back... it was like we were ganging up on her. And to a degree I think we were, weren't we?...

So...those of us that were process-oriented... started to appreciate and gain some perspective on what it must be like for her... [We] recognized that we were going to lose a member if we didn't something about [her situation]... I honour this woman because, if I were her, I'm not sure I would have stayed... nobody seemed, initially, to be

able to empathize with her... [and to understand] what it was like to be in her shoes in this group. But she stayed, and then [she] shared very candidly... So we were deeply, actively listening. There was a lot of mirroring back and a sense of trying to validate, in a very heart-based, genuine way, without overdoing it... Being task-oriented [as she was], if it was too personal, too heartfelt, too much touching... she wasn't comfortable with any of that sowe were being asked to find new ways of being that wouldn't smother her because that's what she was sharing with us: "You're smothering me." ... what I recollect was just saying, you know, "what do you need, because we genuinely want to meet your needs as well as meeting our own, what do you need?" So with sort of the support from an outside faculty person, and a sense that she would be kept safe, she started to self-disclose, which was very powerful for us. So slowly we started to build a level of trust up, and ... made sure that we were very respectful to always ensure that the task voice was being brought into the group...

By the end of the week we had managed to come to some sort of balance of process and task that was situational and recognizing the need. Because we had spent so much time on process that we really needed to park the getting-to-know-each-other piece and focus on task. So [we] invited her to lead us, you know, to show us how best to do that. So... I think she felt she was backed and she was supported and we were genuine in making it work. And in the end we did. But we almost lost her, and understandably. I really understand why that took place.

We became very close as a result of that and, you know, we still laugh about the fact that she'll allow me to hug her.... So I learned a lot from witnessing and supporting her and ... I think she learned an aspect of trust and of valuing the process as I did of valuing the task. And that was very powerful.

Story #2: "A triumph of trust: the groups that nearly, nearly fall apart through external blaming that 'came back' to invest in trusting each other and to soar as a Team".

I opened the story, which is a composite story, by setting the stage as follows:

The set up of this group exercise-based program is very simple. Two teams are put together, each with maximum possible diversity based on various personality profiles. The teams do a series of exercises, like those described in the Pfeiffer Book of Successful Team-Building Tools. The exercises start with each team developing groundrules and ways of operating together. By the end of the 5-6 day program, both teams must also have completed a group project which they then present together on the last afternoon. The program is highly intense and the exercises are highly varied, are all timed and are designed to be challenging for the group. The degree of challenge and/or variety mounts as the week goes on.

So, to set the stage, in two separate variations of the same program held about three months apart, there were two groups which, by the second day in the program had very, very similar reactions to the struggles that inevitably go with some of the exercises (i.e. blaming me as the instructor for making the timing too tight on the group exercises, for providing complicated directions for the exercises, for assigning

too difficult a group project for the final day, and perhaps for other things I may not have overheard). Then, on the third afternoon of the program both of these groups had another directly parallel experience, undertaking a particularly difficult exercise during which they essentially fell apart completely. In falling apart, both groups never did fully understand what they were doing in the exercise and produced very little in the way of result that would be useful to anyone.

The demoralized reaction of these two very different but very similar groups was palpable.

I then drew the following from my notes and from journals kept by two of the participants:

Rita (one of the participants): As the course progressed, we benefited from (an exercise where some conflict came out) every time some felt differences were exposed. We quickly managed to come to a compromise. Before the 'whys' exercise we had a long discussion about our felt differences and this really helped us know each other and what has bothered people. If we hadn't had this discussion, I think we may have broken down at that point or moved into fracture/fragmentation.

Gary: It took several days, but the Magnificent Eight finally progressed to this stage for the first time... The event that triggered this stage is now lost to history – at least to this team member. It involved a points-based exercise that required the group to answer several iterations of why-based questions. Due to what I suspect was a mix of heat-induced fatigue and frustration, little or no preparation took place, and the exercise quickly degenerated to a rush to score the maximum amount of points in an effort to "win" the exercise. To put it mildly, we cratered in the exercise. It was a complete disaster.

What followed in the debrief after [the course facilitators] left was the first effort our group had at a frank discussion. It centered mainly on the absurdity of our actions in the exercise, and our continuing drive to accomplish the task and "win" without seeking to gain the most benefit from the process of participating in the exercise. By this point in time, the Magnificent Eight still had eight members, but we didn't feel very magnificent.

At some point in the debrief, I declared that I wanted to see a concerted effort on the part of our team to "lose" the next exercise by scoring the fewest points, taking the longest time, or whatever it took. I think the rest of the team either did not hear this suggestion at first, or disregarded it. I became more emphatic on the point of intentionally losing, at which point Liz commented something to the effect of whether getting the fewest points actually constituted a "loss". That finally seemed to galvanize the rest of the team's attention, and I sensed a sudden rush of excitement at the thought of purposefully setting out to lose.

From my notes: While the team members both remember themselves after the fact as having exposed and somewhat resolved differences before the Why's exercise, the other facilitator and I had the same observation after the exercise. It was the

discussion afterwards that was key. The group was clearly discouraged and in trouble and that put them on the edge: they either had to accept responsibility for their behavior, start owning the exercises and really trusting each other and talking during the exercises or they might become permanently fragmented.

Once again a group 'rose up' from serious problems to develop a high degree of trust. And the risk-taking involved in moving from competitive and task-focused work on the exercises to a personal responsibility and learning focused perspective was enormous.

Story #3: "Palpable Trust: The Against-all-odds "Systems and Singing" type groups".

This story, like the first one, opened with the voice of participants in the group:

"Peggy raised a very good point in her observer's debriefing today. She told us that although we all are allowing each other to speak and express our thoughts (one of our groundrules), we are not taking the time to really listen to what each other is saying."

- *one of the group members writing in a journal partway through the team's time together*

"Gosh I think I actually understood what he said"

- *humorous reference to group dynamics in the team presentation*

From my notes: All these years later I still get goosebumps when I watch the videotaped presentation of the "Systems and Singing" group. This group, which was made up of members who professed not to understand systems thinking at all and who said that singing in public was one of their great fears in life, ended their time together with a presentation that was extraordinary in its breadth and depth of systems thinking and with two members of the group singing to the assembled group of sixty people. This group was one of the most dramatic of the Progressive University groups I have ever worked with. They actually lived the model I had developed of groups expressing feelings and talking frankly with each other on the road to developing a trusting and mutually supportive relationship. This group (which like the others has composite elements built into the description of it) was part of a cohort which had a younger profile than some of the previous ones (the younger members typically being public servants and teachers). It also had a number of people in it who had previously attended one of our executive programs, which gave us a base in experience on which to draw.

The story of the group starts with the group developing groundrules for behavior and eventually engaging in deeply personal discussions which included one member pouring his heart out and one member then withdrawing from the group and dramatically voicing her discomfort with these heartfelt statements. The group dynamic around this drama is best captured by excerpts from the journals of the participants and my own notes:

Day 5 when all hell breaks loose

Let's start with Dawn's journal notes today: "Today we had a disclosure from Harry about how he had been leading up to the connection between personal and group vision/growth/awareness. He cried and shared about his personal life... He explained his thinking patterns. Sometimes I find him too long-winded but basically he is formulating his thoughts as he goes. He is a caring man. After he spoke I broke the silence by tying his ideas in to previous ideas... anyway I had just finished my comment when Meredith called (basically) a time out. She said that she had to go outside because she felt ill but I had a feeling that we were getting too deep for her.... So nobody could comment on/give feedback in relation to what either Harry or I had said. I was disappointed. ... then Meredith decided not to join the group for a pot luck lunch we had organized... I don't really know why she decided to take a time out from the group so this is all conjecture on my part or perhaps misguided intention... But how can you make someone know [in this case Meredith] that the water is fine—once you're in—if they don't know or if they fear that it is cold—I don't know...

Len's journal: "I find it very difficult to express in words what took place in our group. As the timekeeper I felt pressured by time, but at the same time I knew that what Harry and Dawn were expressing could not be interrupted. Their dialogue with the group helped me to understand them and I wish we could have continued the dialogue. Our group members, myself included, are very concerned about Meredith's uncomfortableness with the group. On the one hand I feel we have reached a very high level with some members of the group but at the expense of isolating another. This was never the intention...

Meredith's journal entry: "Well, where do I start? In the three hours since I tearfully talked with Sandy and we walked around and around the campus, I have reflected on how I felt today but I don't pretend to have fully analyzed myself or the underlying sources of my emotional reaction to the group dynamic today. As Sandy has said repeatedly, you can't plan great insights, they just happen. There were so many processes happening today that I almost find it overwhelming to sift through them all." Meredith then describes a variety of circumstances in her life where she has been or is feeling trapped. She goes on: "I felt trapped because I was increasingly upset about what happened in the group in the morning (and when I'm upset everyone knows). At a certain gut level I wasn't comfortable with the intensely personal statements that Harry made to me and to all of the group members—relative strangers [note—the underlining is Meredith's]... I really didn't want to spend the afternoon with my group (I just realized that I've been using the word group and not team, an unconscious reflection of how I'm feeling?) because I know they would sense that I wasn't being my usual self and would ask me about it and frankly I don't feel comfortable sharing this information with them. If I didn't participate, however, I knew I would feel as though I was 'letting the team down'. I was viewing the situation as a 'no-win' one and felt suffocated by it. With Sandy's help I am trying to view my decision to not participate this afternoon as a winning solution for me and, ultimately, I think, for the group as a whole... I recognize that for Harry it was an intensely moving and potentially pivotal experience to share

those feelings with us (and I'm not belittling that at all). I felt that, for me, the entire situation was artificial and phony because I was not consulted about whether or not I was comfortable with what was happening and so I ended up feeling like I 'just went through the motions' of listening and being sympathetic and I feel very guilty about that... I also really resent what I perceive to be a shift towards a therapy/support group without even being consulted. I know that dialogue is supposed to be spontaneous but I feel that some broad parameters have to be established early on (and could be constantly revised if we as a group chose to do so) in an attempt to 'draw out' some kind of comfort zone for all group members... The issue I'm struggling with is: 'Does one person have the right to up the level of trust without other group members' consent?' This might sound strange but I feel manipulated by Harry's approach to the group work... Contrary to what Harry said I do not view this MALT program as 'one step in a 12-step program. I feel I am now reverting into a defensive mode. I resent being put in a position where I'm effectively a co-member in that '12 step program' (for the duration of the time this group is together) without being asked if I'm comfortable with that. I feel like a recalcitrant guinea pig... everyone should be comfortable with how far the process goes. I agree that there should be a 'safe space' created for someone who wishes to reveal personal thoughts but not at the expense of the 'sense of safety' of other group members.... What made this situation worse for me was the inescapable conclusion that I was basically a 'bad person' for feeling this way. I kept asking myself 'what's wrong with me?' and 'why can't I be as receptive as I perceive the other group members to be... To make matters worse, one of the members of my group asked me if I was ready to go to our group lunch while Sandy was still speaking to the whole group at 11:30. I replied that I really wanted to ask Sandy a question. The reason the group decided to leave early was that Harry had decided he was going to take most of this afternoon off to celebrate his brother's birthday, which happens I find out, to be his 50th. Ultimately the group set off before Sandy had finished speaking... I ended up feeling like 'Here we go again—the group is catering to Harry's needs—what about mine?' ”.

Peggy's journal: "Our group discussion today seemed to be engineered by Len. He started by asking me about my personal life... Was I married? Did I have any children etc. etc. I did not give this info on Monday and I stated that I kept my personal life mostly to myself and didn't really discuss events at home or work very much... I find myself annoyed if I'm working and someone saunters in and asks me how my mother is or what I had for dinner... As soon as I had finished, he said to Harry that he sensed that there was something Harry was working on—did he want to share any of it with us. He had hinted at it at least twice... Harry then launched into a very personal story about his previous wife's death and all manner of other things. All rather inter-related and garbled... As Harry proceeded I felt uncomfortable and looked around a few times and the rest of the group seemed pretty willing to accept the monologue. After he finished Dawn linked it to Senge and talked about personal versus workplace progress and vision. She has excellent neutral language to describe herself and others... Meredith said that she was sick from the sun and needed a break. It was a relief I was not called upon to comment as

all I could think was 'I've just been dumped on'. This had little relevance to our group work... I felt that Harry's agenda dominated. A very needy individual at the moment. However I strongly suspect that I've played this role in a group from time to time. .. We arrived at lunch without Meredith. She herself has lots of needs right now... according to Len, she was consulting with Sandy, which will be good...

My own observer's comments pick up after I had observed the group doing what the participants described above in the excerpts from their journals: ... I made a decision that the combination of Dawn's astute linkages and James, as a wise and thoughtful voice in the group, being the observer meant that the group was OK for the short term. I also resolved that I would have to check in on Meredith and possibly on the other group member who showed what might have been discomfort before any meeting of the whole group on Monday (I had not been there when the group decided to have lunch together so I was under the impression that they would not be getting together until Monday). Maybe a weekend off would do them good, I thought. So I left reluctantly and started in on the talk to the cohort. I was surprised when the group appeared just three or four minutes after I came in. I had planned to talk about the importance of sensitivity to potential vulnerability of some group members as part of my comments anyway but I expanded my comments to specifically refer to revelations and disclosure that some group members might feel uncomfortable with and the need to have conversations about what was appropriate for group process in this type of program. I ended my comments by answering a series of questions—it was just before noon. As I talked with the group of cohort members who inevitably had things to say to me after the end of any comments to the whole group, I noticed Meredith off on the side with one of my other advisees who lived in the same residence hall as her. Meredith had her head up but her eyes were red. "Time for a walk and a talk" I said to myself, referring to the habit I had acquired of walking around the gorgeous Progressive University campus with learners who were in distress and talking through whatever was going on for them. I disengaged from the group of questioners as soon as I could. The talk with Meredith was a long and emotional one as all kinds of issues around failure and emotion and guilt and appropriateness of Harry's conduct came spilling out. The added pressure was that Meredith was missing the group lunch. I dealt with the latter point first, having ascertained that the group knew that she was meeting with me and that she might not come. "You don't owe it to the group to do absolutely everything with them, especially if you have a legitimate reason not to be there and have told them you won't be there", I started out. Then I gradually, gradually started to broach the more difficult territory that this situation might represent a potential break-through opportunity for Meredith, that if she chose to she could talk with the group on Monday about what was appropriate subject matter for discussion in the group, as long as she did so without casting blame on Harry. I added that I would make sure that I sat in on that discussion and would intervene if I thought anyone, Harry included, was being personally attacked as part of the process. Meredith needed to talk it through one more time around the campus; after that she agreed to journal and think about it. She would then get away from things to do with the program over the weekend and then decide what she was going to do on Monday morning. I

promised that I would be there at the start of the group's deliberations, whatever Meredith's decision. After a teary hug, Meredith headed back to the residence and I dragged my way to my car.

I went on to describe a remarkable exercise in group vulnerability that the whole group engaged in the following Monday, led by Meredith's sensitive but pointed statement about her discomfort. The tangible group outcomes were a new groundrule that said the group must 'respect the listener' and a decision to call time outs as appropriate in group process. The intangible outcome was the big one, a level of group trust that was tested again and deepened as the program progressed and that eventually resulted in the extraordinary presentation I referred to above.

Story #4: "Stage hogs, hamsters on a wheel and other phenomena that interfere with the development of trust"

This story is all about groups that have dealt with the seduction of, and preoccupation with, task that so often prevents us from investing the time, energy and parts of ourselves that are necessary to develop truly trusting relationships.

There were two versions of this story, which focused on debriefing as a way of building group trust. The essence of the first story is summarized in the opening text, which again included quotes:

Version 1. The Dance of Avoidance

"... I was so angry that I didn't want to deal with you. I avoided this. None of us were ready to deal with it"

"... I didn't want to be part of this group. The group felt unsafe."

- two group members' comments from the dance of Avoidance story in a castle long ago...

The Dance of Avoidance is a very old ritual, a ritual that may owe its origins to a time when Avoidance was a survival mechanism and when we had to fear mightily those to whom we spoke sharply... it is also a new ritual, a ritual of modern times where politeness and getting along and getting the job done are valued and revered...

This story came from a debriefing of a group, who when I first met them were angry, ever so angry, after five days locked together deep in conversation about a problem-based learning study. During the five days, they discovered, much had been going on beneath the surface as they worked on completing their task: a group report and presentation. Upon sitting down in Circle with me and talking about their time together they found out many things, things in particular about trust and task and how they had frustrated themselves. They found out that they had stewed and boiled, boiled and stewed throughout much of the five days. Yet they did not show all this internal heat until the debriefing when they were all able to learn from their experience and to set the stage for a successful second week as a trusting group. I

noted that "It was only after completion of task that they sat down with me [as the faculty leader of this touchy debriefing] and began to talk about it"

This group is absolutely typical of many of the Dance of Avoidance groups I have observed over the last fourteen years in the following respects: groups in the midst of unresolved conflict find it all but impossible to put pizzazz in to presentations or group work itself because they don't have the level of trust necessary to engage in the vulnerable and risky behavior involved in doing so. When so much energy is eaten up by unresolved conflict, groups can get focused on task as a knee jerk reaction to group assignments and as a substitute for expressing feelings and investing in trust. In effect, when we turn people off in groups we turn off everything, including any opportunity to build trust; in the end this can lead to the breaking of groups into distinct factions [fracturing], which is a normal phenomenon of groups that don't have trust...

The second version of this story went as follows:

Version 2: The addicted to task group (note: title is added; I forgot to include it in the original text!)

"...When you feel the momentum going, you don't want to stop. You forget that rest gives you power. We became powerless..."

"...Respect goes beyond being polite—it involves really listening. We have to be more trusting of each other and put aside the ways we are used to doing [things]..."

"... just one more quarter and we'll win—[it was like] slot machine hour."

- group members in a group that dissembled around a preoccupation with task

I noted in the introduction that this piece was about three things. The most important of these things was the hamster on the wheel phenomenon, where we get going faster and faster in a group, losing sight of the importance of investing in group dynamics and the building of trust as two of the very most fundamental things that we have to keep working at in our groups. A second phenomenon was the phenomenon of the addictive, seductive power of task as a group is experiencing breakdown. The third and final thing is about how to acquire wisdom in a group process.

I added: "Wisdom is associated with many different things in many different societies. In groups wisdom can come in the form of an alert, thoughtful and assertive observer. Witness the power of an observer and of a debriefing process in a group that came off track." Once again a group used a debriefing process to establish a foundation for being a high trust group.

Story #5: "Trust by deconstruction of groups I have known"

There is often a sense of release and the achievement of a very special and hard-earned level of trust in presentations made by groups that have held back from some important conversation or issue and then have dealt with it some time in the twenty-four hours preceding their presentation. What follows is a very special and relatively unusual

composite story (although it draws explicitly from four different situations I have encountered in my teaching career) about groups that achieved trust after the group was 'blown apart' and reconstituted.

The words 'malignant' (Hare, 1993; Peck, 1983), 'destructive' (Brown, 1998) and my own reference to 'organizationally evil' (MacIver, 2001) all describe a form of narcissistic behavior that is hard to countenance in a group (for more on this see appendix #4). Each of these words is also very value-laden and have all kinds of emotional and moral associations for people. This language is reserved for those people who operate without a conscience (Hare, 1993) and/or tell destructive lies (Peck, 1983) to others as a matter of course. Put another way certain people exhibit behavior which is incredibly self-absorbed and manipulative. The behavior is also an emotional violation and abuse of other people inside groups and organizations. The story of 'Ann' refers to the rare situations (three at last count) I have had in my years of team-based teaching where a group has had to deal with someone consistently exhibiting this type of destructive behavior. The composite story of 'Ann' and her group follows.

There was nothing initially to mark this teaching session at Conventional University as particularly exceptional. The course was aimed at public servants. There was a good mix of experienced practitioners and relative novices in the group—some students were Master's students and some were pursuing a university diploma. I built the maximum possible diversity of personality into each of the groups, based on two personality profiles. I was soon to discover that while diversity was not an issue. However, what seemed to be a deliberate attempt to sabotage the group was a serious problem. One of the best ways that I can convey the thrust of what happened is to provide actual quotes from the notes I took during the session:

Day 2 of a 5 day program: "I do have a bias. I felt [the group] giving power to George [one of the members of the group] was [wrong]. It came from that part of me [that involves] competitiveness or evil"

- Ann

Early in the afternoon of Day 4 of the program: "Thank you for asking me to stay with the group. I know I held a gun to your head as a group. It was the only tool I had to use at the time. My frustration is a frustration with myself. I am trying not to [dominate the group discussions]. I overestimated myself coming in to this course as to my energy level. I guess I'm committed to you. I am committed to you [as a group]. That's all I have to say."

- Ann

Later that afternoon of the same program:

"This was one of the most bizarre experiences of my life".

- Aileen, one of the other members of the group, after I separated Ann from the group.

What happened around these various statements? A group that was assigned a class project for marks basically imploded. What led to the group imploding—the Ann character

mentioned above held the group hostage through a whole series of strategies that impeded group process and progress. She began by sabotaging early brainstorming and discussion processes by insisting that her ideas be given special credence in that process. She then pushed for a groundrule that the group would keep its dynamics to itself (which meant that members of the group were not able to tell me what occurred in times when I was not in the room as a faculty observer). Three separate times during the week long program she physically left the group. She did so right when the group was in the midst of group meetings where the group appeared to be getting both confidence and momentum as a group. Throughout the week she engaged in put downs of others when she thought a faculty member was not in the room (I came across her doing this three separate times by entering the room quietly). Throughout all of the above I drew a sense from Ann that everything ought to revolve around her and her needs. That led to the above noted resentment of George. George had specific experience around the subject matter of the group project that the group had been assigned to work on as a group and thus was a center of attention at various times. I was in the room when Ann left for the third time, just as the group was in the home stretch of work towards presenting their results. I followed Ann and advised her that, owing to her conduct, I was removing her from the group. I also stated that I had two requirements of her. One was that she had to do a closure exercise with the group to deal with the termination of the group as a group with her in it. The other was that if she wanted credit for the course she had to write a critique of all of the presentations the next day.

The group then 'ended' their existence as a group with Ann in it by debriefing with Ann about their highs and lows as a group. Here is what I wrote about this process:

The group gets through the closure process and Ann takes a couple more shots at the group about not listening to her before turning on her heel and walking out. In the quiet that follows her departure Aileen says: "This was one of the most bizarre experiences of my life". The group then talks openly and honestly about the experience. Members of the group make themselves highly vulnerable in talking about just how threatening and difficult they found it to deal with Ann. There is an incredible sense of trust in the room as the feelings pour out about the experience the group has had. I sit in the corner, savoring and frankly startled by the degree of openness and the need group members seemed to have to talk (I have since discovered in an almost directly parallel situation that is built in to this composite story that that kind of energy, openness and trust is normal, as an outpouring of frustration and relief). I leave as the group is starting a conversation about what to change to symbolically mark the end of the old group and the beginning of the new.

The group then reconstituted themselves as a group with a new name and groundrules. They engaged in intense trust-building behavior after Ann's departure. Their group presentation the next day, which was brilliant and energizing, was marred by only one thing. In the washroom in the break after the presentation, Ann verbally attacked one of the members of the group for not reporting on her ideas as part of their report. She would not 'hear' that the group was a new group and ultimately had to be accompanied out of the meeting room.

Appendix #2: The Mechanics of the Phase Two Focus Group Process

The phase two focus group process

Early in 2003, I put out a call for possible volunteers through an administrative assistant at Royal Roads. The call went out on-line to personal e-mail addresses of all graduates of the MALT program. The call specifically referred to an anticipated heavy 'workload' of up to eight hours. As fifty plus names came in, I thanked each volunteer for volunteering and told them I would get back to them. I then had a delay of several months while I finalized the consent documents, stories and other materials I would put in their hands. I also categorized volunteer participants as to their likely participation in Victoria, Vancouver and on-line focus groups. Based on the initial population it appeared there were enough participants for two face to face focus groups in Victoria and one in Vancouver. There also could have been enough participants for up to three on line groups. Later I set up dates for groups in the spring of 2003. After attrition owing to dates that didn't work, personal and professional issues and the other stuff of life, I ended up with forty-one participants who took part in the phase two process.

The phase two process is described in detail in chapter two.

I have attached the following five specific documents in this appendix to inform understanding of the phase two focus group process:

- Two sample letters to Focus group members (2.1 and 2.2),
- Background information supplied to focus group members (2.3),
- An agenda for one of the face to face groups (2.4) and
- The aforementioned document that provided speculative indications of what trust involved (2.5—this was circulated towards the end of the face to face sessions and in the fifth week in the on-line sessions)

2.1 Sample contact letter to Focus group members

University Letterhead:

Letter of Initial Contact for Participants to secure their possible involvement in the project

Project Title: “Building Trust: a Foundation of Small Group Work”

Dear

My name is Sandy MacIver. This is an official letter of initial contact for research work at the University of British Columbia. I am currently a graduate student at the University of British Columbia, completing the requirements for a Doctor of Education degree. You will remember me as an instructor in the MALT program

I would like to invite you to become part of a doctoral research project that aims to examine the ins and outs of building trust and trusting relationships in small groups.

The purpose of this study is to contribute to a better understanding of how we can build trust and trusting relationships in small groups so that those groups can benefit from synergy, high performance, dialogue, and other positive group experiences.

This research on “building trust” will explore and reflect upon:

- the nature of trust
- the dynamics generally of small groups and teams
- the dynamics role of trust-building in the achievement of positive group results in both learning and work settings
- psychological safety, vulnerability, conflict resolution and other areas as key factors in building and breaking trust

This research will be conducted in up to three stages.

Stage one has involved and will involve the writing of stories and the refining of the study’s research questions into more specific questions. The story writing will be based on my years of working with groups. I am extracting the material that forms the basis for those stories from the notes that I compiled while observing group processes. I have made and will make extensive use of pseudonyms, alteration and omission of specific details and development and use of composite story elements to preserve the anonymity of members of those groups.

Stage two will involve doing focus groups with volunteer participants who have completed the intense group learning part of programs in which I have taught over the last twelve years. These volunteers will be asked to participate in face to face or on-line focus groups. I envision meeting with several face to face focus groups sometime between March and May. I will also set up and facilitate one or more on line focus groups. That would happen sometime between April and June. Personal anonymity and the right to review remarks

made in the groups are a key part of my methodology at this stage. If there are more volunteers than required I plan to give precedence based on when I receive the e-mail confirming the desire to be involved— those who sent e-mails first will be first to be put in the focus groups.

As a participant, you will be asked to read two or more of the stories and to come prepared to talk or write (in the case of the on-line groups) about those stories from one or several of many angles, all relating to the building or breaking of trust. Thus what I will be looking for in these focus groups is a conversation about what is involved in trust-building. I will seek your input about words, phrases, actions and processes in groups that affect trust, as well as insight regarding the development of dialogue and the resolution of conflict in groups as contributors to trust.

Transcripts will be typed up of face to face focus groups and you will be invited to edit their remarks. You will also have the option to remove your remarks altogether if you/they so wish.

Stage three is an optional stage. If I pursue this stage it will involve one or more additional focus groups in one or all of the following categories: volunteers for stage two who were not involved in that stage, volunteers from the same e-mail listing as stage two who answer a call to be involved in this stage, instructors I have worked with in intense learning environments, cohort members in the UBC EdD program and/or members of a group in the workplace who have applied, in that workplace group, the learning from one or more of the intense programs. These focus groups will have conversations about the stories and about some of the preliminary results from Stage two.

You were invited to be involved in this study based on your completion of the MALT program and on your volunteering to be involved. As someone who has experienced the intense learning and the group processes involved in that program, I anticipate that you will have experiences that you can draw on that will help me in my research. If you consent to involvement, you will be involved in Stage 2 of the program.

The actual data from all stages in the form of transcripts will be held as confidential.

Participants in the focus group will be asked to refrain from disclosing the contents of the discussion and the names of participants outside of the group; however, what other participants do with the information discussed cannot be controlled.

I am currently seeking participants for the Stage two focus groups. In particular, I am seeking people who are interested in being reflective about small group/team processes. If you choose to participate in this research, your involvement will require a time commitment of up to eight hours. It will take you up to an hour to review the research questions and two or more of the stories I will have put together about groups I have observed, up to an hour to review your personal journal/binder/notes from the MALT program (if you can find them!!), up to three or four hours to participate in the focus group (whether face to face or on line)

and up to two hours to review the transcript and provide your approval/editing of your remarks.

All participants in this research will have the opportunity to review the sections of the research to which they have contributed. At that time participants may provide feedback and may withdraw any sections that they are not comfortable with. Also, if at any time a participant wishes to withdraw his or her contribution to the research they may do so. Each participant will receive a pseudonym and transcriptions will be coded to ensure that both confidentiality and anonymity are maintained.

Dr. Don Fisher, Professor, Department of Educational Studies (Ponderosa H, UBC, V6T 1Z4, 604-822-5295, donald.fisher@ubc.ca) is my research supervisor and can be contacted should you have any concerns regarding the undertaking of this research. If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research subject, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598.

Thank you in advance for your time, I will be contacting you in two weeks to answer any questions you may have, and to inquire regarding your willingness to be part of this study. If you agree to participate, I will also seek to confirm which of the focus groups you should be placed in and what your availability will be in the coming four to six weeks/three months or so (for on line participants only). Upon securing your agreement to participate I will send you an official letter of consent. This is a letter you would have to sign consenting to your involvement in the project, providing of course, that you do consent to this involvement!

Yours truly,

K.A. (Sandy) MacIver

2.2 Sample consent letter to Focus group members

Letter of Consent

University Letterhead:

Project Title: "Building Trust: a Foundation of Small Group Work"

Dear _____

My name is Sandy MacIver. I am currently a graduate student at the University of British Columbia, completing the requirements for a Doctor of Education degree. This letter is an official letter requesting your consent to be involved in research work I am undertaking at the University of British Columbia.

First of all, thank you for indicating your interest in participating in my graduate thesis study project, Building Trust: a Foundation of Small Group Work. The purpose of this study is to contribute to a better understanding of how we can build trust and trusting relationships in small groups so that those groups can benefit from synergy, high performance, dialogue, and other positive group experiences. Following completion of the research requirements for the doctorate, I may use some of the data in follow-up publications as a part of the project. A UBC graduate thesis is a public document and any other publications would be public documents.

The purpose of this research study on "building trust" is to explore and reflect upon:

- the nature of trust
- the dynamics generally of small groups and teams
- the dynamics and role of trust-building in the achievement of positive group experiences and results in both learning and work settings
- psychological safety, vulnerability, conflict resolution and other areas as key factors in building and breaking trust

This research will be conducted in up to three stages.

Stage one has involved and will involve the writing of stories and the refining of the study's research questions into more specific questions. The story writing will be based on my years of working with groups. I am extracting the material that forms the basis for those stories from the notes that I compiled while observing group processes. I have made and will make extensive use of pseudonyms, alteration and omission of specific details and development and use of composite story elements to preserve the anonymity of members of those groups.

Stage two will involve doing focus groups with volunteer participants who have completed the intense group learning part of programs in which I have taught over the last twelve years. These volunteers will be asked to participate in face to face or on-line focus groups. I envision meeting with several face to face focus groups sometime between March and May. I will also set up and facilitate one or more on line focus groups. That would happen

sometime between April and June. Personal anonymity and the right to review remarks made in the groups are a key part of my methodology at this stage. Where there are more volunteers than required I plan to give precedence based on when I receive the e-mail confirming the desire to be involved— those who sent e-mails first will be first to be put in the focus groups.

As a participant, you will be asked to read two or more of the stories and to come prepared to talk or write about those stories from one or several of many angles, all relating to the building or breaking of trust. Thus what I will be looking for in these focus groups is a conversation about what is involved in trust-building. I will seek your input about words, phrases, actions and processes in groups that affect trust, as well as insight regarding the development of dialogue and the resolution of conflict in groups as contributors to trust.

Transcripts will be typed up of face to face focus groups and you will be invited to edit your remarks. You will also have the option to remove your remarks altogether if you so wish.

Stage three is an optional stage. If I pursue this stage it will involve one or more additional focus groups in one or all of the following categories: volunteers for stage two who were not involved in that stage, volunteers from the same e-mail listing as stage two who answer a call to be involved in this stage, instructors I have worked with in intense learning environments, cohort members in the UBC EdD program and/or members of a group in the workplace who have applied, in that workplace group, the learning from one or more of the intense programs. These focus groups will have conversations about the stories and about some of the preliminary results from Stage two.

You were invited to be involved in this study based on your completion of the MALT program and on your volunteering to be involved. As someone who has experienced the intense learning and the group processes involved in that program, I anticipate that you will have experiences that you can draw on that will help me in my research. If you consent to involvement, you will be involved in Stage 2 of the program.

The actual data from all stages in the form of transcripts will be held as confidential. Participants in the focus group will be asked to refrain from disclosing the contents of the discussion and the names of participants outside of the group; however, what other participants do with the information discussed cannot be controlled.

As a participant in Stage 2 of this study I will be asking you to:

1. prepare for the focus groups by reading two or more of the stories that I will forward to you and by briefly re-familiarizing yourself with course/program notes
2. participate fully in the focus group that you are invited to participate in
3. review the transcript of the focus group and edit your remarks and/or withdraw your remarks

If you choose to participate in this research, your involvement will require a time commitment of up to eight hours. It will take you up to an hour to review the research questions and two or more of the stories I will have put together about groups I have

2.3 Sample background information for Focus group members

Building trust: a foundation of small group work

Notes for focus group members prepared by Sandy MacIver to assist in preparation for the focus group sessions. **Please read and think about the following notes.** The reading of these notes will help prepare you for your focus group session, along with the reading of two of the stories which are attached separately. The references at the end of this background package are intended only for those who want to read more on their own...

The narrative focus of my work...

This is intended to be a narrative-based dissertation. That means that I will be attempting to explain how to build trust in small groups through the use of stories. Thus there are two things I would like to have you do in preparing for the focus group:

1. Think about how trust developed among members of the groups in the stories that you read—please come prepared to explain your view as to why and how that trust developed or could have developed in one of the stories you read (e.g. what things did people in the group say and do that in your opinion enhanced the development of trust); wherever possible link the development of trust to one or more of the questions below
2. Think about situations you personally have been involved in (at RRU or elsewhere) where you feel that trust was developed in a small group or team (i.e. with twelve or less members); come prepared to briefly describe how and why the trust developed the way that it did; wherever possible link the development of trust that you describe to one of stories that you read and/or to the questions below.

Exploring building trust in groups, for me...

... starts with a statement, some definitions, some speculation about where trust in groups might come from and some questions, lots of questions, about what building trust in groups is all about

The statement: "The decision to trust in collective settings is different from, and in many respects more problematic than, decisions about trust that arise in other social contexts" (Kramer et al.).

Group trust can be tentatively defined as some combination of the following:

- "a state of favorable expectations regarding other people's actions and intentions" (Mollering)
- "revolv(ing) ... around one party's willingness to be vulnerable to (the other parties in the group), based on the belief that the (other parties individually and/or the group collectively are/is) (a) competent, (b) open, (c) concerned and (d) reliable" (Mishra)
- "(a state) created by congruence between words and actions (and) requir(ing) consistency and predictability" (Branden).
- "an individual's intention to accept vulnerability to the group based on the expectation but not the guarantee that the group will act in a considerate and benevolent manner towards the individual" (Korsgaard et al.)

- “(a state involving) both opportunity and vulnerability... the opportunity surrounds the gains... when ... acts of trust are reciprocated... the vulnerabilities derive from the potential costs...” (Kramer et al.)

Where trust in a group might come from: Based on these tentative definition statements we can speculate that in a group or a team, group trust comes from some combination of the following:

1. Personal reciprocity expectations: The idea of a ‘deal’ or a group contract or system of procedural justice among members of the group. You have an expectation of return for the investment you make in trusting the group (e.g. if you trust me, I’ll trust all of you; if all of you follow the groundrules, I’ll follow the groundrules as well). Like all good contracts, this should be something that you can depend on!
2. Institutional factors: The idea of institutional expectations and safeguards—e.g. we are expected to trust others in this learning program or in working for this organization/this employer; as a part of this expectation the educational institution (e.g. RRU)/the employer will do whatever is necessary to make trusting safe. Specifically the institution/ employer will provide us with psychological safety (e.g. have observers intervene if they feel trust is irretrievably breaking down; provide a facilitator/intervention if there is a problem)
3. Risk-taking behaviors: A willingness to be vulnerable and/or to make a trusting leap of faith and see what happens; this can be based on some combination of past positive experiences, a belief in humanity, risk-taking proclivities and a very solid sense of esteem (e.g. even if this group turns out to be untrustworthy I can survive that intact)
4. An intuitive reaction: A willingness to trust and be vulnerable based on ‘gut feel’ about the group or about some members of the group; the group feels ‘safe’ or a critical mass or even one critical person in the group (e.g. the leader) feels safe. For some this may be the ultimate in risk-taking behaviors (#3 above) but for the true intuitive this may feel more reliable than all of the reciprocity calculations implicit in #1 above.
5. Leadership behaviors: A formal or informal leader can influence others to engage in trusting behavior by doing so first (i.e. someone has to get the ball rolling here; I’ll set the example of trusting others and the group will follow)
6. A moral belief: Trust is the right thing to do and what a “good group member” should do (i.e. trust others in a group)

The questions: The questions which follow are intended as prompts in relation to the stories that accompany these questions. In answering these questions please note the page number in the story readings which pertains to your answer:

- Standing back as an observer (i.e. the position I was in), what issues/ learnings do you see emerging from the story about trust in groups; i.e. about vulnerability, leaps of faith, dependability of other group members? Did you encounter similar issues when you were in the RRU program? How did you react? What did you do?

- Imagining yourself as one or more members of the group written about in the story, what personal issues or reactions would have arisen for you during group meetings in relation to trust; i.e. when and whether you should make yourself vulnerable, when and under what circumstances might you have been willing to take a leap of faith about trusting that you could trust the group, what you would expect to get back from the group in exchange for trusting, what might lead you to withdraw trust (here please refer to specific statements made by or actions taken by one or more members of the group)? Did you encounter similar issues when you were in the first residency in MALT/at RRU?
- What constitutes psychological safety for you in a group setting? Does psychological safety contribute to the building of trust? Did it exist in one or more of the groups you read about, in your opinion? What provided you with a sense that there was psychological safety in one or more of the groups?
- What can we learn about trust-building from the groups that found themselves at key times focusing too much or too little on task? Can a focus on task co-exist with an attempt to reach dialogue—a state where we are willing to suspend our assumptions and/or hold them out for examination, ask questions of each other with genuine curiosity and a desire to learn, and converse rather than advocate, argue or reach decisions? Were some groups you read about on their way to engaging in dialogue or building the foundations for potential dialogue, in your opinion? What was the potential in the group(s) for synergy (Covey—the sum of the whole is greater than the sum of the parts)/fused horizons (Gadamer—the fusing of the separate horizons of two or more people)/common consciousness (Bohm—where we have this collective sense of being and doing) and coming up with genuinely new ideas or perspectives that arise from the unique attributes and the combination of the best talents and abilities of the people involved?
- How about conflict-handling behaviors? What do you see as trust-building words and actions leading towards the resolution of conflict? What do you see as behaviors that would exacerbate or drive underground the conflict issues the group is facing?
- How do you see the group processes that you learned about at RRU (e.g. group vision and groundrules, use of observers, debriefing, holding effective group meetings, using creativity techniques etc.) reflected or not reflected in the development of trust in one or more of the stories? How were you aided in the trust-building process at RRU and back in the workplace by one or more of the processes that you learned?
- Consider the institutional trust factors—what do you expect from RRU/your employer and/or the instructor/facilitator so that you invest in trust? Was this a factor in one of the stories you read? Was this a factor in your giving or withdrawing trust when you were in the program? Is this a factor at work?
- Stepping back and looking at all of the above, what learnings could you take back to the workplace about the development of trust from what you've read about in the stories? What learnings did you take back to the workplace about trust after your experience at RRU? Have some of these learnings 'stuck'? What make them 'stick' or come unstuck?

Selected References:

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Focus group agreements, process

1. **Focus groups** are designed to focus on specific topics or issues. Please remember to address your comments to the focus topic: ***building trust in small groups/teams***. If need be I will remind you of this focus.
2. Everything that is said here is **confidential**. In my dissertation, all names of individuals and of organizations will be changed to preserve anonymity.
3. Everything that is said here will be **recorded**. You will have the opportunity to correct/amend the recorded remarks, add to them, or remove them altogether when I circulate the electronic copy in about two weeks.
4. No one person should dominate the process. Everyone should get the opportunity to be **heard**. Please **minimize interruptions** and **honor silence** if it occurs.
5. Anyone can pass at any time in the round robins.
6. Please have **fun**, be **present** and be **curious!!**
7. Any other agreements we choose to add.

Review of the transcript

All West Reporting is providing the reporting services at this session. Your copy of the electronic transcript will be made available to you for editing, amending, further developing your snippet story or removing text altogether in a couple of weeks.

2.5 Sample document circulated to Focus group members

Trust and the 12 Criteria for Team Effectiveness

*A team is two or more people working together interdependently towards a common vision or common goals. In order to achieve interdependence and get things done and thus to be truly effective, teams must do some combination of the following activities. **Please pick one that you think is really important and read further on it the following pages.***

1. **Making meaning together:** Agreeing on why we exist as a team and what success looks like (i.e. mission, vision); setting groundrules for working (and playing) together; having the right combination of common stated team values, team slogan or team logo
2. **Self-managing continuous team improvement:** Setting aside time and energy for meaningful processes of evaluating all team meetings, assignments and other activities, of self-correcting (i.e. what do we need to stop doing that we're doing now, what should we start doing that we're not doing now), of celebrating joint success (i.e. what do we want to continue doing!!)
3. **Defining clear roles and expectations:** Clarifying and putting in writing roles and expectations of all team members so people know exactly what is expected of them
4. **Letting go:** Dropping the baggage that leaves us organizationally constipated. Doing so through doing uninhibited brainstorming, taking calculated risks together, having fun together and being willing to leave behind rumor and reputation issues that might infringe on teamwork
5. **Bringing discipline to meetings, activities and time management:** Having such well-prepared, conducted and followed up meetings that people really want to attend those meetings. Always have a purpose and an agenda and record key thoughts. Plan use of time and energy!
6. **Using and managing the right outside contacts and outside resources:** Staying in touch with the world outside your team to ensure that you do not become isolated, self-preoccupied or self-aggrandizing in your team. Never, ever allow your team to get isolated from the organization.
7. **Doing the right things right:** Making sure that you focus on things that teams do best and then bringing the right process to those things: e.g. problem-solving, contingency planning, decision-making, information sharing, marketing, people management
8. **Getting the job(s) done:** Developing 'raving fans' by successfully delivering high quality products and/or service. Your external and internal customers/clients should have a high degree of positive client satisfaction because you've done such a good job.
9. **Achieving balance in key things:** Making sure that you achieve balance in both halves of the following pairings: listening and talking, focusing on the job and focusing on group process, planning and implementing, debating and exploring/asking questions, work and play/rest
10. **Embracing, i.e. truly embracing, diversity of personalities:** Making sure that you really, really value and hear from those who are different/quiet; avoiding groupthink.
11. **Engaging in revolutionary, higher level creativity:** Engaging in really creative approaches, especially on the people-related problems and other problems that just won't go away: In a demanding twenty-first century world, we must come up with new and different approaches to people-related and other persistent problems.

12. Sorting out team conflicts and providing mutual support: Developing trust, mutual respect, and real support through constructive conflict and connective team practices
In order to be truly effective, teams must consciously undertake one or more of the activities in the left hand column in order to generate some level of the kind of trust indicated in the right hand column. The six types of trust that may be involved in each activity are: Reciprocity, institutional, risk-taking, intuitive, leadership and moral.

Team effectiveness criterion	The element(s) of trust related to that particular criterion
<p>1. Making meaning together: Agreeing on why we exist as a team and what success looks like (i.e. mission, vision); setting groundrules for working (and playing) together; having the right combination of common stated team values, team slogan, team logo etc.</p>	<p>Type: Leadership, risk, reciprocity, moral (re. values)???</p> <p>Trusting the positive and mutual intent of the other members of the group. Trusting that you can rely on group members to be working towards the same vision and mission that you are working towards and that a common sense of purpose is a 'given' no matter how much members may disagree on means. Trusting that you can follow the groundrules and not be the only 'sucker' who is doing so. Trusting that you can talk meaningfully about why and how a certain value (e.g. honesty) is central to how you live your life or why elements of the vision are a part of your life's work and not be exposed and ridiculed in so doing.</p>
<p>2. Self-managing continuous team improvement: Setting aside time and energy for meaningful processes of evaluating all team meetings, assignments and other activities, of self-correcting (i.e. what do we need to stop doing that we're doing now, what should we start doing that we're not doing now), of celebrating joint success (i.e. what do we want to continue doing!!)</p>	<p>Type: Risk, leadership, intuitive???</p> <p>Trusting that the rest of the team will always agree to make meaningful time and put meaningful energy into team improvement—that this item will be made an essential part of the work that you do together as a team. Trusting that you can and will have completely honest conversations about how the group is doing together at all joint activities, that you do not have to pull your punches, that you will not be personally attacked in the debriefing process, that the focus is on behavior and not the person. Trusting that the intent of the group in debriefing is joint improvement and celebration of accomplishments and not jockeying for position. Trusting that you can challenge other's assumptions about what success or failure are and have them listen openly to what you are saying. Trusting that any celebrations of accomplishment will be mutual and will not be about establishing a future power base.</p>
<p>3. Defining clear roles and expectations: Clarifying and putting in writing roles and expectations of all team members so people know exactly what is expected of them</p>	<p>Type: Reciprocity, leadership, risk???</p> <p>Trusting that leadership is about who is best to lead the group in that particular circumstance and not about establishing a power base. Trusting that you will follow the roles as defined. Trusting that people will adhere to and support team decisions when they are outside the team. Trusting that if people are uncomfortable with a role, they will say so. Trusting that people will state their real expectations and not be 'political' in so doing.</p>

<p>4. Letting go: Dropping the baggage that leaves us organizationally constipated. Doing so through doing uninhibited brainstorming, taking calculated risks together, having fun together and being willing to leave behind rumor and reputation issues that might infringe on teamwork</p>	<p>Type: Risk, intuitive, leadership, reciprocity, moral???</p> <p>Trusting that you can truly engage in generating unconventional ideas in brainstorming without someone saying “that was a silly idea”. Trusting that you can talk about the pros and cons of possible risks with complete honesty as a part of preparing to take thoughtful risks and without someone holding it out over you forever that you were ‘unduly’ positive or negative. Trusting that you can have appropriate fun together and not have people hold your ‘fun’ persona (or your bowling score!!) against you at the office. Trusting that you can let go of the past reputation of someone on the team and that that person is willing to make a genuine effort to be a good team-mate.</p>
<p>5. Bringing discipline to meetings, activities and time management: Having such well-prepared, conducted and followed up meetings that people really want to attend those meetings. Always have a purpose and an agenda and record key thoughts. Plan use of time and energy!</p>	<p>Type: Risk, reciprocity, leadership???</p> <p>Trusting that you can state the <u>real</u> purpose of a meeting. Trusting that you will get the advance information you need to prepare for team meetings, including information about the proposed agenda and information to inform your preparation for agenda items. Trusting that the development of meeting agendas and all, or at least much, of the discussion of agenda items will be open processes, wherever possible. Trusting that your meetings will be run well so you can expect good outcomes from those meetings, that they will end on time etc. Trusting that you can rely on the record of the meeting—it will arrive in a timely fashion and will reflect accurately the most important things that transpired/were decided at the meeting.</p>
<p>6. Using and managing the right outside contacts and outside resources: Staying in touch with the world outside your team to ensure that you do not become isolated, self-preoccupied or self-aggrandizing in your team. Never, ever allow your team to get isolated from the organization.</p>	<p>Type: Leadership, moral, reciprocity???</p> <p>Trusting that you can develop alliances internally in the organization and external to the organization (e.g. with customers, key suppliers) in a positive and healthy fashion in support of what your team is mandated to do. Trusting that key outsiders can be approached to engage in constructive conversations about such subjects as whether the team has become too insular or if team members are suffering from collective group think. Trusting that you can engage in upwards management in the organization in order to check how you are perceived as doing in the team and to secure a ‘heads up’ on coming assignments and challenges without being called a brown-noser. Trusting that you can work together to find the right key outside resources (e.g. facilitators, outside experts) without worrying about agendas/power (e.g. Who does the facilitator favor/support? Whose view is reinforced by the expert?).</p>

<p>7. Doing the right things right: Making sure that you focus on things that teams do best and then bringing the right process to those things: e.g. problem-solving, contingency planning, decision-making, information sharing, marketing, people management and the like</p>	<p>Type: Risk, reciprocity, institutional, leadership???</p> <p>Trusting that you can ask the question: is this activity a good investment of our time as a team and be seen as asking a serious and important question and not as being disruptive or negative. Trusting that others will invest the time with you to do thoughtful problem-solving and exploration of the root causes of problems, without become defensive and/or suggesting that this is a waste of time. Trusting that you can define the kind of information (not raw data but real information) to bring before the team and that you can engage in the kinds of conversations required to turn that information into wisdom. Trusting that having a team involved in carefully chosen people-related matters will yield better results than one person doing it all alone. Trusting that you can entrust the final decision to the hierarchical process/boss if the team does not make its own final decisions.</p>
<p>8. Getting the job(s) done: Developing 'raving fans' by successfully delivering high quality products and/or service. Your external and internal customers/clients should have a high degree of positive client satisfaction because you've done such a good job.</p>	<p>Type: Risk, reciprocity, institutional????</p> <p>Trusting that truly open and exploratory discussion of customer needs can result in mutual and thoughtful gathering of a true picture of those needs and ultimately in better quality service that customers are anxious to tell others about. Trusting that the team can work together to yield raving fan experiences and carefully hand off relationships to one another while avoiding getting into silos, debates about fee-splitting and other negative practices. Trusting that in you can share information about customers and customer issues in order to arrive at better approaches to serving customers without having to worry about your customers being 'picked off' or 'stolen' away.</p>
<p>9. Achieving balance in key things: Making sure that you achieve balance in both halves of the following pairings: listening and talking, focusing on the job and focusing on group process, planning and implementing, debating and exploring/asking questions, work and play/rest</p>	<p>Type: Risk, intuitive, reciprocity, institutional???</p> <p>Trusting that you can give air time away in the team and expect to get it back, in a balanced and fair way. Trusting your team to take time to examine your process and not just your results and that that process work will be seen as 'real work'. Trusting that you can surface and suspend assumptions and rely on your team-mates to raise and explore their own assumptions. Trusting that you can suggest ideas and expect thoughtful questions about your ideas and not just put-downs, argument and debate. Trusting that when the time comes for debate in order to make tough decisions that you can do so without rancor. Trusting that you can invest time in planning a future but that you will also turn those plans into concrete reality. Trusting that for every time you push hard to meet deadlines, short breaks will be called during the big push and a longer break will come after the push.</p>

<p>10. Embracing, i.e. truly embracing, diversity of personalities: Making sure that you really, really value and hear from those who are different/quiet; avoiding groupthink.</p>	<p>Type: Moral, risk, reciprocity, institutional???</p> <p>Trusting that you can <i>really</i> be yourself without being made fun of or negatively singled out for being different than others. Trusting that it is OK to be silent at times. Trusting that others will call on you for your opinion and will genuinely want to hear it. Trusting that if anyone thinks that there are issues, problems or other concerns associated with where the team is going that they will vigorously voice that opinion and not just go along.</p>
<p>11. Engaging in revolutionary, higher level creativity: Engaging in really creative approaches, especially on the people-related problems and other problems that just won't go away: In a demanding twenty-first century world, we must come up with new and different approaches to people-related and other persistent problems</p>	<p>Type: Risk, intuitive, leadership, reciprocity????</p> <p>Trusting that there will be 'wild and crazy' and 'out of the box' mess up time to generate ideas and that time will be respected and valued and not ridiculed. Trusting that if the team regularly invests time in understanding and using tried and true processes for higher level creativity (e.g. the random word method, stone soup or what-iffing) that you will eventually arrive at breakthrough ideas. Trusting that 'mess up' time will be balanced with 'clean up' time where you turn the wild and crazy ideas into practical, implementable ideas that you can be proud of.</p>
<p>12. Sorting out team conflicts and providing mutual support: Developing trust, mutual respect, and real support through constructive conflict and connective team practices</p>	<p>Type: Intuitive, risk, moral, reciprocity, leadership, institutional (i.e. all six). Trusting that you can risk surfacing the real conflicts that diverse groups have. This is something that some of us fear mightily, and for this to work you have to trust that you can surface these conflicts without having to fear being marginalized, ignored or attacked. Trusting that others will raise conflicts with you as they arise and will do so with loving candor but will also abandon blame. This trust thus gives you an opportunity to be a better member of the team. Trusting that you can support others and expect support from them as you pursue a common vision/goals and work together at the other criteria without being seen as operating a 'love-in' with 'do-good namby pambies'. Trusting that if you invest enough time and personal energy, including time and energy when you are right in the middle of doing a task, in these activities, that there will be a true sense of connection that will make you effective in your time together and will result in your being consistent in representing or talking about the team when you meet with others outside the team. Trusting that you will not be violated in the vulnerability that goes with all of this.</p>

<p>Taking the overall systems (holistic) perspective: paying attention to the team as a holistic entity; ensuring that all the people and all the processes fit together into one coherent whole</p>	<p>Type: Intuitive, risk, moral, reciprocity, leadership, institutional (i.e. all six) Trusting that being holistic in your approach is one of the most important things you can do for the integrity of the team. Trusting that asking questions like “Overall, how are we doing?” and “Is this a team you are proud of and want to continue to be part of?” will yield important and useful information. Trusting that you can give honest answers to the above questions and not be ostracized or second guessed or, at the opposite extreme, not be dismissed as a Pollyanna.</p>
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Appendix #3: More Detail on the Systems and Dialogue Models

1. The use of models and the models that serve as foundations for my work

As noted earlier in the text of the dissertation, the on-line Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines a “model” as “a usually miniature representation of something; *also*: a pattern of something to be made” and as “an example for imitation or emulation”. From my vantage point, the contemporary history of development of “examples for imitation or emulation” for group development began in 1965 and has continued unabated until 2004. Each of the models or sets of models I describe in chapter three and refer to in this appendix has within it concepts that provided me with both “guidance” and a basis for “imitation” in the modeling work I undertake in chapter six. In a very real sense, without the models that are described, this dissertation would not exist—each of the models or sets of models that are described is an antecedent for the model that I describe.

The models start with the series of archetype models that are an essential component part of the systems thinking discipline described in *The Fifth Discipline* (Senge, 1990). These models introduced reinforcing loops to the mainstream lexicon and were the first systems models that I worked with extensively. Next is my own version of a model that merged elements of Tuckman and Senge in particular (MacIver, 2001). This model was first partially developed in the early 1990s but took me the better part of ten years to refine. The model explains the alternative route that many groups take that prevents them from reaching high performance. The sixth model, developed by Scharmer, appeared in the work of Isaacs (1999) and describes how we can move to generative dialogue.

My process of examining the models in chapter three and in this appendix starts with two important themes I interpret as being common to the models developed by Tuckman (1965), Katzenbach and Smith (1993), and Blanchard et al. (2000). One common theme to each of these models was a largely logical, sequential process to achieving group interdependence and to getting tasks done in organizations. However it should be noted there are two variations. Tuckman does refer to the possibility of regression, as noted in chapter three. The other variation is that Katzenbach and Smith (1993) built in the earlier-mentioned unique feature of suggesting that a group can stop along with the way. Their concept was that when a group does so it can match with what the group is expected to do.

The second common theme is that all three models feature a difficult or uncomfortable second stage (called variously *storming*, *dissatisfaction* or *pseudo team*). This stage is a huge challenge to groups. This stage in each of the models reflected important societal changes in attitudes towards conflict. Another way of stating this is that each of the models is representative of the progression we have made in North American society in understanding that we have to pro-actively deal with conflict. We have moved from the traditional view of the 1930s and 1940s to “avoid conflict at all costs” to the human relations idea of the late 1940s to the mid- 1970s that “conflict is a natural occurrence”. Finally we moved to the interactionist view that “conflict is encouraged for success in organizations”

(Robbins, 1991, p. 429). Unfortunately I did not find in the models developed by others a realistic description of what can result in and result from a failure to engage in conflict and what other important human emotions may result in quantum positive shifts in groups. The closest that the models come to this is in Katzenbach and Smith's (1993) description of being stuck in pseudo-team, a state that I summarize as backstabbing and pretending to get along.

One thing that the Senge (1990) and MacIver (2002) models have in common the idea of reinforcing loops. These loops add a third dimension to the modeling. The upwards or downwards spiraling third dimensions reflect how we generate and counter momentum in our groups and organizations. A feature of both of these sets of models is the possibility of getting 'stuck' and cycling through a negative pattern repeatedly, thus generating negative momentum because of the emotions that go with 'being stuck'. Senge's archetypes amply demonstrate how we can generate all kinds of positive momentum through various human activities. However we can have all of that effort countered by potentially negative influences. These negative influences reverse the positives we have achieved and return the group or organization to a state that balances with the original state they were in before the effort. In the Systems Model for Team Effectiveness (MacIver, 2001), you can see visually how a group could be dedicated to task and yet end up in endless cycles of pointless unresolved conflict and feelings avoidance. These negative cycles result in a group experiencing ongoing self-inflicted frustration and even moving to a state of enmity (Foes) where the only solution to the group's problems might be to break up the group.

All of the models have something to do with achieving what we have come to regard as group success. Success has the earlier-mentioned job or work focus in Tuckman's (1965) task-related groups ("performance"), in Katzenbach and Smith's (1993) teams that reach the zenith of group accomplishment ("high performance") and in Blanchard et al.'s (2000) fourth stage ("production"). I have a more mixed focus on the interpersonal and on performance ("full dialogue and fulfillment" in MacIver, 2001), as do Korsgaard et al. (2003) in referring to "cooperation".

2. Senge's spirals and the development of the Systems Model

Even while I was aware of the seminal contributions each of the three team development models made to my thinking, I attempted to go beyond them and develop my own model for a specific reason. I have had difficulty personally and in working with groups in applying these models to what many, many groups experienced. That experience was a lack of 'success' and a failure to make choices in the manner suggested in these models. This was especially the case with groups that seemed to repeatedly regress back to politeness and domination (Tuckman, 1965) rather than working their way through storming and dissatisfaction (for more on this see MacIver, 2001). These application difficulties are in addition to the absence of mention of layering.

I will now turn to the recent research most responsible for popularizing understanding of systems concepts and for influencing my systems thinking. The Fifth Discipline (Senge, 1990) brought many key concepts to the table. As noted earlier, the book referred to the

negative effects in organizations of “learning disabilities”. These disabilities explain why some of us would hesitate and fail to successfully engage in developing groups in organizations (e.g. because we put too much energy into blaming others). He also wrote about us experiencing a pattern of being repeatedly ‘blindsided’ in our groups by the side affects of previously-experienced problems and challenges (see the Shifting the Burden model, Senge, 380). Later, in elaborating on the Limits to Growth model (Senge, 1990, 379; Senge et al., 1999, 69), Senge et al. explicitly added a factor that is essential to the application of group developments ideas in organizations. This factor was called “growth processes of profound change”. The research suggested we look at individual motivation as a key factor in determining why changes succeed in an organization. I referred to this individual motivation in the dissertation as a basis for understanding why an individual would want to invest in the risk-taking necessary to build trust in a group.

As noted in chapter three, Senge identifies two types of reinforcing loops, both of which are relevant to group betterment. Senge notes that there are “virtuous cycles”—processes that reinforce in desired directions. This is the cycle illustrated in diagram 1 and quoted above with reference to “the good product” and its connection to sales, satisfied customers and positive word of mouth. It is this phenomenon that explains the deepening of trust and repeated leaps of faith referred to in the dissertation in some groups. Having success at taking one risk leads to a greater belief in the possibility of subsequently taking on new risks. I can relate this to conflict and repeated instances of conflict that I have observed in groups after so called storming or dissatisfaction is resolved the first time. Having seen conflict dealt with in a constructive way once, groups are more likely to take it on without fanfare or fuss another time.

Where things start off badly and grow worse, it is referred to as the second type of reinforcing loop, a “vicious cycle”. These are the cycles of where groups struggle, those struggles lead to still more problems with the group, and pretty soon things are going downwards. To go back to the sales example of Senge’s that was referred to earlier in chapter three:

... if the product is defective, the virtuous cycle becomes a vicious cycle: sales lead to less satisfied customers, less positive word of mouth, and less sales; which leads to still less positive word of mouth and less sales (Senge, 1990, p. 82)

In reinforcing negative cycles, the negativity can become a self-fulfilling prophecy that feeds on itself. These negative cycles, however, can also become a positive force when they cause sufficient problems in the group that the group or someone else in the organization resolves that something has to be done. For example, in story #5, as reported in chapter two and detailed in appendix #1, things got worse and worse as Ann manipulated the group until I intervened and removed her from the group

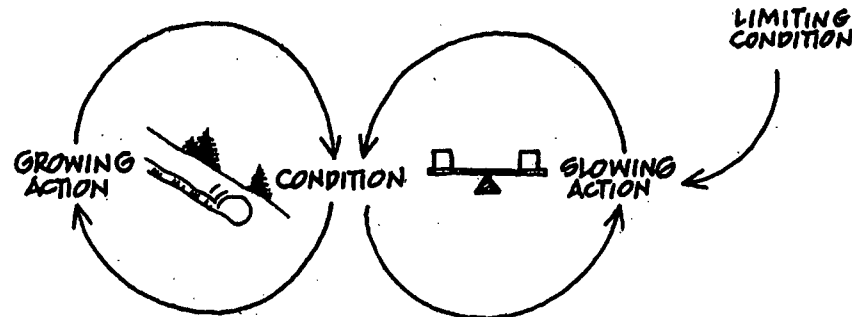
Senge relates these reinforcing loops to such language as the “snowball effect” and “the bandwagon effect” and to such business concepts as “momentum is everything” in building confidence in a new product or within a fledgling organization (Senge, 1990, p. 83). Senge

also notes that these cycles have limits because “eventually, limits are encountered” as one form of balancing feedback were “there is a self-correction to maintain some goal or target” (Senge, 1990, p. 84). Thus in diagram 1⁶⁴, limits to growth, there is a slowing action on the right that has a balancing effect on the reinforcing growing action that is occurring in the left hand loop. The slowing action is brought about by some form of limiting condition.

Diagram 1: Limits to Growth

LIMITS TO GROWTH

Structure:



Senge et al. note a particular form of balancing factor in *The Dance of Change* (Senge et al., 1999). Growth occurs through networking and diffusion, positive personal results and positive business results all leading to enthusiasm and willingness to commit on the part of an employee. This can be counterbalanced and the investment in change initiatives negatively affected by various actions or failed actions by the leadership of an organization. Applied to trust-building, this balancing factor suggests that we must consciously set aside enough time, get the right coaching and support help, make sure that people see groups as relevant and role model at the executive level ‘walking the talk of investment in groups. Senge et al. also note that we can sustain groups past the normal balancing and negative effects that might interfere with sustaining change by directly addressing fear and anxiety, ensuring that we assess and measure where possible the progress we make and secure “infectious commitment” (Senge et al., 1999, 344). This latter point relates very directly to the ideas about the tipping point where positive momentum becomes a compelling force for good (Gladwell), illustrated by Senge above as being like that snowball rolling down a hill.

The concept of reinforcing positive loops could be overlaid on the Katzenbach and Smith model. A group could improve its performance and its group bond over time by making a whole series of decisions and accomplishing certain tasks. It could also do so through some other development (e.g. the affirmation of an increasing sense of accomplishment through more openness in group meetings). The improvement could take the form of a series of virtuous loops as a team evolves from being a potential team to a real team to a performing team.

⁶⁴ Senge, 1990, p. 379

3. The MacIver Model

The reference to reinforcing loops leads to examination of my own model, a systems model of stages of group development (MacIver, 2001, p. 113; see Diagram 2). This is a precedent for the systems-based model of building trust in groups that is proposed in this dissertation. The model is built on Senge's systems notions:

Systems models usually have loops that connect and reconnect the different parts of the model. In the case of the systems team model I propose in this paper, the dynamic interaction is between five different states of team development and a state of being on the way to dissolution. The interconnected parts or states in this model are Formation, Felt Differences/Friction, Feelings/Frankness, Fulfillment/Full Dialogue and Fracture/Fragmentation. The state of being on the way to dissolution is Foes.

A systems approach also suggests that any one thing that occurs in a team (as with a system) has an effect on all other things in that system over time. If I operate within a human system like a team, I will take actions and sometimes I will choose not to act. These decisions will have an effect on others. The actions that others take, or do not take, will also have an effect on me. If things are going really well in a system, then I can take some credit for things going well. However, if I am a continuing member of a system doing poorly then I have to recognize that some of my actions or my inaction will have been part of the problem. If inaction is part of my problem then I may have started to fall into a victim state where I blame everything on others. Taking both credit and responsibility for our actions is a fundamental part of the thinking in this model (MacIver, 2001, 103)

From this point forward I went on to detail the loops and possibilities involved in the Team Systems Model. The starting point is the time of politeness and uncertainty and dominance of authority figures (Tuckman, 1965). However, this is explicitly a state that we can and do cycle through repeatedly. The next state is Friction and Felt Differences. We are propelled here by the normal task focus and stresses of life in organizations. Friction is where we rub up against one another and 'bug' one another. Felt differences is a state where we become aware, often acutely, of the differences among members of the group. Most groups that I observe and/or participated in myself have a task assigned to them. Most groups go exactly the same place after experiencing Friction and Felt Differences, both initially and in later unfortunate downwardly spiraling cycles. That place is Fragmentation and Fracture. Fragmentation and Fracture differ by degrees (fracture being a more deeply felt and counterproductive state in the model) but both describe the original group breaking into subgroups. These subgroups butt up against one another in meetings. Often one or more people with 'different' ways of thinking are left out as we create the sub-groups.

Personal reflection: As the designated faculty observer, I fold myself into the corner of the room, sitting on tip toes, shushing myself. I am there but not there, locating myself in a place where I have seen many wonders, and hopefully a supportive presence. My ears, eyes and inner self are engaged, searching, always searching, for signs of trust, openness, reflectiveness and generative dialogue.

I witness courage that day. I witness courage in the form of eye-popping, mind-rattling suggestions for a true revolution for a tired, staid, old-before-its-time organization, an organization on life support. Managers from this organization, which has since shrunk to a shadow of its former self, studiously occupy this learning seminar.

Much later that day, after all the formal teaching is done and the observing is over until the 'morrow, I find my way to the tall, deep fireplace in the foyer of the great hall. I take note that the perpetrator of the act of courage stands in front of me. His head is bowed low. His spirit is lower still.

"Wait!" I say. "I admire what you did in that room today. You challenged. You suggested. You were magnificent."

"Thanks", he says, and if anything his spirit bows down lower still, dragging perilously close to the shiny floor. "But you know how it is. In that room today, I disturbed people. I felt an outcast, someone my team-mates would rather hadn't been there."

I feel a tug on my sleeve. It is Erin, my fourteen year-old daughter, who has accompanied me on so many of these academic sojourns. She radiates youthful energy.

"Can I speak?" she says.

"Of course", I rejoin.

"I bet your personality profiles show that you're full of creative ideas", she says.

He nods his head sadly and his face and his voice ask the same question: "How did you know?—you weren't even there!"

"Because..." she says. "Because my profiles show the same thing. I feel exactly the same way around my teenage friends sometimes."

Sub-groups and isolation are everywhere.

Outside the meetings the subgroups meet informally (and sometimes formally) and talk about and take potshots at the other subgroups. From there, most groups back off. They are most often seized by a renewed focus on task and the stress of elapsed time and energy lost to the conflict. They may also be concerned over signs of scary and visible conflict in the group and guilt over feeling nasty towards one another. Here is where groups so typically

cycle back to formation and act nice all over again and allow the dominance of strong personalities and strongly held positions (e.g. from the boss).

One of Senge's vicious spirals results if a group cycles through fracture half a dozen or more times. Some groups go to Feelings and Frankness from one of the recurring times in the state of Friction and Felt Differences. However, sometimes after one or two people speak, some of those groups revert immediately to the scared politeness of Formation or the polarity of Fracture. It is only when the group gets involved in talking about feelings that are aroused by the group process or about their frank assessment of what is working and not working that the 'promised land' of an open dialogue and personal and group fulfillment is possible.

Diagram 2: Systems Model: MacIver (see the next page)

Stages of Group Development

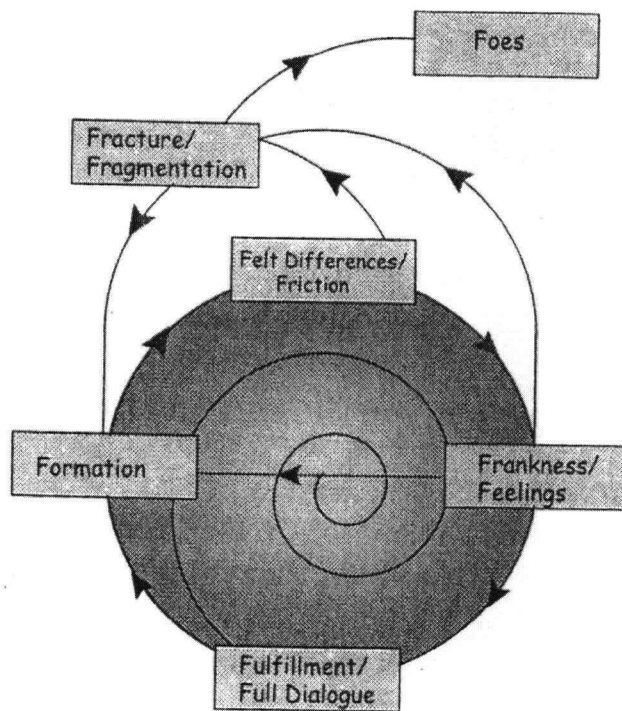


figure 1

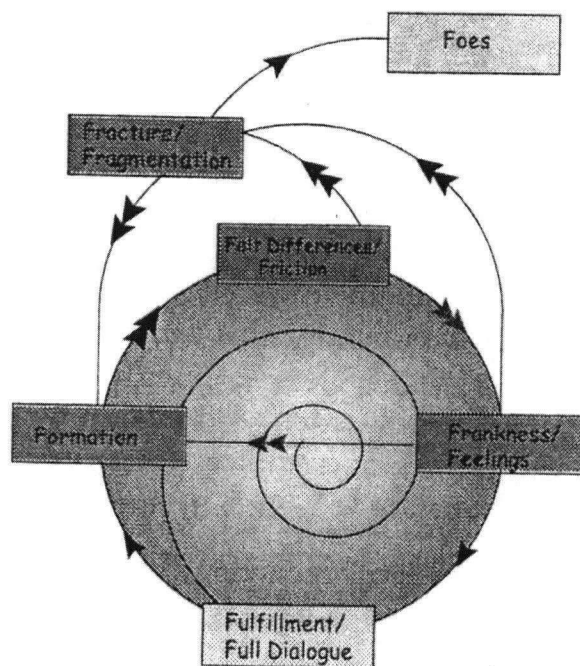


figure 2

Figures by Bert Annear

In some rare cases, involving therapeutic-type groups, people in a group do go to feelings fairly directly from felt differences. And sometime the feelings expressed are joy and delight or personal angst and disappointment and not just anger.

There is one other state in the model, that of foes. I theorized the existence of this state before I was sure that I had actually encountered it based on my understanding of groups that had gone really 'bad'. This other state, Foes, is the result of the ultimate in downward spirals, where people become outright enemies and the group is not salvageable. I have since confirmed that Foes exists by seeing groups in this state.

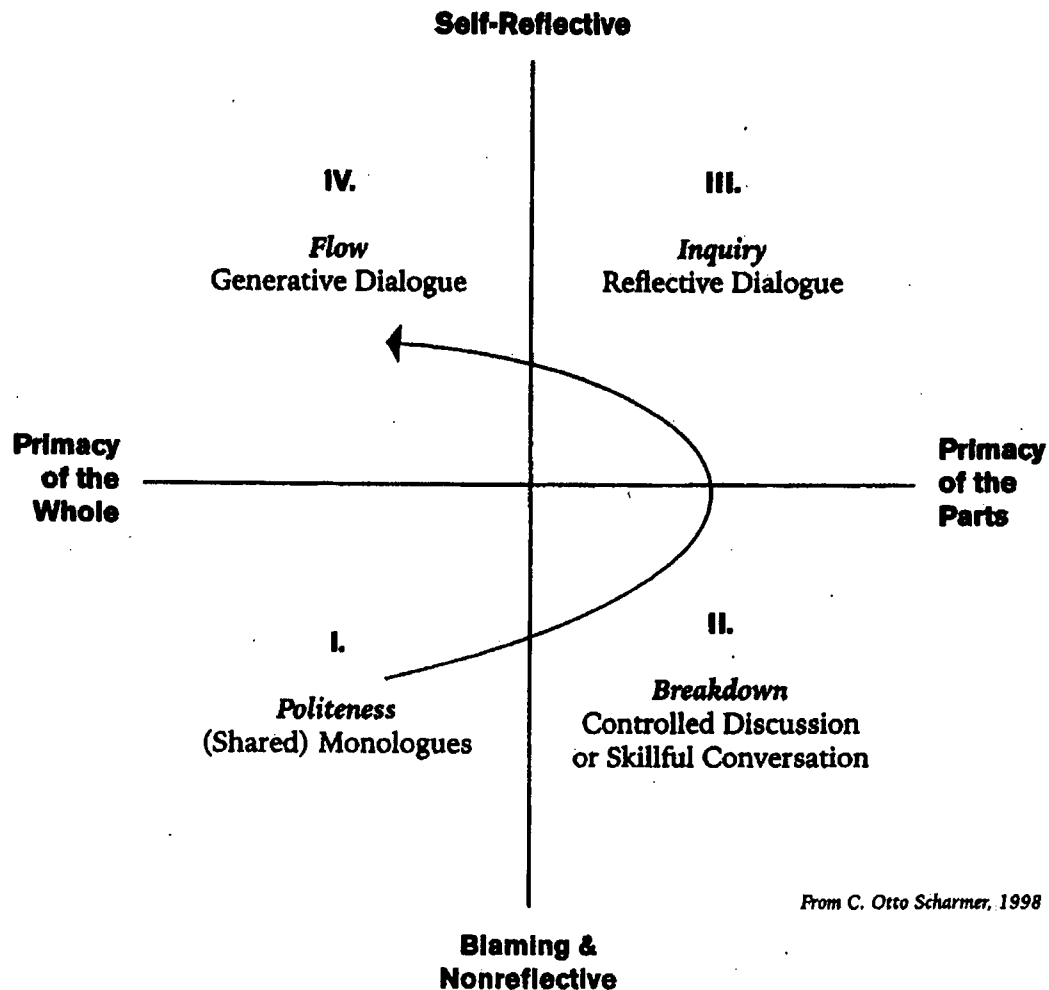
4. Isaac's 4 Field Dialogue Model: from Politeness to 'Magic'

Isaacs (1999) refers to his colleague Claus Otto Scharmer's four quadrant "fields of conversation" map (p. 261). Scharmer postulated in the model a movement from the "politeness of shared monologues" (p. 261) to the "flow" of generative dialogue (see Diagram 3 on the next page).

In the first field, where we are both blaming and non-reflective, we experience a pattern of "politeness" and "pleasantries" (p. 259). We operate with "unexamined" rules and norms that are typical for our organization. Isaacs notes the emotional tenor of the situation: "People often feel no small measure of fear when they join a group of people, even one they know well" (p. 261). While noting that "we simply cannot make dialogue happen" (Isaacs, p. 262), Isaacs suggests that we can use an early crisis in a group as a turning point in our conversation and "as a gateway to deeper silence and deeper listening".

From there we move to the second field of breakdown, a state not unlike the storming/dissatisfaction/fracture situation where there is "instability in the field/breakdown in the container" (p. 265). Here, Isaacs notes, "some of the pain that is present in and among the people can arise" (p. 265). He adds that unfortunately "many groups never get beyond this point" (p. 266), which is consistent with the MacIver model. "Things heat up, people try negotiating, compromise or unilateral control" but eventually "they recycle back into politeness because it is the only other alternative that they know" (p. 266). Diagram 3 is the Scharmer model as published in Isaacs (1999):

Diagram 3: Scharmer's 4 Field Dialogue Model (see next page)



The breakthrough, Isaacs suggests, is accomplished through getting to reflective dialogue in field three. In field three we move to what Isaacs calls “first person data”, which are “inquiries into how things look from where I stand” (p. 272). While we are still dominated by the “primacy of the parts” we have moved from the blaming that is such a standard response to “self-reflection”. Here “new meaning can unfold, seemingly from many different directions at once” (p. 273) and people “feel no obligation to require that others respond or agree with their perspective” (p. 273). The insight that emerges from the shared meaning, called “‘outsight’... simply and profoundly changes what people do” (p. 276).

The fourth and final quadrant entails primacy of the whole rather than the parts and is what Isaacs calls “the rarest of all the spaces” (p. 279). “In this fourth space, traditionally held positions are sufficiently loosened that new possibilities can come into existence” (p. 280). Isaacs uses as an example a recent dialogue where “people began sharing their feelings” and “their own self doubts”, asking profound questions like “Have I used my time well?” (p. 280). Isaacs notes the theme that what is involved is “the release of structures that limit the

flow of meaning” and make “space for something new” (p. 282). He concludes, again using his example:

While these were personal stories, the dialogue was not about the personal stories but about the deeper meaning that came through all of them. That is the magic of dialogue. (p. 283).

He cites Bohm about this deeper state:

People are no longer primarily in opposition; nor can they be said to be interacting; rather they are participating in this pool of common meaning which is capable of constant development and change. (p. 285)

Appendix #4: The Debate about Whether We Should Ever Build Trust by Subtraction

Perhaps the single most contentious issue in the face to face focus groups was how to deal with the presence, in a group, of a person who consistently exhibits highly destructive group behavior (or a person that is perceived as exhibiting destructive behavior by group members). At issue was whether you could ever justify achieving trust by subtraction by removing such an individual from a group. As noted in chapter three, the behavior in question here can be labeled destructive narcissistic behavior (Brown 1998) or malignant narcissistic behavior (Hare, 1993; Peck, 1983). Prior to reading Brown, Hare and Peck, I labeled this behavior as organizationally evil behavior.

Determining the 'right' action in the face of this behavior is a topic that I have regularly found to be highly controversial. Hence my fascination with the behaviors associated with attachment anxiety and avoidance in the model developed by Korsgaard et al (2003). In this appendix I write about three things associated with this behavior, which I will refer to as destructive narcissistic behavior. First, I record and make a summary comment on statements on this topic from protracted discussion in the last two of the three face to face focus groups. The conversation in both focus groups was specifically about whether or not an authority figure (i.e., such as myself in the story about Ann in story #5 in chapter two and in appendix #1) should ever remove an individual from a group in the name of creating an environment where we can build trust. Second I tell a story recounted in one of the on-line focus groups. The story is told by a woman who said she was extremely damaged by her dealings with a difficult boss after making herself vulnerable. She noted that this experience impacted her ability to trust. The behavior may have been destructive narcissistic behavior and the point of including the story is to be aware of the impact on individuals of this type of behavior. Finally, I close with a personal commentary where I acknowledge my personal bias on this topic and indicate its source.

1. Two alternative 'schools' of thought re. removal of a group member

One of the focus groups had a prolonged conversation about how I may have been wrong in removing 'Ann' in story #5. Another group said that that action was not only necessary but that we needed to make people more conscious of removal as a choice that groups may legitimately make (or seek help from an authority figure to make) in order to build trust. Both 'schools of thought' are reflected below. The statements in quotes below are direct quotes from the focus groups.

1.1 School of thought #1: We should 'redouble our efforts in order to be inclusive'; we have to do the hard work necessary for building trust in groups by working with 'merely difficult' individuals

The first suggestion put forward on this topic in the second face to face focus group was that we should avoid generalizations. Someone said that saying that Ann was a destructive narcissist (or organizationally evil person in the language I used in teaching this concept at RRU) was an example of "a generalization we can make about people". This person added,

"I think within the group you're going to come across 'Ann's'. And I don't necessarily put evil to that description."

Someone else then said that we should solve this kind of situation through messaging. She noted that "the problem often is a lack of other people within the group to give that 'I message' back to the people." (i.e., prepare people to deal with difficult situations and behavior through more through training on messaging and on a different way of operating in a group—this could be accommodated in Element One preparation).

Another person said we should "use the power of the group to deal with this and value diversity". She noted that "once one person can raise [their] voice, then the others in the group... [are] able to say 'whoa' as well. But it has to be done in a way that can continue to draw Ann into the group and recognize her strengths" (i.e., this would involve Elements Four and Five relating to the leap of faith—someone would have to speak out and everyone in the group, including an 'Ann', would have to embrace the leap of faith).

Someone used a leadership argument, saying that Story #5 "related to leaders". She added, "It takes leaders with strong esteem who can leave ego at the door somehow" (i.e. this could involve Element Three—the shared approach to leadership). She then asked: "Are you missing an important opportunity to step up?" and "What are the teachable moments?". I noted what an enormous challenge it is to step up and added, "not wanting to be counsellors, which is not our role, is it possible to foster enough trust to have them open up?"

Still another person came back to the issue of diversity and added a reference to the importance of respecting intent. She said that "we talk about respecting diversity but I often have the feeling that we don't really respect diversity". She added that we have to think about how "somebody becomes something of an outsider... if people are truly working with what they know of themselves, what they're capable of at that time, and working towards their personal goals... you can trust that individual ownership... you can trust that individual intent." She went on to say that "If they're having trouble with something, you can trust that you're there [as leader] to help them out [i.e., Element Three—a shared approach to leadership]." In a clear attempt at being understanding she finished by saying that "maybe the composite Ann here was...doing everything she could at that stage in her composite life and evolution. Maybe she was being true to what she could accomplish".

My summary of the argument that the group put to me is as follows: You as authority figure should have given Ann more of a chance. Maybe she was just quite different and really you ought to have been more inclusive. What a devastating effect it will have on group trust if people know that someone can simply be removed if it doesn't 'work'.

1.2 School of thought #2: We should 'build trust by subtraction' (of the destructive individual)

This group started with a safety-first argument, noting that "there always had to be, for safety's sake, the interjection of a manager who could pull people from a team who were not

adding anything to the team at all" (i.e., involving Element One, determining the composition of a team by cycling back to Element One after the group has been meeting for a period of time).

"Realistically", someone added, we have to "...recognize (the situation) for what it was and... intervene in... a clear, assertive fashion". That person went on: "to me (that) built the environment that the organization cared, but also that they could trust that they wouldn't be abandoned" (i.e., it contributed to the trust space involved in Element Three).

A third person made an impassioned "it's real" argument, focusing on what she saw as the reality of destructive narcissism. She said: "currently where I am, as part of the senior management team ... I think that there's a particular evil, dysfunctional, toxic person. I have followed him. I have taken over his district and saw the damage. He's in the second most senior position in my organization and there's no trust... I tried the MALT approach about be strategic, let's work on common issues, you know. We've done everything over the last two and a half, three years... I can go home with a clear conscience about taking my responsibility, ...trying to be as genuine as possible, and this person [has continued to do damage] – and the organization is permitting it" (i.e., the organization is failing in its Element One responsibilities, setting in place the preconditions for trust).

Another group member noted the difficulties of proving that someone has had a pattern of destructive narcissistic behavior. She stated: "some people are not as [obvious in] showing the characteristics of Ann". She went on to say: "And in so many cases it's really... not easily tangible, the behavior—the behavior is not like right out there and you can't put your finger on it". The behavior is not so overt that "you could say, 'Oh, yeah, that's this behavior and you've got to go'". She added: "I know lots of times they're really using it, turning it over into being victim mode and so on and so forth and you get sucked into supporting them." Taking action on this would involve Element Four, taking a leap of faith when you cannot 'prove' the intangible.

Our institutional response is a key part of the problem, one member stated. She said: "our institutions more and more often are ignoring them because they don't like the idea of litigation because of a wrongful dismissal suit... the fact that the organization has to call you [i.e., Sandy] in to document the behavior in order to get rid of somebody (like this) is really, really a problem". She added: "I think to build good teams... you have to put the parameters on what is normal" (i.e., this could be done as part of the mandate-setting by the organization in Element One, and could be done by the group through Element Three, creating the 'trust space'). She finished with a question: "What is our normal level of dysfunction as human beings where we bring all our baggage and when does it become abnormal to the point that you have to draw those boundaries and have that person leave?"

One of the team members finished by referring to secrecy or a code of silence: "what's equally pervasive is the code of silence [about this problem]."

My summary of the group's argument is as follows: In rare, rare cases we have to remove people from groups in order to create trust. The rare people we remove are those who

repeatedly demonstrate themselves to be a threat to psychological safety in the group. This removal should be done quietly.

2. Another story about destructive behavior and the impact on trust

The idea of trust by subtraction (i.e., removing a difficult person) was illustrated in two stories referred to in the main text of the dissertation. One of these was story #5 from the original package sent to focus group participants and the other is Ervin's story, as reported in chapter five. There was a third story on a related topic, which is recounted here. The story, as told by Kendra, was a potential 'trust by subtraction' story. However, since the problem person or toxic person in question was Kendra's boss, it was the trusting person, Kendra, who was herself subtracted from the group. Let me pick up on Kendra's story as she told it to the on-line focus group that she was part of. As Kendra told the story it was very clear that she was still 'smarting' from it. Kendra called the story her "long-painful-career-changing- short story" where "I was completely blown out of the water and I must admit that much of it was my fault as I placed trust in the wrong hands".

It is instructive to treat the story as a potential two-person-group trust-building story as we examine Kendra's account of the events closely to see where things went awry. Thus the story starts as always, with Element One, those events that preceded the creation of the team that impacted on the team. Kendra talked on-line about her previous work with her workplace team, a team in the health care sector. Kendra says this about her previous career: "I had literally created a position within the organization. I [was] 15 years into (a) career that was both provincial and national in scope. [It] was my job and although I had had many positive performance appraisals, I had come to recognize my limitations." Among other things, Kendra had yet to be exposed to the principles and practices of transformational, involving or distributed leadership. There was a fracturing in the group that occurred while Kendra was away in Victoria. She reported that "When I returned to my unMALT world, after the first residency I found my team fracturing"

Kendra's had a self-described positive and trust-building response to her team's difficulties: "I returned back to work and went into the MALT mode. I took each of my team for a walk, I listened (with intent) to their concerns, I shared my summer experiences and I expressed how much I wanted the team to work... I had a team meeting, we set ground rules... we spoke of expectations... I believed I was rebuilding and helping each of them (servant leadership?)... we even set goals and I received a positive response from them... it was great".

Here we segue back to the other part of Element One, the new factor represented by the addition of a new player, Kendra's new boss.

We will assume, for argument's sake, that Kendra engaged in some form of activities with her new boss. This could have represented Elements Two and Three, had Kendra and her boss truly been in 'earning trust' and 'creating trust space' mode. That gets us to Kendra

taking a leap of faith initiative. Here again we will leave it to Kendra to tell us about the devastating response (potentially Element Five) to her leap of faith initiative:

When I met my new boss, I took a risk by sharing many of the leadership problems I faced in developing, creating and maintaining the current team. I explained the situations as I saw them... Well here is where the story shortens quickly... Within weeks this gentlemen abused this vulnerability that came by sharing my limitations... Within weeks I started noticing how he was using my words against me. Meanwhile each member of my team, suffering from incredible personal problems at home (I quickly discovered that I had hired some very unstable people), started placing blame on me for their collective unhappiness. They started going directly to my boss, as he encouraged an open door policy... I was being bypassed, decisions were being made without my knowledge, expenses were being paid without my authorization... I was in a bad place... To the point that in his three-month performance appraisal of me, my boss listed all the weaknesses I had shared as being problems that cannot be fixed. He used the fact that people were coming to him (which he encouraged) as a fact that I was "not a leader" and that I was wasting my time in school... I was in a bad place...

Ever the optimist, Kendra talks about the results of all of this, her subsequently moving on to a new organization in positive terms: "I am building a new career that I am very excited about, so I guess all things happen for a reason..." However, the evidence of Kendra's hurt is still palpable as Kendra notes that she doesn't want to ramble on "on like some-injured-squawking-bird who feels sorry for herself..." She added: "I placed my trust in the wrong people and I paid a price that is still very much a part of who I am as a professional... I long for the comfort of a trusting team..."

There then ensued in the focus group an instructive conversation about what those who want to build trust in groups can learn from Kendra's experience. The conversation included someone else in the group reporting on an experience with a toxic person, this time someone that that person hired. I will report the discussion essentially as it took place:

Sandy: Kendra's story of placing trust in the wrong people is a very powerful story about how things can go wrong in applying some of the MALT ideas when we get back 'home' after MALT. Thus her experience is diametrically different than that of the others we've heard from earlier. The thing that intrigues me about Kendra's story is how a person recovers as an individual after having that type of devastating experience; i.e., what is involved in building trust 'the next time' or 'the time after that' after your being vulnerable in the way that Kendra describes is 'used against you'. One of the single most frequent things I hear that stands in the way of building trust in groups is the 'scarring' that one or more people in the group have had. Kendra has given us an outstanding example of this. So please explore this concept of overcoming 'scarring' of one or more individuals in groups that build trust.

Rachel: This is a tough one.... when you apply the principals of shared leadership you make yourself vulnerable. Some people use that to harm you. As cliché as it sounds some people are simply nasty. Yet, I believe the majority are not and we need to keep trusting and believing in good. Things do happen for a reason and we are directed to where we need to be. Your organization sounds like a very unhealthy one. Perhaps, you needed to move on. I'm sorry your experience was so painful.

Liz: This made me think of the people we talked about at MALT who are "organizationally evil people" [as noted previously, this is the way I presented the concept of destructive narcissistic behavior to learners in the program before I researched the literature on narcissism] and who are destructive to all relationships and progress of an organization. My experience with such a person was different in that I hired him. I thought he was intuitive, innovative, smart, dynamic and honest because he said all the right things. He carefully researched the things that were important to me. What I didn't know was that while he was being all those things around me he was undermining and manipulating my relationships with other staff by telling them or implying that he was being groomed to take over the company. He was condescending and dismissive about their skills and ideas. They were afraid to tell me in case it was true. Eventually I discovered he was also billing for more time than he worked, using teaching materials that were inappropriate, and lying about statistics. So I fired him but by that time his influence had created serious rifts in relationships that I wanted to nurture. I had no idea why people were being so distant. When he was gone people started talking about what it had been like for them. It has taken enormous amount of work on my part to try to regain the trust - with some people I think it has been successful and others I think will never really believe/forgive me. The worst of it is that I feel like such an idiot for buying the act...

3. Summary analysis and personal commentary on this difficult subject

The focus group that was involved in the second 'school of thought' conversation reported at the beginning of this appendix were vehement about the importance of this subject. I ended the conversation the group with the following promise:

... I assure you that I will write in my dissertation about this situation and about this conversation. I was going to anyway, but you've made it really clear to me that I better not send you a copy of the dissertation unless it's in here.

Where I personally end up on this difficult topic is where I started in writing story #5 about Ann. I believe we must engage in careful consideration of whether the person in question is merely difficult or a diverse personality playing devil's advocate or countering groupthink.

If, after such a consideration, we identify what we feel is outright manipulative sabotage, we should remove the 'Ann's' of this world from groups. Thus my contention is that in rare cases we need to acknowledge the validity of the writings of Hare (1993), Peck (1983), and Brown (1998). The basis for the bias that I must acknowledge on this topic is that both myself and a person that I care very deeply about were impacted hugely in our lives by two different people who behaved in the destructive manner associated with destructive or malignant narcissism. It would be a betrayal of confidences to write specifically about either situation. However, I wish to make clear that, like much of what I write about passion, conflict and being task-focused, I am drawing on personal experience here. I readily acknowledge a personal bias in writing what I have written on this topic.

Appendix # 5: The Story within the Stories: Trust in the Focus Groups

The focus groups demonstrated, from the beginning a combination of critical capacity and the capacity to trust. I was blessed in the focus group process to have the benefit of a minimum of eight hours of people's time and an extraordinary investment in terms of participants giving of themselves. This kind of giving and the vulnerability involved in this kind of giving speak to going from a capacity for trust to there being some level of trust that was actually developed within at least four of the focus groups. With the face to face groups this may be an example of the swift trust referred to earlier or of a single layer of trust. With the first on-line group it may be an example of a double layer/level of trust. I focus on this group in particular because this is the on-line group where there appeared to be the highest level of trust (based on the degree of disclosure in the group). The big plus here from a research point of view is that this is an examination of trust in a group that was explicitly exploring the subject of trust. Therefore it is perhaps not a surprise both I and a number of the participants were interested in pursuing this topic in the groups at the end of the process.

The following is a recounting of the six elements as they were reflected in the focus group process. In writing about Elements One and Three I will rely primarily on comments made by participants in a formal assessment of the trust-building. In the other elements I will mix together my own assessment with comments made in the focus groups themselves.

Element One: Planning and initiating the preconditions for trust. This element was clearly foundational to the building of trust in the groups. At least four separate preparation factors were cited: the select nature of the group itself, the formal distributed leadership of the group, formal preparation for the session, and the attitude and experience brought into the session.

One decision that I made that had a major impact on the building of trust was restricting the focus group participation to graduates of the MALT program who volunteered and self-selected for involvement. One participant described the importance of this factor as follows: "I believed that the atmosphere would be safe because of the nature of your selection process: you invited members of a "chosen" group to decide whether they wanted to discuss a topic that was central to team-building. It seemed unlikely that non-believers would apply." A second person said that an important factor was "because the others had also been through MALT... I supposed that only people who were truly interested in the topic would bother to respond to your invite, so I assumed that the others would, like me, be open to hearing and listening and exchanging. Later, a third participant who had read the earlier comments summed up this factor by saying that the previous discussion "... prompts me to muse that our focus group appears to have established trust from one or more ideas/values/shared experiences that participants have. In another face to face situation, someone said the following: "I had a sense of, you know, [of our common] fellow MALT experiences and their safety and the learning process that we'd ... been through... [We'd had] different experiences, but nevertheless [some] sort of some grounding or foundational

elements there that made it safe and so it ... was just like putting on your favorite jammies and, you know, you could just [talk]..."

Most interesting of all, perhaps was the following comment about the general environment that people were coming into with fellow graduates from the MALT program was the following statement about pre-emptive trust:

I was doing some reading...I wish I would have written the source down for this phrase that I'm going to give to you and it's called, "What exists in groups sometimes is a situation where there is just preemptive trust." I thought that was so remarkable, just preemptive trust... And this very much felt like that to me too. And when I was sort of contemplating coming here I was feeling, "Well, I don't whether I have anything to offer," or whatever and I just thought, "No, this is a group of people who I know their backgrounds," just because of where you've been and it will be a place where I can ... practice that preemptive trust.

Much as Jeanie's personal role as facilitator in her research process (Cockell, 2005) was essential, my role was cited as essential as well. This was expressed in different ways, one of which was quite straightforward: "I trusted you to be an ally in the event that someone threatened trust in some way". A second person described my role as follows: "I think I felt ready to trust because it was you... I knew your ethics, and integrity, and that you would 'keep us safe'." A third person said "Trust for me was established in the MALT residence. I knew and trusted your integrity because your actions and words matched and there was a warmth to your personality that rang true throughout our two years. You were present, not just for the assigned students but for all. You were not an attention seeker, but rather a sage who was well aware that answers were not really necessary, just the opportunity to communicate... I knew that your guidance would make the journey pleasurable and valuable." A fourth statement was quite eloquent in describing the layering type impact of key decisions that boost the preparation factor. This person's statement referred to the importance of "our trust in you and your excellent skills/knowledge/leadership - the 1st ripple in the pond - establishing a safe, supportive trusting environment which allowed us to share our malt/rru experiences/our leadership - further ripples ebbing and flowing, combining to have opportunities for new ideas on trust to emerge and allowing us to make further ripples".

The third factor within Element One was preparation. One part of the preparation was implicit: the learning and experience that occurred through participation in the MALT program. The second part was explicit: preparation for the focus group itself. This was described both by a face to face participant and an on-line participant:

The face to face participant: I felt that you had prepared us well, with stories and reflection questions. I had taken some time (not enough, but there never is enough!) to think through some answers. I knew that by the nature of focus groups, it is enough to have thought about the issues, and be prepared

to answer the first question that is asked... that after that the ideas flow freely.

The on line participant: we all shared a common background and likely had a very similar understanding of the task before we agreed to take part; this was very directly linked to the fact that Sandy had so clearly laid out all of his expectations beforehand.

The fourth factor was the attitude and previous experience some people brought in to the sessions. There was always someone who knew at least one or two of the other people. And the attitude that people brought to the session was exemplary and was typified by this comment: "I came into the group open, ready to trust, and eager to learn"...

Element Two: Undertaking activities to earn trust. Element Two involved primarily two things, gathering people together in a friendly way that clearly 'stated' that process and people were going to be important while we pursued a 'task', exploring the building of trust in groups. The second was the use of Christina Baldwin's circle approach of having people introduce a personal object into the circle in introducing themselves. While no-one specifically referred to this as a key factor in retrospectively reviewing the building of trust in the face to face groups, one participant did suggest it in advance, noting: "I am a bit surprised that you are not using circles in your methodology as you seem drawn to that work??" I was leaning towards the use of a circle introduction at the time I received this e-mail and the suggestion 'put me over the top' in terms of taking that risk myself. To cite an example from each of the face to face focus groups, here is a representative sampling of what came out of the introduction of personal objects people had in their possession that had meaning for them:

Participant #1: I find it just totally amazing that you asked us to do something around this. So the object that I'm going to put in the centre is a ring. It's carved by Norman Bentley. He's a Haida carver. And the symbol on there is a Haida animal, that's on the ring, it's a frog, and the frog is, in Haida culture and spiritual belief, the communicator or voice of the people, which communication is a huge component of trust... And there's kind of a neat little story that goes with that ring because I decided I was going to choose that ring as a 25th anniversary sort of symbol of the relationship where my husband and I were in our marriage. So I went out and I chose a ring. I did not choose the frog. I chose a whale and I can't even remember what that means in terms of relationships and what the spiritual message is, but when I got the ring home it was this frog and I was stunned because that wasn't what I chose. But I thought, "Okay, well, I have it now and it fits my finger, I like it, and I just have to trust that it will become this symbol for me about trust in a relationship." And I'm just blown away by the fact that I get a chance to tell you that.

Participant #2: I'm going to do a big risk for me thing, I obviously didn't come with... neat artifacts. I'm going to put a medical test thing in the

middle of the table... I was like the picture of health until a year ago. I had cancer and my supervisor doesn't even know that. I took eight days off that were sort of intermingled with time working at home. So as far as I know I'm fine now, but I'm at that check-up time...

Participant #3: ... your comments [those of the previous introducer] have, I guess, derailed my thought process, which has never been here in the best of time... [You talked about] coloured diagrams, and systems diagrams. To go right to the heart of the matter, I'm actually at the moment on a wait-list for open heart surgery and, you know, I'm fine, I'm here, and it will be something that will be fine. It's a pretty often-done procedure...

Element Three: Creating a trust space: One person summarized the importance of self-selection and of the group's conduct in its early activities. These two factors, which are examples of Elements One and Two respectively, led to what I would interpret as an internalization of what the group was about, an example of Element Three:

In summary, I was among a group of people who believed trust was important, I had at least some people I trusted, and I had little to lose from anyone who betrayed the group's trust... All that said, I felt a very quick and tangible feeling of trust in the group, based on the respect members showed for each other and for different ideas. While most in the group seemed strong enough to express their individual ideas, I believe only group trust could have enabled the kind of spring boarding from one idea to another that occurred.

Another person said this about the way the group operated: "Everything that happened only reinforced my initial approach. Participants listened carefully and thoughtfully to each other, were open with each other (some more so than others), respectful of each other and each other's ideas -- the time flew by." Still another person picked up on congruity and alignment, which may be two of the best ways to achieve internalization. This person said "As far as meshing with the group, my sense was quickly that I would trust these folks because their eyes reflected what words and body language were trying to convey. Often times the language was inadequate but the clarity in the eyes and the tone of the voice carried the meaning. The openness and willingness to communicate genuinely begat the trust."

Two other people linked the focus group process to Wheatley's concept of "aura", being in an environment where you just 'know' how you're going to be treated. A third person then linked what those two people had said to leadership and to two of the stories told in chapter five:

Participant #1... [Something that] kind of applies to what you're talking about a little bit is the two stories that Terry and Shauna told about their team dynamics and how they were practicing principles that we learned about and had been formalized but they didn't have a name for it at the time and they

didn't go through the process of doing it. And I think that is also what's happened here today. We didn't sit down and create ground rules and we didn't sit down and talk about values and permissions and so on and so forth. I mean certainly we had a facilitator that guided us, but those things existed without us having to really put them on the table and name them...

Participant #2: ... [In other words] we deconstructed some of the things that we did naturally when we went through MALT as well as, obviously, add to it and enrich it and expand upon it. But quite often you don't think about the mechanics when you're doing that. I don't think about the mechanics, "Oh, I've got to have ground rules..."

Participant #3:... I think leadership is also key in it... I think ... where it's stated or unstated or modeled or whatever, I do think there is an environment of values and presence and unstated things that contribute to the building of the trust... because there's a whole thing about leadership. I think leadership is a key component and it can be informal... but there is a sense of that's what drives within the group and so you might have one person who you can't trust, but if the leader and the rest of the group, it might just -- I'm going to leave that there.

There was also a fascinating conversation about the creation of trust space in the first of the on-line focus groups. One person wrote:

As I read through this thread I wondered, "What did make this work?" I do not know any of you and that did not have any negative impact. Although Sandy was the Faculty Advisor for one of my courses, I cannot say that I really know him [note: of all the participants this is one of those that I knew least well]... While we were focusing our discussions on trust, we were developing trust within the group. It was not an effort or a forced activity; it was natural. Everyone appeared to be stepping farther and farther outside their comfort zone with little concern about the risk. There was a clear exhibition of care, consideration, and concern around the stories being shared. From my perspective, some in the group appeared to have a thirst to share their story, letting others into their world, receive support that appeared to soothe their soul, quench their thirst. ... In closing, I felt a high degree of trust within the group and a healthy respect for each member.

A second person who commented in that group was 'Kendra' from the story in appendix #4:

What I have tried to do, in this group, is voice my opinions on how teams develop trust. I have used some painful experiences as reference to these opinions. The security I felt within this (essentially) MALT group allowed me to speak from the heart without the fear of someone taking advantage of the weaknesses I am showing... Therefore Sandy, in answering your question... I believe I was following Statement Number 1... Personal reciprocity expectations... in my interactions with this group...

Element Four: Taking the 'leap of faith initiative: My guess is that the key moment in each group where the leap was most visceral and got the greatest response was in the telling of stories. It is apparent that the space for trust, disclosure and vulnerability was impacted by everything that occurred (see the comments on chaos below). It is also apparent that extraordinary vulnerability was displayed by people from the beginning of the process, including in some of the introductions (e.g. like the ones above) and some of the general discussion. The impact of the way of operating in the focus group on one participant who was late in arriving (ironically owing to trust issues being raised at work) is instructive:

... I think it's very telling in terms of I came into the room, you had already taken some time to acquaint yourselves with each other with some introductions that I'm assuming took place and I missed ... when it came to be my turn to talk ... what I wanted to put on the table in terms of the a story, ... I jumped into the pool. I didn't even have second thoughts about whether I could trust, you know, the environment, whether it would be safe here.

For me, however, it was in the telling of the stories that the vulnerability was really going to be, and was, tested in the groups. That is why I led off the storytelling process in the face to face sessions by telling the story of Jeanie's research group (see chapter two) and why I built in a break to allow for personal reflection. That is also why I used an earlier version of the RRU faculty story (see chapter seven) to lead in to storytelling in the on-line groups. Even in one of the two focus groups where some people hesitated to tell stories (on line focus group two), participants showed what I felt was extraordinary vulnerability in writing about the concerns that led them not to tell a story. A personal on-line exchange between one of the participants and I, as noted in chapter two, helped lead to that display of vulnerability.

Element Five: Embracing the leap of faith: Once one person had displayed vulnerability in telling a story, to use the analogy referred to earlier, the vulnerability rippled out from there. I saw the vast majority of the stories that were told after someone told the initial story as a testimony to the power of a positive leap of faith response.

One especially striking story involving vulnerability and disclosure was a story told by a woman about a group experience she was involved in along with her husband that took place in a retreat setting. She stated that "what the environment provides" was a key factor in building trust:

...we had been lying on the top of this mountain... that has the absolute perfect panoramic view and there's eagles and stuff that soar over top of you, and it's just an absolutely magical place that you can still lay down in. He [my husband] said, well, I wrote this while I was lying down, or it came to me while I was lying down. And he proceeded to read this poem that really brought a huge smile to my face... because it was like, yes! That's it! You know, that's it for me. That's it for us and that's it for the universe. You hit it.... And in his completely understated way, you know, he just wrote '... of his experiences of being able to lay down in this place that was... a calendar of the universe and the world that I live in is... And all the things that trouble

me somehow fall into perfect order as I lay here and just let the universe take care of it. And you know... I printed it up a few years ago and put a photograph that I took of the hills in eastern Cascadia USA in behind it and, you know, ... that now sits, much to his immediate chagrin, proudly as you walk into our house you...

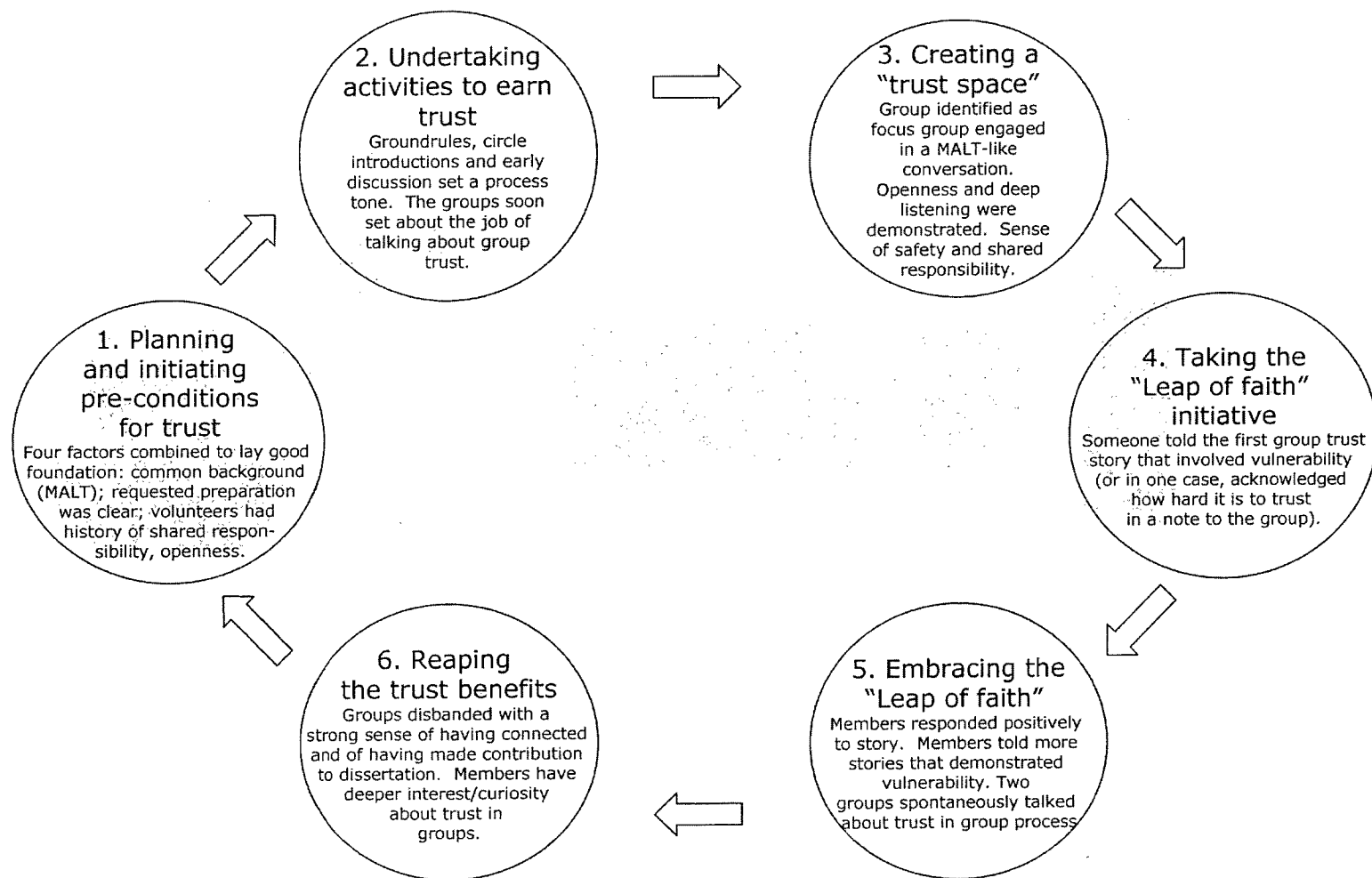
As well, the linking stories of Shauna and Terry, as cited in chapter five, were told at the very end of the process in that focus group and, being quite different from any of the other stories that were told, involved considerable vulnerability.

Element Six: Reaping the benefits. At the end of the focus group process and in subsequent e-mails I was inundated with comments about how valuable the process had been for people and how connected they felt to the group and back to their MALT experience. One person summarized the session as follows, citing the earlier-mentioned metaphor of the warm bath (see chapter four), "It felt like a warm bath - I was so energized afterward, time flew by - I was disappointed it ended - wonderful things happened". An on-line participant put the benefits in the context of the MALT program:

The MALT experience for myself was an extraordinary life changing experience. It gave me hope and insight in ways that I didn't think was possible. It was and continues to be a gift, one which I want to share with as many people as possible and bring to as many people as possible. To have conversations with individuals such as yourselves is a privilege. Sandy, thank you for the opportunity.

Diagram 1: The focus groups (see next page)

Story of the Focus Groups and the Six Elements of Trust-Building in Groups



The whole model: A factor cited by two people which may capture all the looping and circling of the model was the complexity and chaos factor: "I wonder about the influence of complexity and chaos theory in these types of trusting groups, with many similar elements (trust; familiarity with RRU/you; our personalities; backgrounds; ...)..."

The personal factor: Individual decisions made by group participants clearly were a key factor. One participant expressed some anxiety that she and some others felt coming in as follows: "My 'problem' was trust in myself not... to not speak up..." Another participant, one of those from an on-line group stated the following about the personal impact: "I found that participating in this, reading the submissions, caused me to reflect and dig a little deeper into myself, to think about things in different ways. I feel I've learned something about myself and about everyone that participated in the conversations. In some ways I feel like we are just beginning." Another on-line participant talked about the nature of the process and how, unlike at work, there was 'nothing to lose':

I think I assumed that everyone else, like me, would have weighed the pros and cons of participating in this group by the usual standards, which is to say that I instinctively considered: what do I stand to get out of this? what is the potential cost (risk) to me? Since there truly didn't seem to be any kind of personal gain (except in the sense of being more enlightened) to be had from participating in this experience, I trusted that others were taking part simply because they wanted to come to a deeper understanding of the topic. The flip side is that there didn't seem to be anything to lose, other than a few hours. Had this been a group that I expected to know intimately or be in a workplace environment with, I would have been much more concerned that I might not measure up or would "lose" in some other way.

Where does this all take me? Once again, the conversations about building trust reinforced the elements of the model. However, the comments did three things in particular. One was that they highlighted the role of the formal leader in the process. In many of the stories that people told they were modest in the typical Canadian and servant leader way in talking about their role as a formal or key leader in the process they described. However, they were not similarly circumspect in talking about the role of the leader and of shared leadership in the focus group process itself. Similarly, I and my fellow co-researchers readily acknowledged Jeanie's key role in that process. The second vital factor referred to was the reminder of the many unpredictable systemic factors and loops that can be involved in any modeled process!! The third thing that these conversations did was link to the idea of 'swift trust' (see chapter three). Participants introduced and talked about the idea of pre-emptive trust, a situation where intuitively people just "know" that trust is going to be there and act on that basis.

Some more thoughts

The two other focus groups that have not been mentioned did not appear to have the same degree of trust as the first four. With the last one, I know that my energy was waning. I also suspect that the group was affected when a couple of participants I expected to be quite

active in the process dropped out owing to work and personal pressures in the first week. The middle on-line focus group was interesting in that some of its most open moments may have come around some participants finding that they were challenged when it came to trusting.

One participant noted the difficulties people in certain settings (e.g. 'macho' men in certain settings) have in trusting.

Deep trust to me is a sense of just knowing - it is a place of complete comfort - and it is necessary for intimate relationships to be successful... As is probably true with any group, [with those who are in difficult settings] once the stakes get a bit higher it [trust] becomes more difficult. It has been my experience that if a group shares a lot of personal stuff, the next session no one is talking. When I do group process training I warn people about this, and the necessity to recognize the anxiety and pull back to a less risky activity. This happens because they get caught up in a moment and trust more than they had intended to trust, and then have an uh-oh feeling afterwards and feel out there without a net. They don't trust themselves, or me, to protect them from going further out there - and in fact can feel manipulated - and they pull back. If we get past this, the group can trust at a deeper level. If I push at this point, it can cause fracture, but when the group gets past this trust is enhanced and we move to another level. As their trust grows, we reach more significant levels of self-awareness and growth and I must be good at this because I have an unusually high degree of success in my programs, but I'm not really sure how to explain it...

This person then discovered s/he had difficulty trusting and sent me the following personal e-mail, which she gave me permission to cite:

So I started to look for a ... story...one about me as part of a work team. And here's where my distress has started to unfold. In looking for a story about a work group where I experienced deep trust while performing a challenging task - something that I thought would be easy - I have come up empty. I think my work with [a fellow MALT colleague on a related thesis] was as close as I have come, but that wasn't a group experience. My experience with my MALT cohort was probably as good as it gets for me, but I find some of the "MALT was transformational" stories a bit much, and I didn't want to contribute to that hype, particularly since although it was better than other experiences I have had, it still doesn't fit with what I think we are talking about with deep trust. My inability to zero in on anything didn't make any sense to me. I'm able to work well with others, and I always get good feedback about my work from co-workers and superiors, but I suddenly realized I could not think of a time in a work experience with a group where I had that sense of "safety and comfort" in the midst of something very meaningful. Every story I wrote had an element of feeling anxious and as a result not being able to show my best stuff, but it was a story about what others were doing to not make this a comfortable space for me. Light goes on - what's the common denominator? I realized quite simply I have a great deal of difficulty trusting. I refer to myself as a skeptic, but that's clearly minimizing it. As you know I often feel like an imposter. I'm terrified that I don't measure up and I often see behaviors in others that might be very non-threatening as

quite threatening to my sense of self-worth. I manage my behaviors with others well - perhaps because I'm an introvert people don't notice and I just get on with it - and because of my experiences if I have control over the group process I work very hard to make sure others don't feel uncomfortable - ergo my success with inmates. But if I'm just part of the group process I will do what needs to be done but will continue to feel anxious about my contributions. My first few comments in this online forum came quite naturally, but when I couldn't think of where to go I started to think about what I could make up so that I wouldn't let you down. I realized I was writing bullshit that didn't have any meaning to me, so I didn't send it, but it was just frustrating me that I couldn't think of anything to say about a topic that interests me so much. My inability to find a story of trust is not because I wasn't in a group where that didn't exist, but because personally I didn't feel it. If I am "in charge" of the group process I know how to increase trust and help others feel safe, but even then I don't feel safe. I'm confused right now....probably very tired. It's been a very challenging couple of months workwise. As I sit here I am asking myself what this is all about. I also know that a couple of things I did write that were disclosive, I didn't send, and I certainly wouldn't send this to the group. Easier to get to deep trust with just one or two people... Anyway, I don't know most of these people and when we start to talk about stories about deep trust it means trusting the people who are receiving the info - and I just can't go there with this group it seems, or maybe at all in a work setting.

With my encouragement this person then wrote to the following to the whole group:

----- Original Message -----

From: Jennifer

To: Focus Group

Sent: Friday, May 21, 2004 10:48 PM

Subject: Re: Thread 4: Telling our stories of trust in groups we have been part of

Hi Folks,

I too had some difficulty writing a story about a situation where I experienced deep trust. Knowing only a couple of you makes a difference in what I am willing to share and of course then there's the internet! Oh, so many levels. What if I say something and that may come back to haunt me if I decide to run for office in ten years (like that would ever happen)...but it's a risk, isn't it?

Like June, I have found out something about myself through this process. I realized there were very few situations in my life where I have experienced a sense of deep trust with a group while working on a difficult challenge. This level of trust for me comes with a sense of comfort and a sense of knowing that despite how difficult it gets we will move forward, the relationships will stay intact and my contributions and the contributions of others will be valued. I recognized there were many situations where the job got done, but I'm not sure these factors were part of the picture. The question becomes "would you work with this team again?" There were certainly situations where I quickly said yes and others where I

quickly said no. Despite all of that, I think the decision was made on based on what caused the least amount of anxiety as opposed to a situation where I felt particularly "comfortable". I realize the challenge is to look at the internal and external factors that contribute to our own sense of trust. In recognizing that despite some great work efforts and outcomes the emotional content of not trusting remained high, I had to look at the fact that much of this results from that good old "imposter syndrome" and fear that my contributions won't be adequate and won't be valued, and that will cause me to hold back - self-fulfilling prophecy if the anxiety is too high. I am back to knowing that the more the sense of safety is created, the more people put their best stuff out there....but sometimes we can do little to help someone feel safe if they haven't built that foundation first for themselves. We can certainly do lots to help reduce anxiety -all the motivational stuff...empathy, break down barriers, etc. The question then becomes...is it possible for someone to facilitate that sense of deep trust in a group if there are individual(s) who continue to question their own abilities?

I have an approach that I developed in the work I do. I have written about this and hope to explore it further, and it seems to have resonated with others. It is quite simply language based. The word "resistance" is often tossed out quite easily in the type of work I do with groups, and I believe in organizational change. When I train others to facilitate groups I encourage them to see this as "reluctance" as opposed to "resistance". The question is...who wouldn't want to learn things that would keep them out of prison? Who wouldn't want to engage in change that would benefit us? No one is resistant to this. They are simply reluctant to start on the road for so many reasons...primarily anxiety....a feeling none of us like and none of us want to have. They don't trust the process will make their anxiety go away, and believe it will exacerbate the feeling, and so it is easier to stay still. As facilitators, when we think of that push back or staying still as reluctance, rather than resistance, I think we act more to facilitate participation. We look at satisfying the emotional need. In the end, it is the emotional tone of the group that defines trust for me, not the product outcome.

I need to say that I am a "Feeling type" person. I am aware that for others the feelings are less surface, but we are all motivated to act by emotions. Without an emotional impetus we would do nothing. As we learned with MBTI, when doing a presentation we need to anticipate the ways all people take in information and make sense it, and try to interact in ways that make it possible for everyone to relate to it. I think this is true of building deep trust in a group. We need to understand the many ways people experience trust, what each person is looking for in an intense group experience, what is important to us (I use the exercise "Why is that important to you...as the 5 Y's in my work) and find a way to satisfy what motivates all the people in the group. The feeling types need to know they are appreciated. The thinking types need to have a space to share their thoughts. It will not be the same for everyone. I cringe when I watch my husband talk to other thinking types and think they will soon dislike each other - yet they are able to accomplish so much together. As a feeling type, I need the emotional connection first. If we are facilitating, we need to cover both needs. The closest I have come to a situation of deep trust was in MALT and I think it was because we knew this - we talked about this - and we tried to honour what was emotionally important to everyone.

It seems trust is so individual and depends entirely on what we value, but I do think emotionally it is still the same feeling we are seeking to find - comfort in the midst of stress and challenge. Safety. The foundation of any relationship. My question is what happens when one person questions their own abilities so much that they never feel safe internally? Can the group get to a place of deep trust when this occurs? Just like families, when you ask individuals about their "emotional" experiences, will they be the same. Is it deep trust if someone says "I didn't feel it?" I recognized (and shared with Sandy but feel okay about putting this out to you folks - big leap) that I suffer from an imposter syndrome and as a result I don't feel deep trust often. It is possible in very small groups - one on one - but gets much more difficult in large groups. Whose responsibility is it to create that feeling? I can contribute, and apparently I do well enough to keep getting invitations to work, but internally the feeling isn't there. As a result I had a very difficult time writing about a time when I experienced this. Perhaps my expectations are too high.

I do know that Sandy's interactions with me helped me to trust enough to write this piece. I'm not sure what you did other than validate and encourage, Sandy. Perhaps that is all any of us need for deep trust to occur.

Jennifer

Appendix #6: 19 Questions asked in the Focus Groups

The questions	What I saw in the question: trust-related issues and more questions to think about
1. Is it possible that learning focused on personal/interpersonal development may require a higher level of trust than other types of programs? “	Is it expected of us, incumbent on us or a self-expectation in engaging in interpersonal development programs to disclose things about ourselves and our professional practices in such a way that we make ourselves vulnerable?
2. Are we looking for drive through trust or does trust need to be tested, re-confirmed, tested again and become warm and real and solid over time?’	What differing expectations do we have of trust generally speaking? How does our past inform our present in terms of expectations of trust—e.g. what differing levels of trust have we experienced as peak experiences? What differing expectations might those of us who are members of the same group have of trust?
3. “Must a higher level of trust need to be established if the product/end result is personal/intangible or as the perceived value of the anticipated end result increases?”	Should we target achieving higher levels of trust when we know we are working on something that is complex, hard to grasp (e.g. “good service”) and matters a great deal to the organization and its future?
4. “Do we trust each other in the same way?”	What meaning can we attach to the phrase “I trust you”? How can we apply our knowledge of personalities and preferences to trust? E.g. Will MBTI Intuitives be more focused on achieving trust through concepts than through rules and other mechanics? Does an “F” (Feeling type) typically have a higher standard of personal connection that is required for trust than a “T” (Thinking type)?
5. “If we were more comfortable with the value of the process [that leads to trust], would we invent less to do?”	If we could require people to work at trust and/or teach people in the development of trust, could we reduce the number of things we have to do and protective mechanisms in our organizations?
6. “Are there [members of the group that you have just described as being trusting as a group] that you would not trust as individuals?”	Are trusting groups a way of socializing and controlling some of the more disruptive and difficult members of our organizations (provided we are not dealing with a malignant narcissist)?

7. "How do you build trust if the individual isn't necessarily self-aware?"
How do we overcome lack of personal awareness around failure to listen in building trust? Is this something the group should take on or should this be contracted out to the 3 C's: coaches, courses and critical buddies?
8. "Do you feel safe because you're listened to or does it need safety in order to be able to listen?"
Which comes first, being heard or a sense of safety? Are we likely to listen well if we don't feel safe (i.e. we are in fight or flight mode)? Can we ever make people feel safe about saying what is important to them, the purpose that matters to them etc. if they don't feel heard?
9. "What would happen if we could frame process as a critical task?"
What do we have to do to convince a task-absorbed person that process is worth investing in? Can we truly establish a list of tasks, types of committees etc. where trust would make the greatest and least contribution (see the earlier reference to intangibles and importance)?
10. "What does process have to do with the end product?"
How important is process to end product? How can we prove that when everything that happens in a group is systematic (i.e. the group equivalent of the 'butterfly effect')? How important is this question to the task-oriented types?
11. How do we create trust?"
Now there's an easy one—first questions first, do we talk about it openly as an objective (and why it is an objective) or do we pursue it in a subtle and opportunistic fashion (i.e. the so-called benevolent, well-intentioned 'secret agenda')?
12. "How about talking about trust as creating the groundwork that groups need? Do we do that?"
Groundwork and foundation and planting the seeds are well-understood concepts in physical work, building structures and nature—can we convince people to see their application to trust-building in group work. Similarly, see comments on practice in #16 below.

13. "Do we want to trust each other?"

This question relates in part to attachment theory—there are some people who avoid and are anxious about attaching themselves through trusting or in any other emotional or personal way to groups. This also relates to the literature about malignant/destructive narcissism and those people who are so self-preoccupied that they cannot get to where you have to in trusting a group? And finally, for those of us who are values-based and have negative life experiences, will we set such a high bar for trust that we effectively make it impossible, thereby making it legitimate to say that we have set a group up for failure in terms of building trust.

14. "I wonder if focusing on the work to be done rather than the personal stuff can be a powerful impetus for the personal stuff?"

Here is where the values and people-based work on trust may intersect with the task-based work of Katzenbach and Smith. In some settings (e.g. the workplace, volunteer work that matters to us or is high profile), is the best thing to do to set a group a near-impossible/daunting task and to get them to work, realizing that in many instances they will eventually realize that they need to work on process or they will fail? Or are we setting people up for one or two people doing all the work in the absence of coaching/help in this situation?

15. "What do you hope to get out of identifying goals/commonality?"

Should we be more purposeful and thoughtful about purpose-setting? Specifically, should we identify both the task and people/process-related virtues to working together on identifying and sticking to purpose?

16. "What makes us think we don't have to practice listening and other trust-related skills?"

Practice is a well-understood and accepted practice in sports, theatre and music—can we get it understood in terms of its contribution to building trust in group work?

17. "How do we get group members ready to learn?"

How do we move from compliance to commitment when it comes to learning? How do we get groups to really internalize what they need to be learning about their progress or deteriorating in the area of trust-building?

18. "How much can you do when a group's not ready for it?"

What do you have to do to get the attention of a group? Allow them to fail or nearly fail (i.e. the group equivalent of a near-death experience)?

19. I wonder if this [relationships in a larger group] dissipates the energy as what needs to be dealt with within the group.

Do we remove the creative tension from a small group if we talk about its issues to others who are not part of that group? Or does that help us to constructively focus the tension?

Appendix #7: A Speculative Matrix on the Leadership Functions of Groups that Lead: What We Need our Groups that Lead to do

In order to understand the leadership functions that might be taken on by trusting groups that lead, I constructed a matrix of current readings on leadership. The left-hand column reflects the broad common categories I found in the literature. The other five columns contain references from the books and articles noted at the top of each of the columns

Broad category	Bennis and Goldsmith/Heenan ⁶⁵	Covey (2004)	Goleman (2000)	Heifetz and Laurie (1997)	Kotter (2001)
1. Do the 'Vision' thing; provide perspective and direction	Create and communicate a vision (G)	Pathfinding: Jointly determine the course, the vision	Use an authoritative style—mobilize people towards a vision	Get on the balcony—view patterns. Don't get swept up in the field. Identify adaptive challenges.	Set the direction for the changes the organization needs—go through tough, sometimes exhausting process
2. Accomplish empowerment; share responsibility; forge consensus	Build team goals and camaraderie grounded in shared accomplishment (H)	Empowerment—focus your talent on results and then get out of people's way and give help as requested	Use a democratic style: forge consensus through participation	Give work back to the people—get them to assume greater responsibility	Align people by meeting the communications challenge—do so with credibility and by getting people to believe the message; empower

⁶⁵ References from Bennis and Goldsmith (1997) are indicated by a 'G' in parentheses. References from Heenan and Bennis (1999) are indicated by an 'H' in parentheses.

Broad category	Bennis and Goldsmith/Heenan⁶⁶	Covey (2004)	Goleman (2000)	Heifetz and Laurie (1997)	Kotter (2001)
3. Inspire/coach people/model	Show unconditional empathy, consistent positions and integrity	Model—set a good example	Use a coaching style—develop people for the future		Motivate people—inspire them to a burst of energy Make work important to people
4. Get involvement from people; trust people; hear from below	Realize intentions through action (G); Institutionalize dissent, solicit the truth (H)	Use discipline—set up and manage systems to stay on course	Use an affiliative style—motivate people by building relationships	Protect the voices of leadership from below—encourage curiosity, investigation Regulate distress—conditions for talk	Create a culture of leadership—give people significant challenges and plan for the development of people

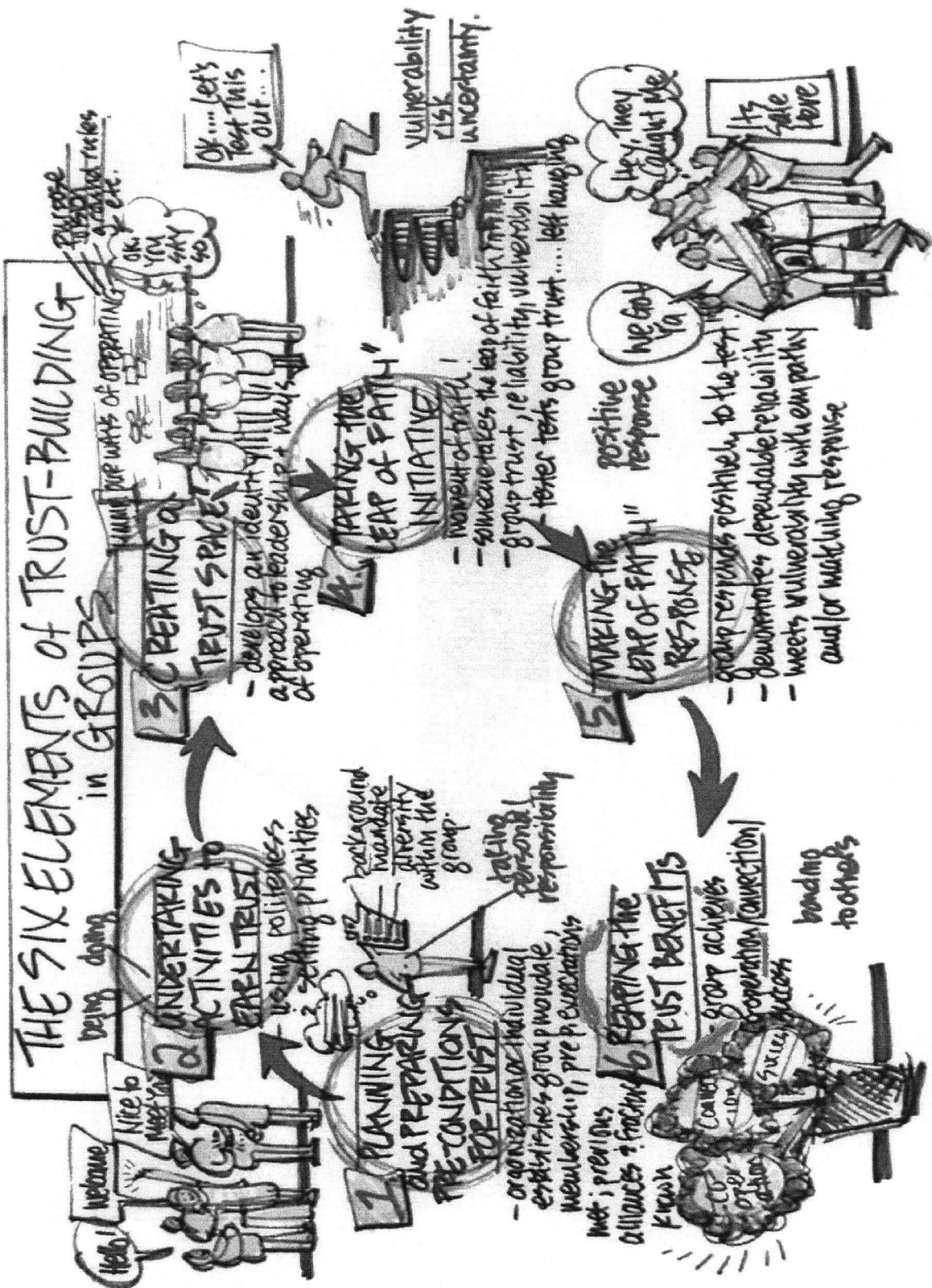
⁶⁶ References from Bennis and Goldsmith (1997) are indicated by a 'G' in parentheses. References from Heenan and Bennis (1999) are indicated by an 'H' in parentheses.

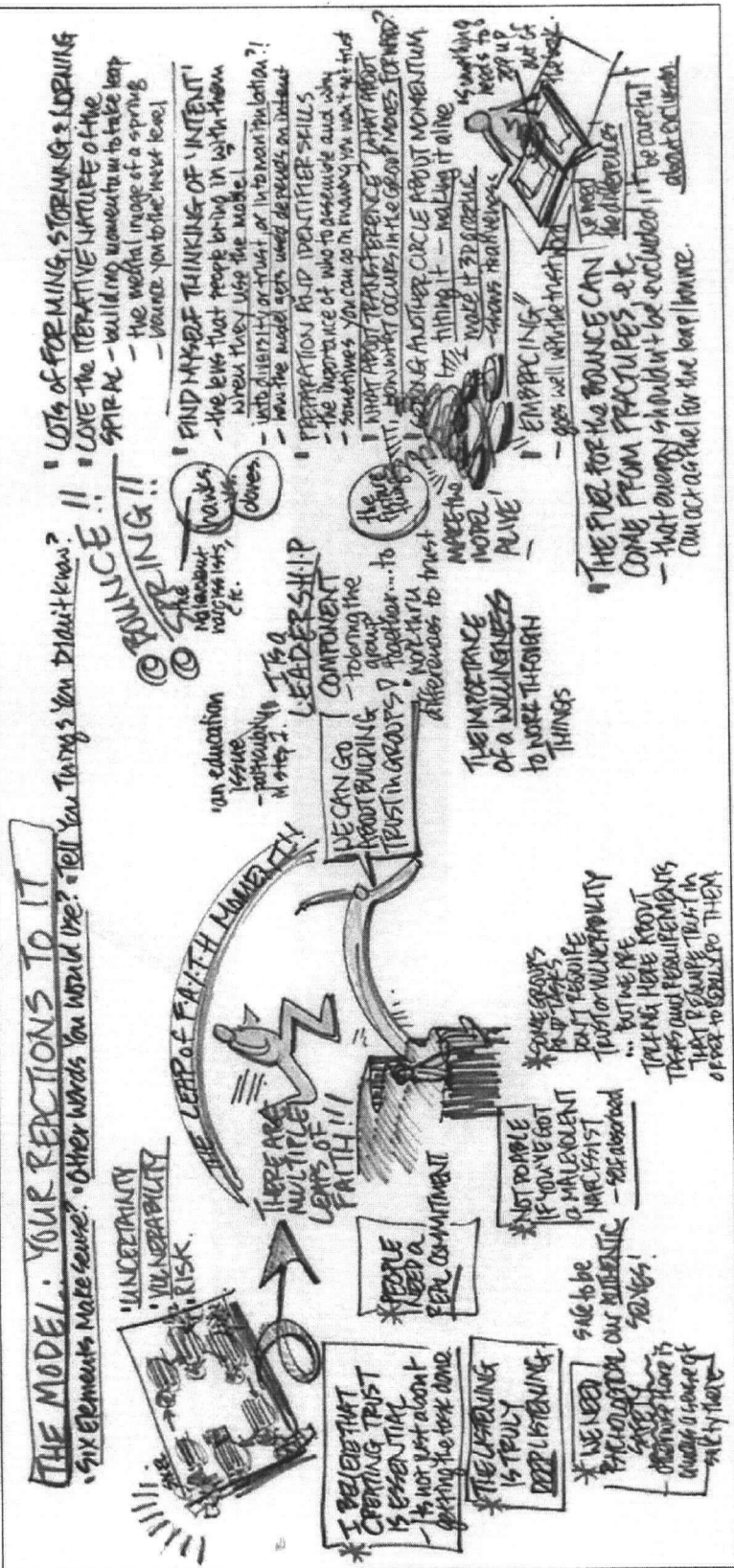
Appendix # 8: Graphic Illustrations of the Model from the Stage Three Face to Face Focus Group

The graphics on the following pages were developed by graphic facilitator Christina Merkley in the stage three face to face focus group of returning volunteers from stage two.

The basic format was that I led the group through the model, using the graphic that appears on the next page, which Christina had prepared in advance of the session. As I spoke Christina added important notes to the original. The notes, all of which appear on the next page referred to “taking personal responsibility” in Element One, “being and doing” in Element Two, “vulnerability, risk and uncertainty” in Element Four, “positive response” in Element Five and “bonding to others” in Element Six. After I went through the step by step description and moved to the upward spiral, Christina drew the second graphic, which summarized what I said and the group response. The third graphic is a summary of the overall conclusions of the day.

With such an important visual aspect to this focus group, this method of recording results worked very well. In all situations where I displayed the colorful poster version of the first two pages of these results in the course of explaining my research I have had an extremely positive response to the value of the graphics.





OVERALL COMMENTS / CONCLUSIONS: — TAKEAWAYS.

- QUESTION FOR STAGE 1: WILL TRUST INHIBIT OR HELP THE TASK?
- DID THE FOCUS GROUPS THEMSELVES REQUIRE TRUST?
- REALIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FIRST STAGE TO MOVE GROUP FORWARD.

what to expect	educating	what not to expect	set expectations ahead of time
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- REM BIG QUESTION: WHAT ROLE DOES TIME PLAY IN TRUST?
- IT'S NOT EASY "!!!"
NICE TO BE WITH PEOPLE
DOING THIS... THINKING
BEING GREEN!
ROOT IT.
- THE METAPHOR OF THE WIND — not everything is linear, has lots of flow and movement.
- SOMETIMES THE HUMAN STUFF GETS SO NEGLECTED AND MARGINALIZED
- FASCINATING TO SIT IN ON THIS TOPIC
— WHEN REAL TRUST ISN'T THERE... WHAT A SHAME... BACK TO STAGE ONE
- TRUST ISN'T SOMETHING YOU CAN TOUCH, TASTE OR SEE
"!!! BUT YOU CAN FEEL ITS ENERGY THRU LAUGHTER, FUN, ETC.

Appendix # 9: The Six Elements of Trust-Building Model Illustrating Stories Told in the Dissertation but not Diagrammed in the Text

The following stories are illustrated by diagrams in the main text, in chapters six and seven:

- Peter's MALT story
- The UBC people-related course story
- Erika's story
- Joan's story
- The RRU MALT faculty story
- The UBC EdD cohort story

As well, in Appendix #5, there appears a diagram of the focus group story.

The diagrams which follow illustrate those stories that were not put in diagrammatic form in the main text of the dissertation. The diagrams are for the following stories in the following chapters

Chapter one:

- The research course story

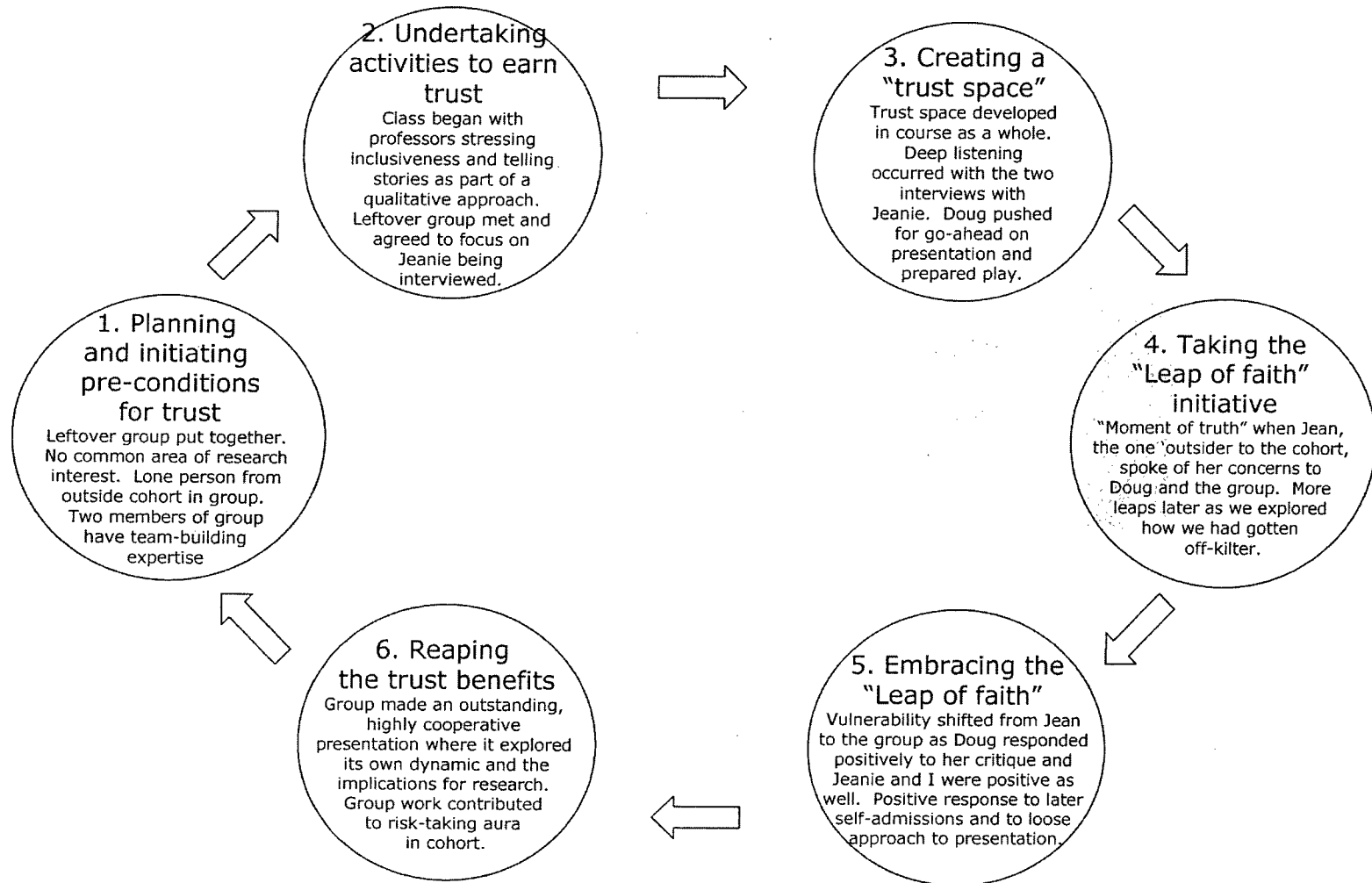
Chapter two:

- The magic group story

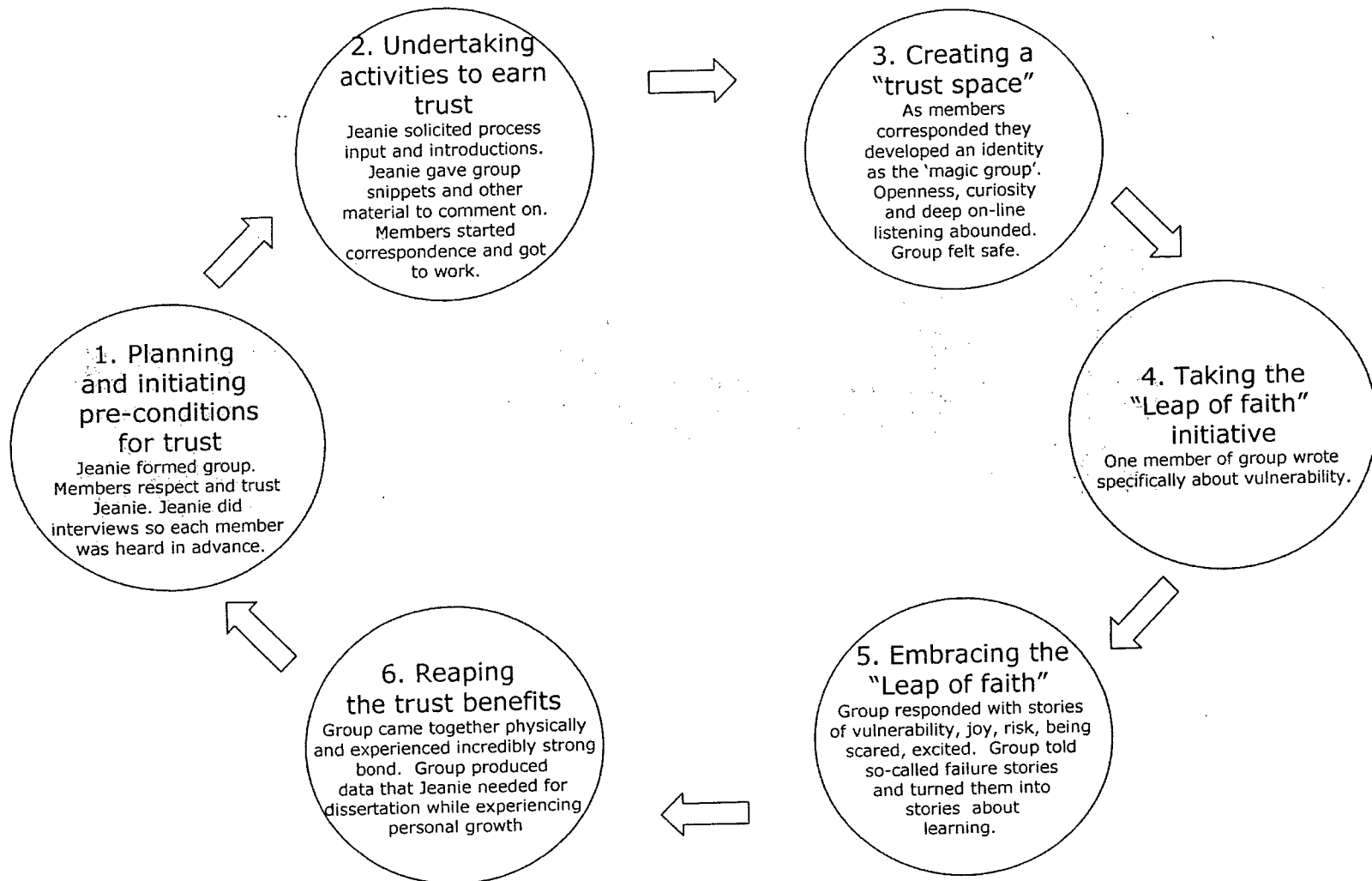
Chapter five:

- Adrienne's story
- Donald's story
- Donna's story
- Ervin's story
- Linda's story
- Pam's story
- Terry and Shauna's story

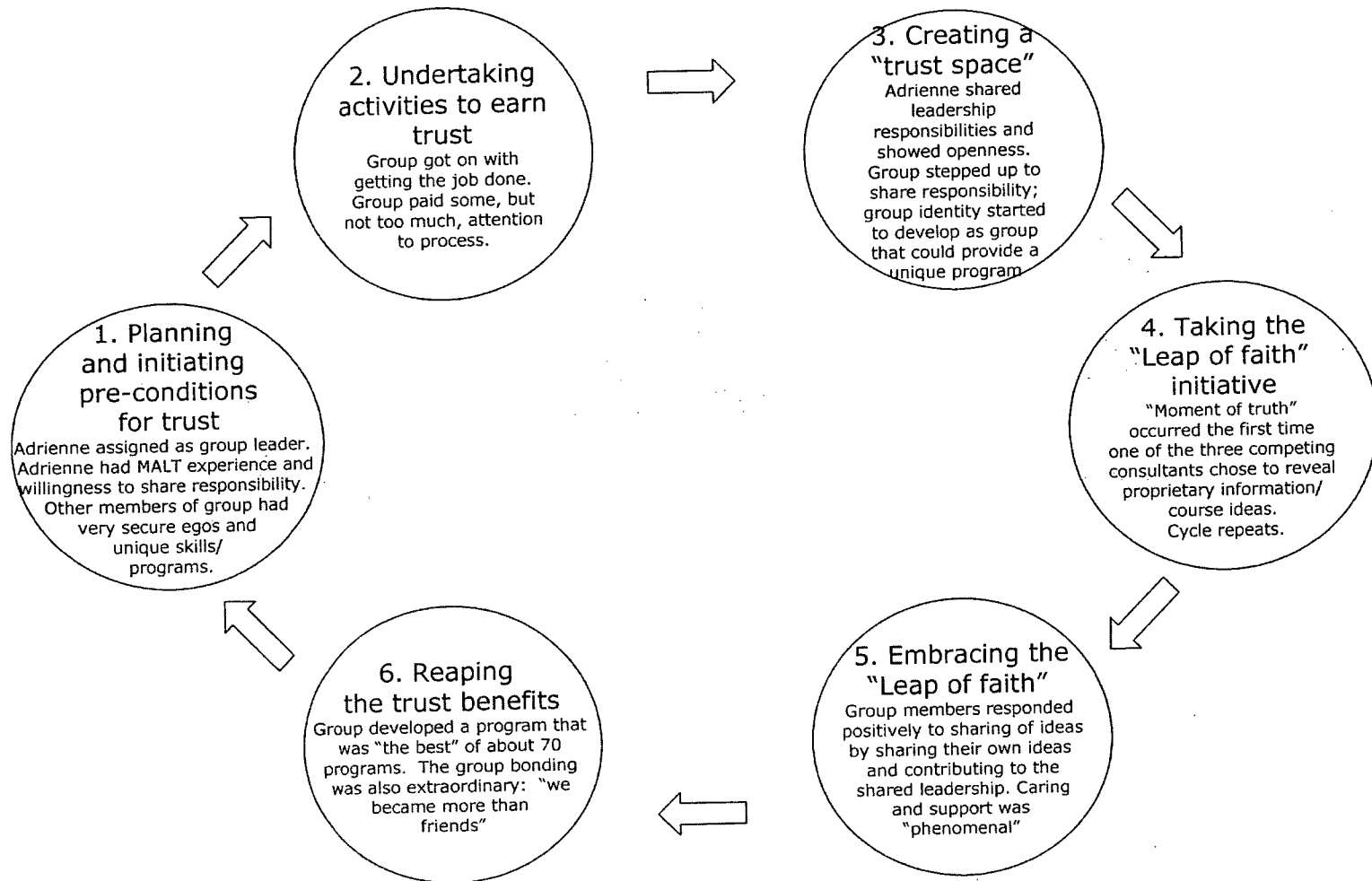
The UBC Research Course Story and the Six Element Model



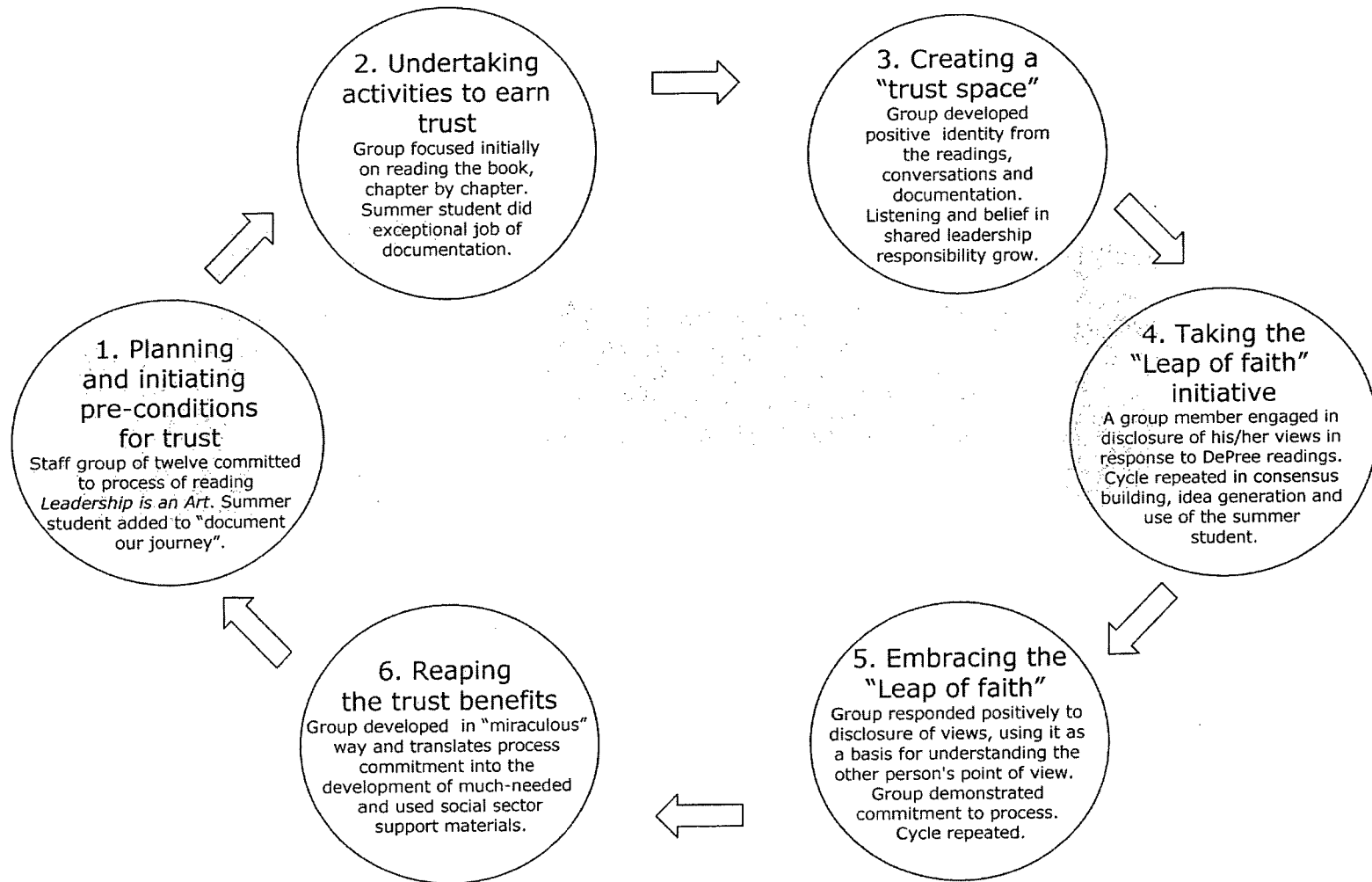
The 'Magic' Group and the Six Elements of Trust-Building in Groups



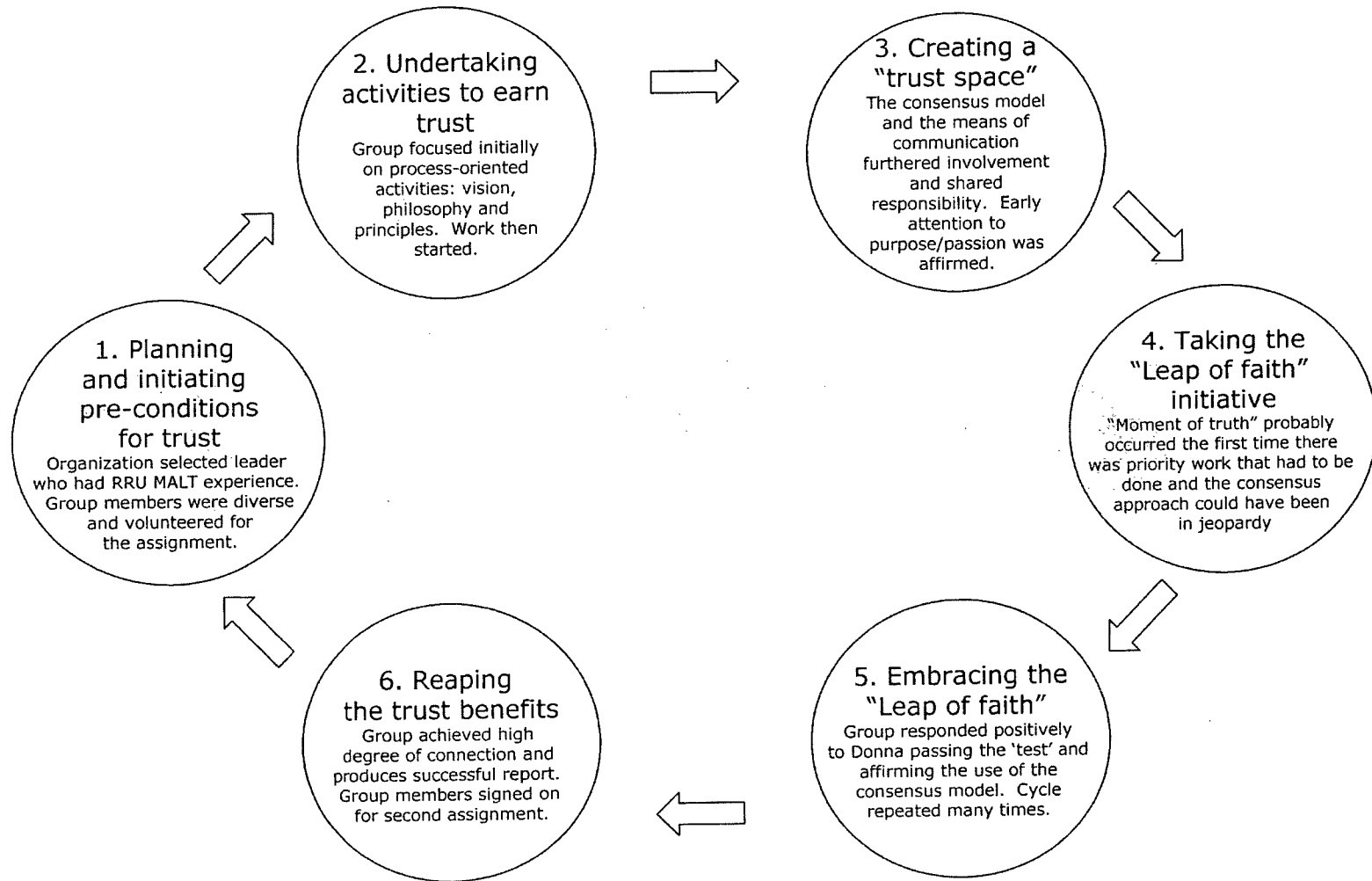
Adrienne's story and the Six Elements of Trust-Building in Groups



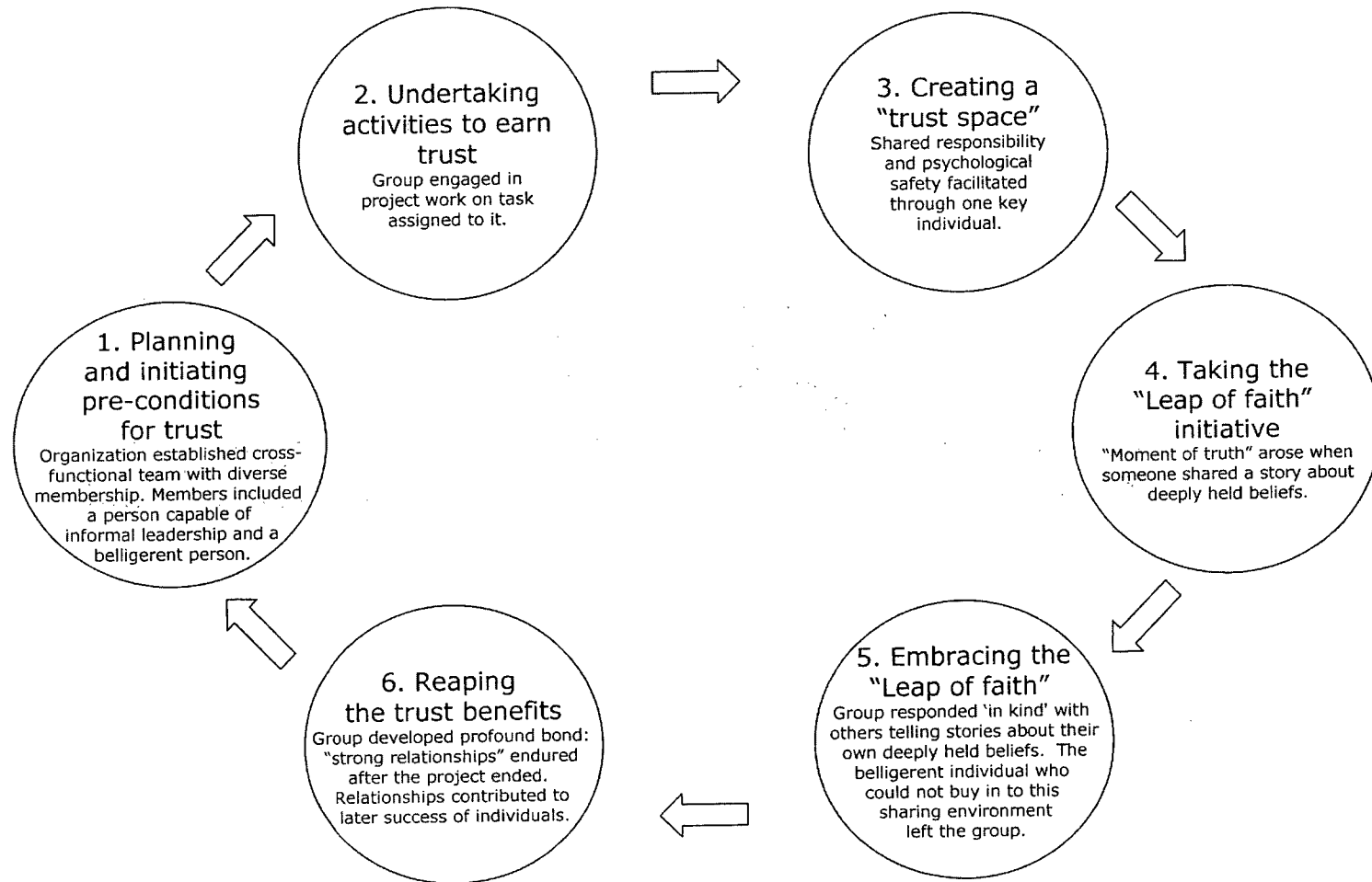
Donald's story and the Six Elements of Trust-Building in Groups



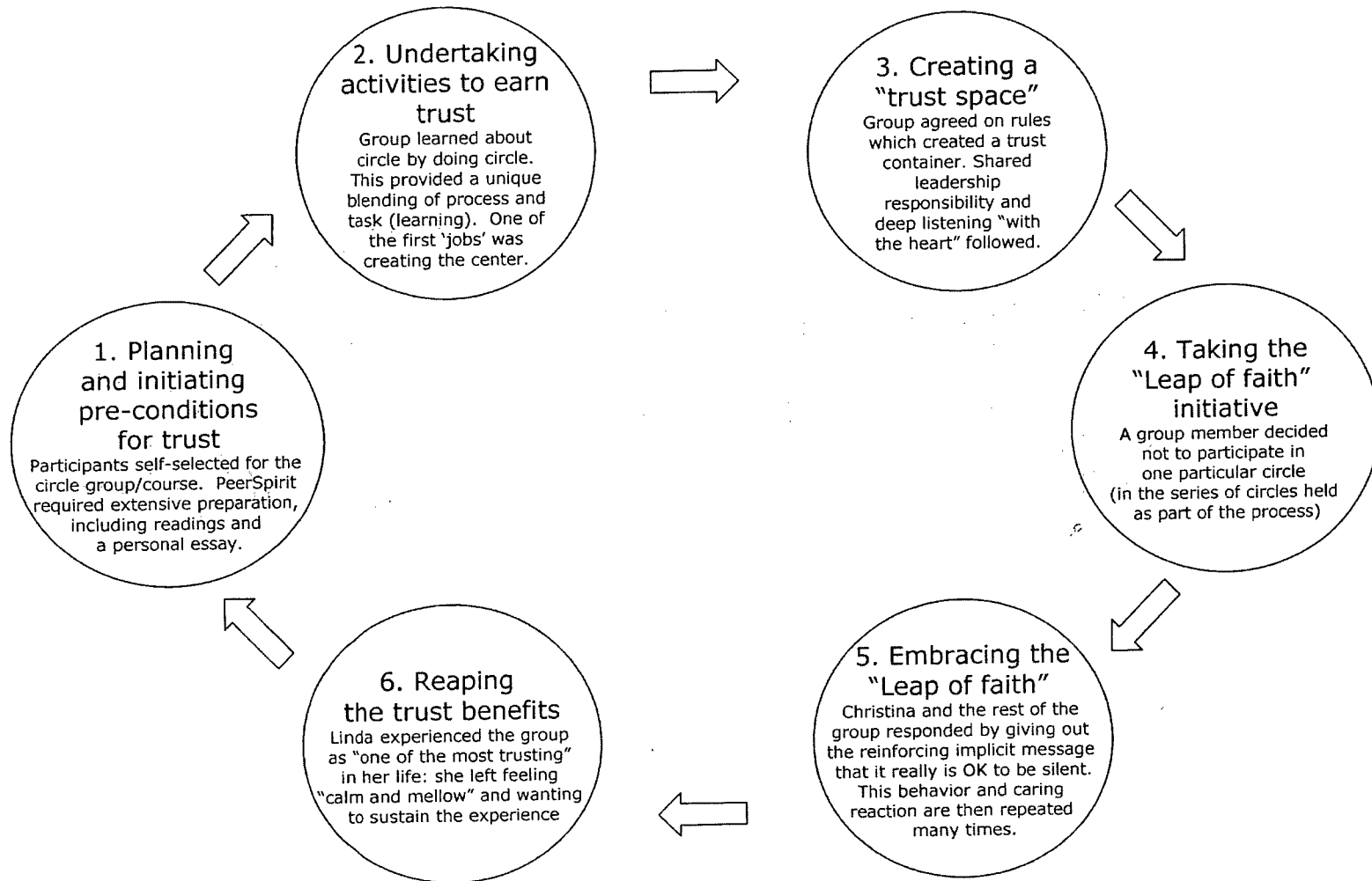
Donna's story and the Six Elements of Trust-Building in Groups



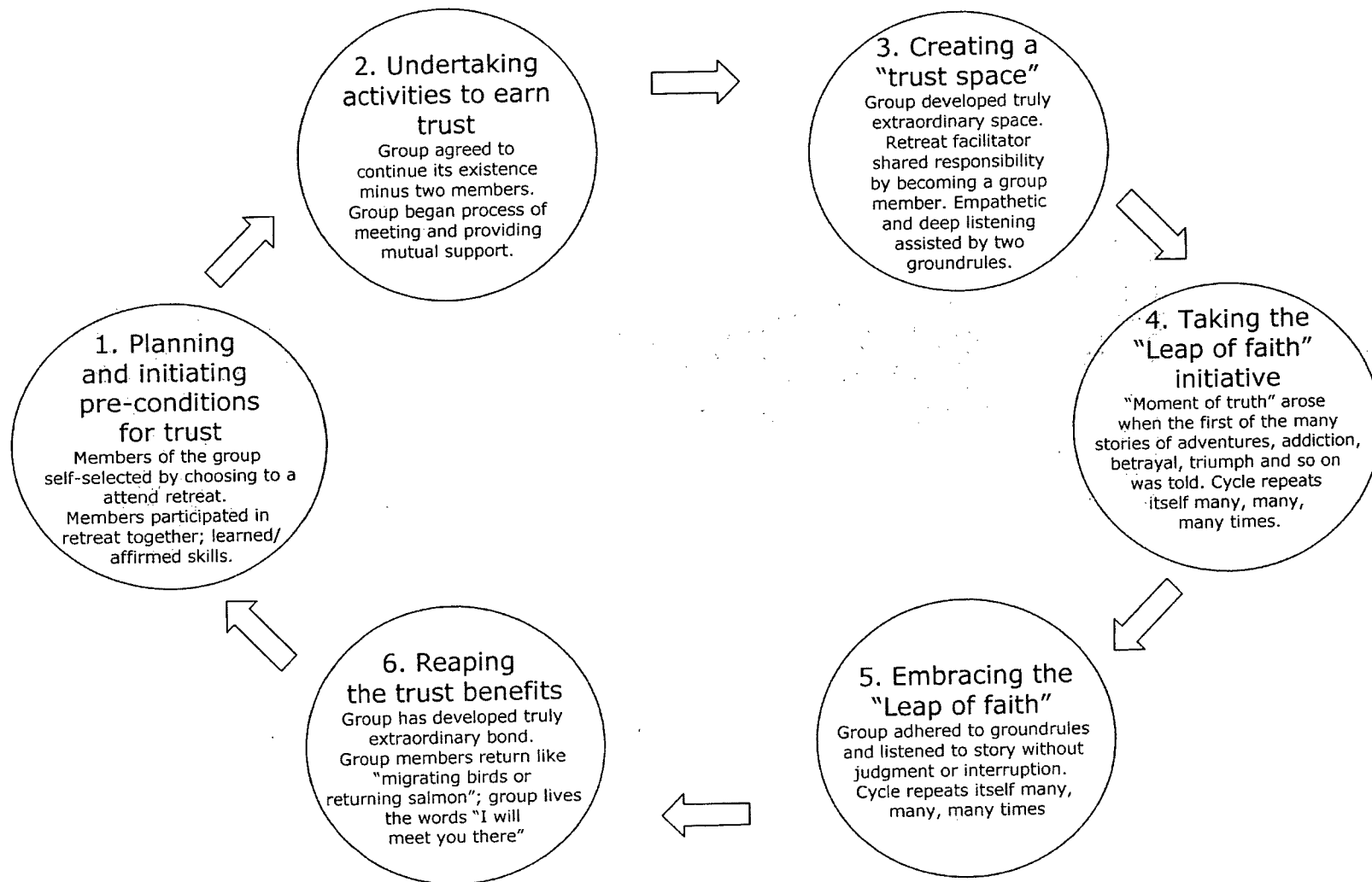
Ervin's story and the Six Elements of Trust-Building in Groups



Linda's story and the Six Elements of Trust-Building in Groups



Pam's story and the Six Elements of Trust-Building in Groups



Terry's/Shauna's story and the Six Elements of Trust-Building in Groups

