

### Deep Democracy: A Process-Oriented View of Conflict and Diversity

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#### Abstract:

Deep Democracy is a large group facilitation and change management model that integrates concepts from quantum physics, psychology, and anthropology. The basic approach combines the use of dual awareness; an attitude of inclusiveness towards subjective experience; tools for modeling, analyzing, and intervening in the process structure of group dynamics; and an integrated methodology known as Worldwork to prevent, manage, resolve, or control conflicts and co-create greater understanding, meaning, and group cohesion.

#### Presented:

Mosaic of Cultures: Theory and Practice of Polycultural Interaction in Asian and Pacific Integrating Region. Sakhalin Oblast In-Service Cadre Retraining Institute, Uzhno-Sakhalinsk, Russia., Mar 2009.

#### Deep Democracy:

Arnold Mindell<sup>1</sup> (2000), originally a physicist and Jungian analyst, has researched and written extensively on how awareness creates reality, how we perceive it on different levels, and how this creates different frameworks of reality. This idea follows discoveries in quantum physics, chaos theory, and the symbolic thinking of Jungian psychology and also stems from ancient spiritual traditions such as Taoism and indigenous philosophies. It is directly relevant in working with today's interpersonal, organizational, social, and identity conflicts.

Having spent his early career working as a clinical psychologist, Mindell's research led him towards an understanding that a new methodology—one that combined social field theories, dreamwork and bodywork, physics, and spiritual traditions—was needed. Clinical psychotherapy practice could no longer be limited to private sessions with a few privileged individuals, pretending that our collective dreaming and social forces weren't also an important part of the work. In the late eighties Mindell began experimenting with new forms of large group processes,<sup>2</sup> formulating his ideas as a political principle that he called Deep Democracy<sup>3</sup> and as a practical methodology called Worldwork:<sup>4</sup> Worldwork evolved through viewing the world itself as a client (1992, p. 4).

Unlike "classical" democracy, which focuses on majority rule, Deep Democracy suggests that all voices, states of awareness, and frameworks of reality are important. Deep Democracy also suggests that the information carried within these voices, awarenesses, and frameworks are all needed to understand the complete process of the system. Deep Democracy is an attitude that focuses on the awareness of voices that are both central and marginal. (Wikipedia, 2006)

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<sup>1</sup> [www.aamindell.net](http://www.aamindell.net)

<sup>2</sup> [www.iapop.com](http://www.iapop.com)

<sup>3</sup> [www.deepdemocracyinstitute.org](http://www.deepdemocracyinstitute.org)

<sup>4</sup> [www.worldwork.org](http://www.worldwork.org)

The focus on “voices that are both central and marginal” refers to the voices of various states of consciousness, somatic experiences, synchronicities, and subjective experiences associated with rank dynamics and the marginalization and social tensions that arise from diversity issues. Worldwork is a practical methodology for bringing marginalized experiences, tensions, and voices directly into group dynamics and relationship.

Formal conflict resolution and peace processes often focus on finding solutions through positive bonding experiences between diverse groups and the signing of peace agreements between political leaders. These are important but rarely solve the deeper problems. We seek a way out of our problems and dream of a conflict-free, harmonious world rather than believing that the tensions and disturbances are an important part of the world’s self-organizing tendencies. And yet, through developing a practice of focusing on our own somatic and subjective experiences and developing our ability to notice, understand, and use the information contained in them, we can improve our ability to facilitate complex interactions in a more meaningful way. Worldwork focuses on using awareness to improve understanding, find meaning in disturbances, and also to create change.

What we normally refer to as a conflict is really the visible disturbance or symptom that arises from the deeper problems in the background: problems that may not be immediately evident from all viewpoints, are not measurable, and are difficult to work with and which pattern group and social dynamics thus creating the disturbances that we do notice.

We can capitalize on these disturbances and improve their ability to understand a difficult group’s dynamics, to facilitate more effectively, and to transform disturbances by understanding the patterns that structure group dynamics and individual behavior. These patterns first appear as signals that are critical for understanding difficulties. We experience them as troublesome because we don’t yet understand their wisdom and importance. Behind these disturbances is a self-organizing system striving for balance. A new form of leadership is emerging that can help groups find more creative and sustainable solutions. Deep Democracy and Worldwork provide a framework for understanding these emerging patterns through a combination of personal innerwork and collective group process.

The philosophy of openness, fluidity, and inclusiveness behind Deep Democracy and the methodology of Worldwork are an approach for addressing conflict and not necessarily meant to be a methodology for resolution. Certain conflicts are so global in nature that any local resolution can only be understood as a momentary phenomenon. These momentary resolutions are important but they aren’t the final or only answer to complex issues.

### **Process Theory:**

Mindell (1989) defines process as a constant flow of information—which we experience through signals, body symptoms, relationship experiences, and other channels of information flow. Process work’s field theory says that the psychology of the facilitator and the group are organized by the same forces, meaning, by the constant flow of information. The information creates a field, similar to an invisible electro-magnetic force field, that pulls people in various directions. These varied directions appear as roles, which are the viewpoints or functions within a field that are occupied by various people or subgroups at different times; for example, the leader, tyrant, worker, lover, helper, or trouble maker. These dreamlike roles are like the point attractors patterning the field in chaos theory.

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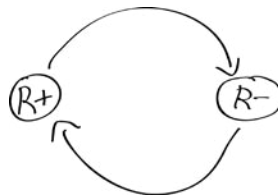
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While any given role may at times seem to be located within a given individual, roles are actually dynamic *timespirits*. Timespirits are roles that change with time, sometimes quite rapidly, and often move from one individual or group to another. They are non-local and also occasionally appear to have local manifestations, like waves and particles (Mindell, 2000). For example, while speaking angrily against tyranny, I may inadvertently tyrannize others, at least momentarily. Timespirits are part of the field's self-organizing structure.

Groups are most difficult when the structural elements of the field's pattern are not seen, invited to speak, listened to, and spoken to. These elements include the tensions and feelings that exist between various roles and ghost roles. Ghosts are roles that are somehow felt to be present but can't quite be located. For example, sexism remains a common ghost in organizations. People may feel its presence and obviously no one speaks in favor of sexism directly, and yet it persists. And it may be especially difficult for women to raise the subject without fear of being fired. Not only are women often marginalized but their experience of being marginalized is also marginalized, making it especially difficult to create change and avoid escalation.

Whether in a large group or one-on-one relationship, tensions tend to escalate when key signals are not addressed because the underlying roles remain invisible—like ghosts that are felt and effect the group but aren't directly expressed or spoken to. Also, groups tend to become frozen when one polarity (two opposing roles) is given too much attention or when groups lack the fluidity (an ability to consciously shift between different roles and to avoid being grabbed by one role) that comes from understanding roles as dynamic timespirits rather than static positions. Understanding roles as timespirits means that any one person or subgroup is not the role but also changes and needs awareness of and access to other positions as well.

Dominant groups can benefit from understanding how their use of power effects others and how they sometimes misuse their power out of an experience of feeling powerless. And marginalized groups can benefit from understanding how they are not only downed but are also powerful. There is a structure behind this pattern and the roles that people occupy often change in a rotational symmetry.



Groups tend to be more cohesive when subgroups are seen as important roles representing emergent leadership and welcomed to interact with the group's dominant views and individuals. Obviously this is difficult to do in heated conflicts. People are often opposed to certain roles, at times enjoy winning by defeating and silencing others, and positional leaders and designated facilitators often feel threatened by the emergent, momentary leadership of others.

Understanding leadership is an important aspect of conflict resolution and social conflicts are one area where our collective psychological and emotional profit margins are in the red, and the community is failing to develop its potential leadership as a team (M. Schupbach & E. Schupbach, 2008). Three distinct levels of leadership models are: an authoritarian model (an individual person leads), a systems model (people lead by consensus), and a chaos driven, self-organizing model (where leadership is a non-local timespirit, meaning that it can't be definitively located in any one person or group but is distributed throughout the field). Leadership is normally assumed to be associated only with hierarchical position and not understood as a timespirit and a dynamic function that exists within each of us and is needed at different times from all members of the

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entire group. This doesn't mean that designated leaders are not also needed, only that their role becomes more of a fluid facilitator rather than that of a static director.

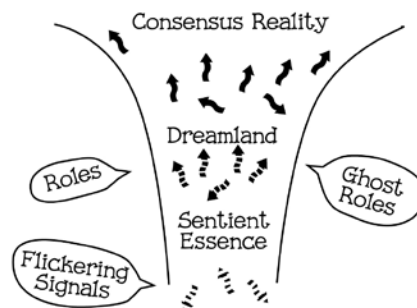
### Tracking Process Structure:

The root of the word "learn" is *leornian*, arising from a Proto-Indo-European word meaning "to follow or find the track" (Harper, 2001). Tracking is the root of learning. *Tracking* means to notice the signals and discover how they fit together revealing a path that leads forward. The first step is to notice signals that don't seem to go along with the normal flow of communications and to explore their meaning. If process is a constant flow of information then signals are a constant flow of symbolic indicators, which indirectly inform us about various competing processes. These underlying processes are evident in signals and their structure—patterns in verbal and nonverbal communications, movement, roles, emotional queues, and somatic experiences.

We often marginalize signals when we don't understand their meaning. Signals often seem so chaotic, and confusing signals are often ignored. For example, in moments when you might expect someone to attentively listen, signals that don't go along with attentive listening (gazing out the window, fidgeting with a cell phone) will usually be ignored until their strength (either through an increase in intensity or repetition) exceeds a certain threshold. Below that threshold their informational value is lost and our ability to learn from complex situations is limited. You might notice something as a briefly flickering signal, like barely noticing someone's expression. Rationally it is easy to explain signals away but then our own somatic experience is ignored.

Process work tracks experience at three different levels:

- Consensus Reality      This is the level of our normal daily experience. Consensus reality includes experiences that we tend to agree upon and includes focus on rules, structure, and objectively measurable outcomes and profit. We assume, at this level, that we can control events.
- Dreamland              Dreamland experiences are subjective and not measurable and not in our control. They include team work and relationship issues, experiences of rank differences, somatic experiences, our assumptions about each other, and our dreamlike visions for the future.
- Sentient Essence      The sentient level is something that is sometimes barely noticeable, like an atmosphere or the most deeply held values that we can't quite articulate. It is an indescribable somehow sentient essence like a feeling, a tension, a joy.



Processes first appear as flickering signals or as our deepest, most ineffable experiences. As they emerge, they become more congruent and appear as roles and ghosts, visions for the future, and dreams. Conflicts escalate because signals and their underlying processes are ignored and they are ignored because they conflict with other processes, and so the cycle continues. It takes a

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change of attitude to understand that those signals that we might prefer to ignore can be used to discover an emerging tendency that is crucially deserving of support and may lead towards resolution or a more sustainable self-organization, rather than see them as a troublesome obstacle to be overcome.

Tracking isn't meant to be a reductionist exercise in conducting an increasingly detailed analysis of signals and their patterns but is meant to uncover the meaning behind the signals and to create greater intimacy, understanding, and relatedness. By tracking signals and unfolding the meaning hidden within their patterns we can begin to understand the underlying processes that organize the group dynamics and individual behaviors. Process structure is the symmetry between the signals, their informational patterns, the underlying processes, and the way they manifest in terms of individual behavior and group dynamics. Understanding structure is the key to understanding difficulties, recognizing and supporting emergent leadership, and helping groups find more sustainable and creative solutions to conflicts and social tensions.

### Innerwork:

Most conflict resolution paradigms focus on finding solutions externally but a process oriented approach to Deep Democracy uses our own awareness as the fundamental tool for forming and executing interventions. This means that our own inner development is an important part of our ability to facilitate conflicts but it also means that we are part of the conflict field and our own inner states of consciousness effect the external field as well.

How we use our power and our awareness and the emotional sensitivity and feeling way that we intervene and interact with others is as important as the content of what we say. Amy Mindell (1995) calls these feeling skills *metaskills*. When used consciously, metaskills also refer to toughness and direct sharpness and other emotional tones. Becoming aware of our own metaskills (or lack of them) is difficult because it means that we have to notice our own *double signals*, signals that don't go along with the message we intend to give. For example, I might intend a comment to be supportive and not notice how my tone of voice is aggressive. I don't identify as being an aggressive person, so my normal or *primary identity* keeps me from seeing my own aggression. Because the impact of our unintended signals is huge and because our primary identity keeps us from noticing our underlying *secondary process* (like my own marginalized identity of aggression), extensive personal innerwork is a key component of training in Deep Democracy and Worldwork facilitation.

There is a philosophical attitude of curiosity and openness to unknown and marginalized experiences behind process oriented innerwork. Developing this attitude is itself something of a spiritual path and requires a discipline of noticing, unfolding, understanding, and integrating that which does not necessarily go along with the our normal and everyday identity and experience. It is an attitude of curiosity, a belief in the importance of all of the parts, and a reverence for the magic of it all. This attitude requires a fluid identity and a fluid identity requires the discipline of a *spiritual warrior*. Spiritual warriorship is a disciplined attitude towards one's spiritual or psychological development. In other words, someone who takes a disciplined approach to daring the truth about oneself, learns to follow her own inner process, and ultimately takes responsibility for his troubles.

*Spiritual Eldering* was developed by Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, president of the Spiritual Eldering Institute and World Wisdom Chair at Naropa Institute, and focuses on the importance of meaning and love:

... after you grow out of the issues of libido and the issues of power (so you are done with the Freud stuff and with the Adler stuff), you get a little bit more into the young creative artist of Rank and then Jung and the archetypal great visions. But when you get somewhat

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older, you see that what keeps you going every day is the fact that you have covenants of love and meaning with other people—and that you are looking forward to the next stage of life to be able to fulfill your part in these covenants. (Lakritz & Knoblauch, 1999, pp. ix-x)

A process oriented view maintains that the spiritual elder, the sage, and the one who ages consciously are roles. As roles, they are not necessarily tied to chronological stages of development nor available only in later adulthood. Also, while the patterns of working through Freudian and Jungian stuff may be common patterns, Process Work does not stress a linear developmental model. These too are roles and processes that happen at various times throughout life and can happen at any age. Perception can be used to bring awareness to these roles and processes.

The facilitator's first task is to notice and explore the signals but the second task, the real task, is to follow them into something unknown and intimate and mysterious. Tracking isn't about analyzing the signals. It's about having the curiosity to follow a path that leads towards something that initially appears to be mysterious and unknown.

Mindell refers to developing mastery in these two tasks as the *first training* and the *second training*, emphasizing the complexity and enormity of each of them. The first training is developing mastery in noticing and tracking signals, forming structural hypotheses from the patterns, creating interventions from these, and carefully noting the feedback from the group; which will either confirm the hypothesis or suggest another direction. The second training is developing mastery in following something mysterious and intimate, even when it can't be rationally described by signals and structural patterns. It is ineffable but leads to the core of a group's self organizing tendency and it is always something intimate.

The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and all science. [She or] he to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead: his [or her] eyes are closed. (Einstein, 2004)

What we say is informed by our awareness of which role we are in, our feeling connection with others, and an ability to demonstrate fluidity while caring for others. Arnold Mindell (1992) calls this quality *eldership*. For example, speaking as yet another force challenging someone's thoughts or experience often causes escalation and may not be as effective as eldership: caring for others and for the whole system by speaking first as an enthusiastic supporter before introducing other ideas. Everyone knows this but we forget, especially in difficult situations, and this adds to the difficulty of potentially polarizing, inflammatory situations. This doesn't necessarily mean that people should never polarize. By themselves, polarities have an enormously creative potential. If we can polarize consciously and maintain a relationship connection with others and use a deeper set of skills to facilitate the polarities and tensions between the roles it can help a more creative and sustainable process emerge.

At times, tyranny might seem easier since it takes time, skill, and effort to foster Deep Democracy. It's easy to constantly polarize a group into an exhausted state of chronic ineffectiveness or submission and difficult to follow a deeper path towards developing a meaningful, creative, and sustainable group, community, or organization. Overall, following the self-organizing process structure is the path of least effort but this usually requires some help with facilitation.

Conflicts escalate when there is no *facilitator function* present helping to bring awareness to the roles, polarities, tensions, and visions of the team members. Facilitation doesn't have to come from a formally designated facilitator. The facilitator function is ontologically built-in to all groups. It just isn't being used. It is unoccupied but anyone can help bring it out. The facilitator is a role and you

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don't have to be the designated leader, extroverted, or abnormally charismatic to help bring awareness to a group. You only have to trust in your own experience and want to find a way to help the group that is supportive of others.

The most fundamental forum is your own heart. Both as a facilitator and as a human being, you must learn to hear yourself there. ~Arnold Mindell

Unfortunately noticing and trusting in our own experience is not always so easy. There is only one problem a person can have in a group, not knowing the deepest part of himself or herself and not bringing it out and making it more transparent. Our world needs this from its members for its own self-organizing development.

### Rank:

Organizational theories generally view rank in terms of formal hierarchical and informal organizational rank. Social theorists tend to view rank in terms of class, gender, and race. There are many dimensions of rank, some earned (like educational rank) and others not (like appearance based rank or rank that stems from class connections or health differences) (Arnold Mindell, 1995). Three additional dimensions of rank are:

- Psychological Rank    This is a sense of ease that someone has, even in difficult situations, that comes from knowing that she will be able to engage in a tense scene while also protecting herself. This includes an ability to track and believe in her own experience and remain fluid when under attack.
- Spiritual Rank        Some people have an ability to ground themselves in something that comes from beyond space and time, giving them access to an inner sense of meaning.
- Street Power          This is an ability to be comfortable in a group that gives you intense negative feedback.

Discussions of rank are challenging because rank is so precious and so complex and so threatening. When rank is mentioned, some may hear a ghost in the winds reminding us of those who want to use their own power to down others in an attempt to eliminate rank differences. Deep Democracy supports rank as well as power and leadership. We can support rank by acknowledging it and understanding our own rank so that we can use it better. Among the many factors that can escalate conflict, rank problems lay towards the top of the list. We generally don't know how to use power well, so we use it to get at each other rather than for the benefit of the whole.

Rank is a contextual and relativistic concept because rank doesn't exist in and of itself. For example, people don't inherently have more rank based on gender or race. Rank differences only exist within a sexist or racist context and these particular differences are only meaningful as models of gender or race based oppression. Conflicts often emerge as reactions against inappropriate use of rank. Helping others to become aware of their rank and its effect on others helps them develop an ability to use rank better and also helps individuals develop an ability to not rely on rank so heavily.

Psychological, spiritual, and street power ranks are less central in most communities and organizations than more normally acknowledged hierarchical ranks. Rank has a lot to do with centrality (our ability to gain access to resources or status). Tensions that derive from rank differences effect cognition and our sense of IQ changes. For example, I'm heading a meeting and feel like things are going great. Suddenly someone with higher rank enters the room and my IQ drops twenty points and then I get attacked and it drops to single digits.

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Rank affects our abilities to think, to speak, to stand for change, and it impacts our health (Morin). If there is a rank problem between two people it is because neither of them understands their own rank well enough. If they did, they would be able to understand the tensions, facilitate the conflict, and defuse the conflict. Rank problems can ultimately foster greater understanding and learning for the individuals and the group. For example, if you have a rank problem with someone with less rank than you, you will notice it through her or his feedback. You say something the person doesn't understand or doesn't know much about and he may look down or signal discomfort in some other way. Or if the person you have a rank problem with is above you, you may experience a constant grinding in the background.

If the community or organization has a culture where these problems can be addressed directly, great! This is the best. If not, you can work on yourself to understand what it is about the way that the person uses his rank that is disturbing. Generally, the most disturbing thing about rank is that people don't know they have it. If they knew they had it, they would use it in a more conscious way. A facilitator's challenge is to find a way to help her see that she has it. To do that, you have to love her rank. You have to think, "this person does this and this and this and she can't see it and can't love it yet. That's why it is so irritating." If you can love it in the other person, great. Then you can praise it and congratulate her for it and encourage her to use it more consciously. You have to momentarily be her therapist even though she has more rank. Eldership is learning to love every signal (E. Schupbach, 2004), which also means learning to love it that you hate certain things.

Does it work? There's something shamanic in the role switching involved in noticing my experience as a person with more or less rank, understanding the scene with another, shape-shifting momentarily into being the coach or the facilitator, making an intervention, and then returning to being the person with my relative rank, all the while checking feedback carefully to make sure I'm on track. Is awareness enough to change the world? Is it enough to notice that someone could use his rank better? Or does the world need a little push from time to time?

What does it mean to use your rank consciously? Let's say you have enough rank that one word from you can stop anything. When do you use that word? Before you use your rank battery think, is there another way to go? For example, imagine that a subordinate makes an insensitive remark. A classical approach to dealing with the situation would be to immediately reprimand the subordinate. An alternative approach is to directly support the power and developing leadership behind the remark and suggest that the individual consider the advantages of transforming his or her power into something creative, useful, supportive of the leadership of others, and respectful of rank. It isn't possible that the remark is only negative. There is also something emerging that the relationship and the organization can benefit from.

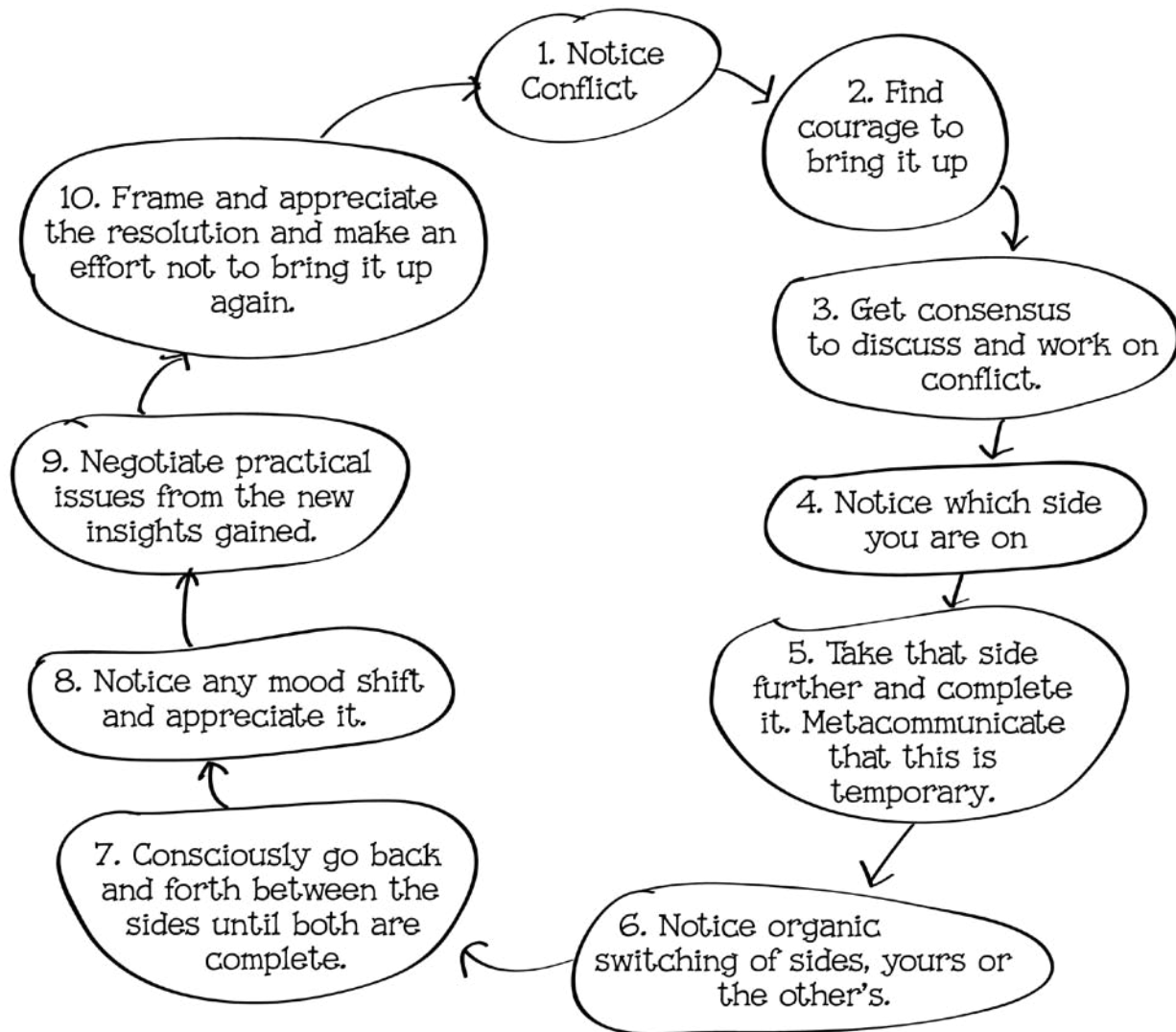
### **Process Oriented Conflict Resolution Cycle:**

The following model of process oriented conflict resolution provides a road map for addressing conflicts and noticing the roles, moods, de-escalations, role switches, and resolutions that emerge. There is a certain linearity inherent in being able to follow a road map. This cycle is generally most effective with conflicts between individuals or small groups of people. Even when the entire road map can't be used, understanding it can help to prevent, manage or control the conflict.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Levels developed by Max and Ellen Schupbach of [www.maxfx.net](http://www.maxfx.net).

### Basic Process Oriented Conflict Resolution Cycle



Cycle can be entered at any point. Notice where you are and begin there and continue until completing all positions.

You might notice someone attacking you... They are at step 4, taking their own side strongly. See if you are on their side or your own and go from there. Continue through till step 10 and then appreciate the other for having noticed the conflict (and why you might not have done that) and having the courage to work on it (and why you you might have had a hard time to do so) and for taking her or his own side strongly and getting the whole thing moving.

(M. Schupbach, Ph.D., 2008)

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Conflict Prevention	The best is to catch the flickering signals of an emergent conflict, intervening early to prevent it from escalating. This is only possible early on, when the tensions have not yet been framed as a conflict.
Conflict Resolution	This includes working through the complete cycle, resolving the consensus reality details of the conflict, clearing up the emotional tensions, and it brings an emotional bond that is not likely to be broken for many years because of what you both went through and the learning you had together.
Conflict Management	If prevention wasn't tried or didn't work and efforts towards resolution also didn't work, which is often the case in a long term relationship with complex history, you can still work on managing the conflict, which can help to limit the tensions and the damage done. Go through the basic process oriented conflict resolution cycle until you get to the spot where the conflict is and invite the person you have a conflict with to join you at that step and believe in non-linearity. Afterwards, people may resist resolution because it will look like they were wrong all the way along.
Conflict Control	When conflict management won't work in an interpersonal conflict (for example, when two people hate each other too much to access their own fluidity and eldership), go through the basic process oriented conflict resolution cycle as a role play. Then go to the other person and say ... if I were you I would see x, y, and z about me and if I were me I would see a, b, and c about you. We have got to accept it and hope this is less painful for all and that we can move on. The conflict is still there but now both sides can feel free of being a victim of it.

If the individuals or group aren't able to complete the cycle and find even a momentary resolution, it may be that additional people are needed to help uncover all of the histories, views, and ghost roles. Larger scale conflicts may best be addressed through large-scale group processes that are open to a more chaotic dynamic.

### Group Process:

Worldwork involves a tradition of deeper personal exploration, inner work, relationship and community work wherein people, community members, and facilitators practice developing their own awareness and fluidity (the ability to *shapeshift* from one role or viewpoint to another) through group processes. This path of learning involves developing an attitude of openness towards other people and their feelings, experience, and opinions as well as towards various roles, dream figures, and states of consciousness. It is what Carlos Castaneda called the path of a warrior (Castaneda, 1972) because it involves developing an openness to a certain kind of symbolic, psychological death or detachment wherein one's own momentary experience, though important, is no longer important in the way that it used to be. There is a kind of identity death that enables an individual to support the views of others, as well as her or his own, in a way that promotes an openness to intimacy, to relatedness, and to change, and which allows the whole community to work together to find momentary solutions to each of the ongoing conflicts with which it is faced.

Some, however, including Johan Galtung (Galtung & Ikeda, 1995, pp. 39-40) (considered to be the father of peace studies, and winner of the Right Livelihood Award (the alternative Nobel prize)) disagree with the efficacy of large group process:

Although they have value of their own, debates involving large numbers of people are less useful. As the French philosopher Henri Bergson (1859-1941) once said, discussion among more

than 25 people is fruitless. The more numerous the participants, the less likely are the exchanges to be sincere. (pp. 39-40)

Mindell (1995), however, found that if he shifted from the goal-oriented thinking of debate and resolution—which is intent on “solving” the conflict and achieving static outcomes at a consensus reality level—in favor of an awareness-based approach intent on understanding the conflict, dynamics, motivations, concerns, signals, feelings, and dreaming of the conflicted parties at a Dreamland and Essence level—then something more interesting, profoundly sincere, and potentially more sustainable happened.

The individuals and groups began to understand themselves better. They were more able to be fluid, momentarily shifting their thinking to better understand the positions of others. They began to understand their own motivations and assumptions and understood the role their identity and self confidence played and their prior experiences in conflict, emotional wounds, and humiliations began to make sense in a new way that helped them to develop a sense of their own power. They began to understand the experiences of the people on the other side of the conflict as well and they began to be able to work together to develop their own ability to facilitate and work on conflict sustainably.

Many spiritual traditions view the maintenance of an inner attitude of love as a panacea but Mindell (1995) found that his awareness-based worldwork skills only worked when he was himself at peace inwardly. Realizing that he was rarely in a normal state of consciousness while in the midst of heated conflict, Arny (1992), however, viewed inner mastery as the *sine qua non*, a starting point for development of awareness-based interventions:

Our challenge is to carefully develop . . . conflict resolution skills so that they reflect [Deep] Democratic principles and are widely applicable.

Worldwork methods must not assume that the responsible facilitators and leaders are always centered. Process facilitators, group instructors, business executives, psychologists, politicians, and teachers are rarely in neutral or normal states of consciousness, even at business meetings. Worldwork must not be limited to inner peace or outer equilibrium but must apply to real situations where there are chaos and attack, transformation and conflict. . . .

The tools of worldwork can only succeed with the attitude of Deep Democracy, that special feeling of belief in the inherent importance of all parts of ourselves and all viewpoints in the world around us. . . . Deep Democracy is our sense that the world is here to help us become our entire selves, and that we are here to help the world become whole. (Mindell, 1992, p. 5)

Development of the feeling sense of Deep Democracy and belief in the importance of supporting a deeper dialogue is not easy. It involves a psychological or spiritual growth process for those of us who were not born gifted with the awareness of a *Bodhisattva*. Deep Democracy is not sufficient in and of itself to deal with world situations. It is not a panacea. And the techniques of awareness-based worldwork facilitation techniques “become meaningless in the hands of those without the necessary inner development, without a sense of Deep Democracy” (Mindell, 1992, p. 5).

Deep Democracy is based upon those perennial psychologies and philosophies that include global, egalitarian approaches to personal problems. It is any form of bodywork that encourages us to understand our feelings and movements as global spirits asking for resolution. And it is that type of dreamwork that realizes that images do not belong only to us personally. Deep Democracy is found in relationship work when we consider not only what we are saying but also what our bodies are doing. Deep Democracy occurs in groups when we notice how group and political conflicts are connected to the spirit of the times. (Mindell, 1992, pp. 5-6)

### Discovering Deep Democracy:

Introducing these concepts into a community, organization, or society is a project, and every beginning project is plagued by conflict that seems to have a teleological purpose. In theory, the purpose is to push away those people that aren't dedicated to helping the organization develop. Those people who really want to do it will hang in, not out of a sense of commitment but because they enjoy learning together and helping the world grow. These conflicts are important because they parallel a lot of organizational and social issues, which means that they point towards the issues that the group will need to deal with first. Introducing these concepts is also difficult because Deep Democracy is not a set of rules about how to run groups. It is a set of tools and principles that can help the group to discover its own path towards noticing and embracing Deep Democracy and an atmosphere of inclusiveness.

As a facilitator, you only have a limited amount of time to make a meaningful difference in a group. Too often facilitators only focus on getting things expressed, which is good, but also tends to recycle old stories and doesn't complete any of the key polarities. Groups that focus on completing experiences, one at a time, tend to work better than groups that attempt to address everything all at once. Suggest that the group focus on one particular polarity. The facilitator's task is to help the group finish one thing. Encourage people to tell you why the two parts can't complete. Create the ghost role that speaks for the marginalized parts. Instead of trying to get the parts together, ask the group why they are conflicted? "How was it in the beginning of the group? Was it already a problem way back?" Ask, "how come you guys can't get along with that ghost role? It is fine that you don't, but explain why." Ask the ghost to say more. Model a new relationship to the ghost role. Sometimes it isn't enough to simply have all sides heard. Discovering the story that lies between them reveals the tensions that kept them apart.

It is also important to focus on and complete any hot spots as they arise before moving on. Hot spots are moments in a group process where there is a strong reaction or a sudden, tense silence. The suddenness and the heat with which these arise indicates that there is a strong ghost that has been unspeakable or hasn't been heard. Caring for and completing hot spots helps to create a sense of safety and faith in the facilitator and in the group's ability to be fluid and inclusive of diverse experiences.

Overall, following signals is the easiest way and the shortest path to helping a group move forward. When you are on, it's like surfing a wave. It's easier than clawing your way to shore through rough seas. With mastery it is almost effortless, although gaining mastery requires practice and courage and trusting that there is a wealth of information that can benefit the group and help the facilitator to develop her awareness, leadership, and eldership.

It may be that tensions can't be resolved because the roles and emerging tendencies need to interact with other parts of the organization as well. Some problems can't be solved within a given group. The forces that organize the group are also fractals, meaning that the process structure that exists at one level in an organization often exists at other levels, structuring the entire organization. Each level will only notice certain patterns as they appear within other levels, but that doesn't mean that they don't exist within each level or that they can't be addressed within any given level. Those roles that lay outside of the group are ghosts. Introduce them as roles so the group can interact with them and complete the story.

This doesn't mean that everything can be completed within a given group, community, or organization. —Groups aren't human and aren't meant to have human responses. It's a force field. If you deviate too much the dominant group will cut you out to protect its own integrity. Go for it anyway and check feedback carefully.

### Key terms:

Consensus Reality	This is the level of our normal daily experience. Consensus reality includes experiences that we tend to agree upon and includes focus on rules, structure, and objectively measurable outcomes and profit. We assume that we can control events.
Deep Democracy	Deep Democracy is an attitude that focuses on the awareness of voices that are both central and marginal.
Dreamland	Dreamland experiences are subjective and not measurable and not in our control. They include team work and relationship issues, experiences of rank differences, somatic experiences, and our assumptions about each other.
Eldership	A role and a metaskill: An ability to care for others and the whole system simultaneously that includes an awareness of which role you are in, a feeling connection with others, and an ability to demonstrate fluidity.
Emergent Leadership	This is an initial attempt to develop or express leadership, which is experienced in momentary signals of power, which—because they are not yet understood and may not be initially well directed—are often seen as difficulties, confusion, or a lack of respect for authority.
Entanglement	The symmetrical relationship between polar roles that led people towards a fluid dance of rotational symmetry.
Facilitator Function	A role that is ontologically built-in to all groups that provides a natural tendency towards, observation, facilitation, and emergence of awareness within the group.
Field	A group of signals, tensions, roles, and tendencies. An emotional atmosphere or a felt sense of a particular shared acausal consciousness.
First Training	Developing mastery in noticing and tracking signals, forming structural hypotheses from the patterns, creating interventions from these, and carefully noting the feedback from the group; which will either confirm the hypothesis or suggest another direction.
Fluidity	An ability to consciously shift between different roles and to avoid being grabbed by a role.
Ghost Role	A strong unoccupied role in a field that effects the group's dynamics but can't yet be directly interacted with.
Hot Spot	A hot spot is a moment in a group process where there is a strong reaction.
Polarity	Two opposing roles.
Process	Process is defined as the constant flow of information, which we experience through signals, body symptoms, relationship experiences, and other channels of information flow.
Process Structure	The patterns in verbal and nonverbal communications, movement, roles, emotional queues, and somatic experiences and the symmetry between the signals, their informational patterns, the underlying processes, and the way they manifest in terms of individual behavior and group dynamics.
Psychological Rank	This is a sense of ease that someone has even in difficult situations that comes from knowing that she or he will be able to engage in a tense scene while also protecting herself. This includes an ability to track and believe in your own experience, stay awake, and remain fluid when under attack.
Rotational Symmetry	The complex dance of various roles and states of consciousness in a fluid system.

# Process Mind

## Deep Democracy Facilitation

Second Training	Developing mastery in following something mysterious and intimate, even when it can't be described by signals and structural patterns. It is ineffable but leads to the core of a group's self organizing tendency.
Sentient Essence	The sentient level is something that is sometimes barely noticeable, like an atmosphere or the most deeply held values that we can't quite articulate. It is an indescribable somehow sentient essence like a feeling, a tension, a joy.
Spiritual Rank	Some people have an ability to ground themselves in something that comes from beyond space and time, giving them access to an inner sense of meaning.
Street Power	This is an ability to be comfortable in a group that gives you intense negative feedback.
Timespirit	Roles that change with time, sometimes quite rapidly, and often move from one individual or group to another.

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