



NEWSLETTER 016 · MAR 2011

## ACT OUT NEWS

**CREATIVITY WORKSHOPS** – I have been asked to run another workshop!! The truth is that there have been many breakthroughs from doing this work!!!

**Time:** SUNDAY MAY 15 – all day 10:00 to 5:00

**Cost:** \$120 (BYO lunch – tea/coffee/snack provided)

**Venue:** To be advised



Deckchair Theatre presents

**The Modern International Dead** by Damien Millar

Mar 17 – Apr 1

**Touching, funny, biting** – a great piece of theatre - I enjoyed it very much. Don't miss it!! Call 1300 31 41 51

## Much more than icebreakers!

A few weeks ago in Geraldton, WA, a group of community service providers came together for training on how to use Boal tools and techniques to enhance their work practices with their clients.

Over two days we explored a range of activities and their relevance to the work they do. Here are three of them:

**“The Sun Always Shines On Anyone Who...”** This is a circle game, like musical chairs, that serves as a ‘getting to know you’ activity. Participants sit in a circle with one person standing in the middle. He or she says the above sentence and completes it with something that is true about him or her.

For example, ‘the sun always shines on anyone who...has been to Fremantle... or has a tattoo or...is wearing black underwear!’ When those seated around hear something that is true about them they have to get up and quickly change chairs before the person in the middle can take a seat and leave someone else standing in the middle!



While it may seem like a simple and childish activity, this has often served to generate a lot of warmth and unity, as well as information about a group. It always brings people closer together and is a gentle way to encourage people to participate in a group. It can also reveal more hidden aspects of participants that can be important in the transformative process.

**Blind Cars** This is a trust exercise that can be done in pairs and then also in groups of four. The pair stands one person in front of the other facing the same direction. The back person is the ‘driver’ and the front person is the ‘car’. The driving commands are all given by touch. Touching the centre of the back indicates going forward, the right shoulder turning right, the left shoulder turning left and the back of the head is reverse.

The trust, of course, comes when the ‘car’ has to close his or her eyes! All they have as direction are the touch signals given by the ‘driver’. It is an exercise aimed at highlighting the way we communicate while at the same time generating a sensory alternative which triggers the right brain. It is a wonderful springboard for creative and holistic examinations of leadership, communication, teamwork, trust and power.



**Slow Walk ETC** – This is a series of exercises that aim to explore alternative ways of using our bodies by making changes to the way we walk; in other words changing the familiar way we do something to an unfamiliar way.

One very popular version is the **slow walk race**, which is a race where the last person to get to the finish line wins! The rules are that the body must always be in motion with one foot always off the ground as if running but in slow motion. Other variations include the **three legged race**, where in pairs A & B wrap one arm around each other and intertwine their inside legs and race. This means the leading ‘leg’ has to move the partner’s body as if it were her own leg. **Leaning against each other**, the pair leans against each other trying to keep their feet as far away from their bodies as possible while moving forward. Races can also be held by having participants **walk as different animals**: crabs (sideways on all fours), monkey (hands always touching ground), elephant (on all fours with right foot and left hand at the same time, and left foot and right hand at the same time). These warm ups help participants explore their bodies, break the ice and spark new connections in their brains that lead to more creative ways of accessing greater learning and problem solving. **Oh...and they are fun!**



# Make a U-turn in Leadership

According to **Otto Scharmer** the essence of leadership today is the ability to facilitate a shift from the current model of operating from past experience to operating from 'a future space of possibility'.

His social technology for leadership, **Theory U**, premises that in order for there to be transformation we need to access, understand and be comfortable with the quality of leadership that is unseen.

In other words, not the processes or the actions but their origin; the **inner** place from where these originate.

This is precisely the aim of the creative techniques employed at Act Out to work with groups. They aim at stirring up what is underneath the actions – what inspires them; what are the fears and the desires that drive all our actions; or prevent desired actions?

Scharmer invites participants of his workshops to enter into a dialogue with each other about the issues they want to tackle. But to go beyond the usual polite, disconnected or inauthentic listening; past the tough-talking, debating, competitive, divisive listening; even past the more empathic inquiring listening to a **generative** listening. This is a listening that enables individuals to 'operate from the highest future possibility that is emerging'.

It is not an easy proposition. Looking at our inner motivations is hard enough, but to do this collectively is even tougher. His Theory U delineates seven leadership competencies essential for transformative leadership:

1. **Holding the Space:** A leader invites others into a space the she or he holds and the key to 'holding' is listening; a deep, attentive listening.

'Listening to what life calls you to do', not only listening to oneself and to others, but also to what becomes apparent through listening to the collective.

2. **Observing:** This requires ignoring the **voice of judgment** which blocks access to our minds and therefore our creativity.

3. **Sensing:** This requires leaders to connect with the heart often by ignoring the **voice of cynicism**. This voice prevents us from being present to our vulnerability and authenticity and from acting from an innate knowledge rather than a cognitive knowledge.

4. **Presencing:** this is a capacity to connect to our deepest source or will and not listening to the **voice of fear** which blocks our access to being willing to step into the unknown and let go of the past ways of acting.

5. **Crystallizing:** This is when a leader accesses the power of intention of a small group of committed key people. This group, through its intention and actions creates an energy field that attracts the necessary elements for the project to take place. This creates momentum until it is past the tipping point.

6. **Prototyping:** This is leadership capacity which calls for integration of the head, heart and body; calls for action. It is a difficult step during which leaders will become accosted by the usual ways of being: reactivity, endless analysis and what he technically refers to as 'blah blah blah'.

7. **Performing:** This is the last step in the layers and it involves acting and listening constantly from a space that moves in and out of the self; it is through you that the action happens but its origin is beyond the self.

This may all sound like it's easier said than done – it is! Much easier; but in his inspiring book, Scharmer and his colleagues, describe moments that have transcended great obstacles.

From the transformation of Oxfam GB's African HIV/AIDS program, to huge systemic changes in doctor-patient relationships by the German Health Care Ministry to the extraordinary work done by the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This is the kind of leadership transformation we aim to create at Act Out.

***"We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them."***

**Albert Einstein**



**Act Out – Theatre for Transformation**

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