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COMPOSITE ANALYSIS and PROPOSED ACTIONS ON THE ANALYSIS



This Composite Analysis was developed by Irving Stubbs, the TLDM Dialogue Project Director and Farheen Naveed, the TLDM Dialogue Project Associate.¹ It combines our Force Field Analysis Survey,² our book, *Dialogue: A Way to Live*,³ our lecture/dialogue, “The Awesome Benefits of Transformational Dialogue,”⁴ and additional thoughts and suggestions from other sources.

Our opinion survey on the goal to expand the practice of dialogue, includes responses from educators, psychologists, religious leaders, social workers and business leaders among others from five nations. The responses from different national cultures reveal that cultures influence the receptivity for dialogue. In some cultures, there is little knowledge of dialogue and therefore little receptivity. Some cultures discourage dialogue. There are cultures in which there are no barriers to the practice of dialogue. We know of no nation in which dialogue is an important part of its culture.

This is the definition of dialogue included in the survey. *We are in a dialogue environment when we listen for what is meant and respond empathetically to what we hear, when we ask questions to clarify and draw out the thinking of others, when we resist being defensive, when we acknowledge that on which we disagree but seek to find that on which we do agree, when we try to discover more than to persuade, when we find ourselves changing our views or positions in light of what we are discovering.*

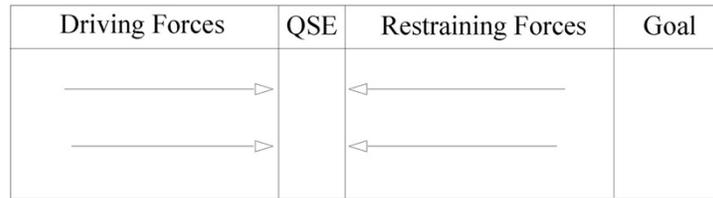
¹ Their profiles are at the end of this document

² Includes 40 responses (30% response).

³ Irving R. Stubbs, author

⁴ Lecture video link available on <https://dialogue4us.com>.

The survey employed Kurt Lewin’s change model outlined below.



In this model, countervailing forces squeeze to a “quasi-stationary equilibrium” (QSE), a status-quo, that can be thought of as a conceptual spring that gets tighter as the forces impinge. Change toward the goal requires increased driving forces to overpower the restraining forces and/or thawing the restraining forces to allow the driving forces to make progress toward the goal.

This composite identifies driving forces that, without restraints, would likely achieve the goal. It also identifies restraining forces that impede the achievement of the goal. This document includes a composite analysis and a framework of action proposals to reduce the restraining forces to allow those driving forces to have the impact for which they have the potential and the preamble of a proposal to sustain the practice of dialogue.

DRIVING FORCES

From the book (multiple sources):

- Socrates was happy to be refuted by inquiry because in that challenge to his previous views, he was relieved of the burden of false opinion.
- Inquiry helps to break up the hard, rocky soil of our personalities so that the soil becomes permeable, allowing the seed of spiritual realization to take root and blossom more fully.
- The passion fueled by dialogue becomes contagious as we generate fields of influence that spawn creative possibilities.
- “In [Martin] Buber's philosophy, life itself is a form of meeting and dialogue is the ‘ridge’ on which we meet. In dialogue, we penetrate behind the polite superficialities and defenses in which we habitually armor ourselves. We listen and respond to one another with an authenticity that forges a bond between us.” (Daniel Yankelovich)
- “Being open to meeting someone different from yourself and taking part in a collision of ideas is what is dear to me in being human.” (Carole Harris)
- Political philosopher, Cass Sunstein, feels that for a democracy to remain robust, we need constantly to bump into people with colliding perspectives and points of view.

- It requires the courage to affirm our best nature, to actualize our potential, and to contribute to a society in which human energy can be put to constructive purposes.
- In his newsletter, Dan Schawbel shared an interview with professor and author Brené Brown whose TED talk, “The Power of Vulnerability,” is one of the top five most-viewed TED talks in the world. Schawbel asked Brown why we have a crisis of disconnection in our society. The root cause of this disconnection, said Brown, is our loss of a sense of true belonging that leads us to retreat to our bunkers. To change this, we must allow ourselves to be vulnerable, uncomfortable, and intentionally to be with people who are different from us.
- Jane Vella: “We have been brought up to accept hierarchy, certainty, cause-and-effect relationships, either-or thinking, and a universe that works as a machine—in short, mechanistic thinking.” Vella suggests that it is a shock for most of us to consider a universe composed of energy that is patterned and spontaneous, the certainty of uncertainty, both/and thinking, and the connectedness of everything. “This is quantum thinking.”
- Dialogue enhances sustainable relationships.
- Peter Senge introduced the business world to dialogue in *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. He said that we learn when we suspend assumptions and think together. Our sensitivity becomes a fine net able to gather subtle meanings.

From the survey:⁵ (The list includes redundancies that add nuances.)

Forces that apply to the person practicing transformational dialogue:

- When dialogue takes hold and is sustained long enough for internalization it becomes an adventure, a source of energy and joy
- Increases empathy
- Helps build interpersonal relationships and reduce stress
- Helps to better understand one another that can reduce the "barriers" we erect between ourselves and those we see as "other"
- Helps participants reach new insights, co-creativity, and ultimately solve problems with much greater depth
- Provides peace within, with others, and with God
- Generates confidence and mutual respect
- Enhances our emotional intelligence

⁵ Some forces that will be apparent were identified by those in nations in which dialogue would be challenged.

- Helps in therapy groups to identify in-depth details of the patient and to reduce resistance of patients to share personal issues
- In one sense it is the best way to come unto and become a new being in Christ Jesus
- Those that practice it, generally enjoy a more complete (Holy) life
- The experience of satisfaction at the opening of one's mind to a new reality is rewarding
- It strengthens courage to speak and share
- Enhances insight
- Helps to build character - enables the development of trust and honesty
- Helps to cure the disease of loneliness that has been identified as a major problem in today's society
- Human minds are the most powerful device in this world and the most complicated. Dialogue is the un-wiring mechanism of this complex device

Forces that apply to relationships and society:

- Enables people to feel they are in a “safe” and non-judgmental space that allows diverse opinions, and freedom to express opinions that might run counter to the majority
- Supports principle of freedom of speech
- Produces synergy
- Upholds the principal that clarity is more important than agreement
- Helps to see the bigger picture, and to create wisdom in the counsel of many
- It is like a catalyst that helps us grow as a society
- Enables servant leadership
- Dialogue is a way of exploring the roots of the many crises faced by society today
- Builds communities of mutual trust and interests
- Rather than “I” it brings us to “We”
- Energizes worldviews based on *shalom* including peace, harmony, wholeness, justice, and joy
- Provides foundation for long term norms to exchange different ideas and settle conflicts
- Transforms ideas to realities and empowers by shaping and converting stone-age to tech-age
- As dialogue slows down normal communication, there is an inclination to dig deeper
- Just imagine what could be accomplished if political foes could discuss options and compromise without all the grandstanding and rhetoric, which simply fuels the general populations' behaviors
- Could stem the tide of individual acts of violence often caused by frustration, isolation, and mental illness gone un-noticed/un-treated
- Encourages participants to be less likely to accept extremist leaders
- Dialogue is the only way to bring peace in the world

From the lecture:

- Connects us as persons more than personages
- Demonstrates love
- Means by which God's Spirit opens us to liberating TRUTH
- Opens closed systems
- Means to tacit knowledge
- Stretches our levels of consciousness
- Stimulates a larger intelligence with which to deal with heavy society issues
- Bridges gaps
- Bonds for harmony
- Builds things

RESTRAINING FORCES

As individuals:

- The meaning and benefits of dialogue are not clearly understood
- The lack of empathy when we are unable to put ourselves in others' shoes to understand their problems as we only concern about how we feel and our own issues does not open dialogue environment for people
- Lack of appreciation of the value of growing in the wholeness that dialogue brings
- Everyone is in a rush. Many would rather text than engage in an open dialogue
- One responders' list includes a pithy summary: Perceptions, Unforgiveness, Revenge, Prejudice, Ego, Childhood paradigms, Religion, Stubbornness, Pessimism, Lack of knowledge, Focusing on differences instead of similarities, Social status, Indifference
- Self-centered and egoistic mental approach, superior complexity, non-realization of gravity and seriousness of issues, stubborn attitude, relying on use of force and resources, aggression, exploitation of weak party, putting conditions (dos and don'ts) before dialogue, etc.
- Preoccupation with differences instead of similarities
- Dialogues are avoided by the party who is weak in evidence that support their point of view. They are vulnerable to be persuaded
- Accepting the opinion of others without analysis can prevent us from making our own decisions and speaking our own voice
- Takes active listening for which few have the skills or experience
- Listening for meaning requires focus and full attention. There is a limited strategic allocation of attention available for dialogue

- Many do not care to hear or listen to or read views/ideas that do not support their own positions. There is a broad prevalence of Confirmation Bias
- Fear that her/his opinion might get rejected. Such individuals either resort to submission or aggression to express their opinion
- Fear that we may say something that is deemed insensitive, thus creating division and stress. We are inclined to avoid conflict
- Not ready yet to give up the practice of their ancestors, even when they are found to be wrong
- Students being bullied by classmates because they are "different." There is another saying, "you go along to get along. Let's not rock the boat "
- Efforts to cover our shame by being "right"/righteous inevitably fail, at which point we either disengage, ensconce in our lies, and invite the spirit of division and enmity
- Considering change in thinking or acting means something must die, few are willing to embrace that
- It is difficult to suspend judgment
- Lack of respect
- Many do not have a purpose of life and are stuck with generating surplus product that leads to tiredness, exhaustion and boredom which in turn leads to impatience
- Lack of readiness to change

In the contextual environment:

- Society has become polarized politically, religiously, economically, socially
- Society, specially 3rd world, is not sensitized how to have dialogue, how to hear the difference of opinions and still be friends
- Dialogue is avoided by some when they think it will weaken their power or authority
- Opportunist politicians encourage opinion creators and fund and encourage them for creating conflicts which makes their political survival for long run
- Controlling the opinion of the masses and regulating opinions discourages the practice of dialogue in a society/institution
- Dialogue among nations inhibited by imposition by powerful countries over smaller countries, hidden agendas, and absence of effective mediators
- Physical distance, language differences, accents, cultural differences, can restrain dialogue
- Ignoring cultural differences during conversation may lead to major restraint
- Though the religions always encourage to be open, seek the truth, be kind towards others opinions, so called religious leaders create unwanted barriers and push their followers to confine themselves in a closed environment that negate others thoughts and opinions

- In ethnic, religious, economic, social, and political contexts there is an erosion of trust
- In some societies, the practice of dialogue is kept as a last resort and more violent means are adopted as first response to any provocation. This practice brings the society at risk to embrace violent measures into their cultures and restrain the practice of dialogue
- Organizations that promote dialogue tend to limit their focus and customize their structures for dialogue
- Very small % of leaders motivated to reinforce a sustained practice of dialogue
- In some areas of the world, women are not allowed to initiate dialogue to express their grievances to their husbands and are encouraged to remain silent
- Lack the information, credible data or knowledge to participate in dialogue
- Absence of designated places for dialogues
- Family system is changing – now more people live in isolation and call it privacy. The more people are living in individual units the more difficult it is for them to dialogue and connect with each other.
- Setting up pre-conditions
- Focus on short term goals
- Setting up of goals prior to the dialogue

ACTION PROPOSALS

To reduce the restraining forces:

- A. Leadership must be found to use its commitment and influence to stretch the practice of dialogue.
- B. Public relations' initiatives must be taken to convey the nature and benefits of practicing dialogue and to make a broader public aware of how and where to gain the skills for practicing dialogue.
- C. Dialogue training tools must be developed.
- D. An umbrella must be provided for dialogue organizations to connect and synergize.
- E. A means must be found to encourage and support education systems to include dialogue in their curriculum.
- F. A means must be found to encourage and support initiatives to use dialogue to deal with "heavy" societal issues.
- G. A means must be found to offer support for the practice of dialogue in receptive international cultures.
- H. The public must be made aware of successful applications of dialogue.
- I. A means must be found to sustain support for the practice of dialogue.

Chapter 9 of our book points to the need for continuity of support for the practice of dialogue.

Examples of Continuity:

The total quality movement (TQM) that sparked the economic revolution in Japan following WWII spread throughout the world. It had many champions and took a variety of forms. Statistical measuring and commitment to continuous improvement augmented the performance of many enterprises. TQM's varied applications generated better products, services, and profit, where applied. There is abundant evidence that the movement permeated institutions and motivated people. Reasons for this continuity included competition, profit, leadership, and dialogue.

Religion may be the best example of continuity. From our beginnings as human beings, we have been aware that there is a force that is manifested in a spirit. That spirit is often manifested in motivating leaders as well as institutions. It is beyond us, yet it guides and empowers us to live with principles that sustain and enrich our lives. The history of religion has many bumpy chapters including witch-hunts, persecutions, and even wars. However, continuity has persisted based on the needs met and the benefits discovered in a faithful relationship to a transcendent and ultimate reality.

Bill Wilson and Bob Smith founded Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) in 1935. Its purpose is to help its members stay sober and to help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety. AA's 12-step program has rescued and sustained millions across the world. According to the AA website, these steps are principles, spiritual in nature, which if practiced as a way of life, can expel the obsession to drink and enable the sufferer to become happily and usefully whole. The site adds that AA is nonprofessional, self-supporting, multiracial, apolitical, and available almost everywhere. "Membership is open to anyone who wants to do something about his or her drinking problem."

AA, in answering the need for recovery from alcoholism, is probably the most successful recovery program in the world. AA seems not to be an institution with a bureaucratic hierarchical structure, and its members are anonymous. Members are understood, listened to, encouraged, challenged, supported, and loved. This feels like transformational dialogue.

Transformational dialogue is a human energizer and a means to better ends. However, we have been reminded by advocates who were passionate about dialogue, who, in spite of that passion, did not find the response, for which they hoped. What hope can we have for transformational dialogue's continuity and impact?

Philanthropic foundations do a lot of good. We are blessed with those who, having attained great wealth, choose to use that wealth to make things better for all of us. A philanthropic foundation may be the best option for the continuity, penetration, and impact of transformational dialogue.

Posted on <https://dialogue4us.com>. is a proposal for sustained support. This website also includes Survey Anecdotes, a link to our lecture/dialogue and more about the TLDM Dialogue Project.

PROJECT LEADERS

Irving Stubbs is a Presbyterian minister with degrees from Davidson College and Union Theological Seminary in New York. After 4 pastorates, he co-directed an urban ministry in Richmond, VA after which, for more than 30 years, he consulted with organizations in North America, Europe and Asia.

Stubbs is the author and co-author of numerous articles and several books including *Dialogue: A Way to Live*. He is President Emeritus of TLDM, The Living Dialog Ministries, the sponsor of the Dialogue Project for which he is the Director.

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She is a founding Director of Drug Free Pakistan Foundation and the chairperson of Pakistan Youth Congress. She is the regional trainer with the Colombo Plan International Center for Education and Certification of Addiction Professionals.