The Art Of Administrating

A Handbook for Waldorf Schools

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Chapter 9

WORKING TOGETHER

When adults come together in a sustained working relationship there is a constant flow of dialogue swinging between the extremes of affirmation, and conflict. This chapter was written to address those adults choosing to work together out of an inner connection and commitment to Anthroposophy, most specifically in, but not restricted to, Waldorf Schools. In most Waldorf Schools, a College of Teachers assumes the shared responsibility for the destiny of the school as well as the interpersonal relationship between the adults who staff the school.

The unique role of a College as a meditative group has been addressed in a previous chapter. However, any group of adults might benefit from an examination of the nature of conflict, how to recognize it, how to deal with it, and how to transform it.

Conflict is an integral and important part of all social interactions, whether this be within a group or between individuals. Every issue discussed has its polarity, and a healthy Waldorf School will learn how to use polarity in its faculty discussions to form the tripartite, or third viewpoint, to which all may recognize

with consensus. Sometimes, however, the tripartite is not recognized and the polarity remains. This can result in conflict. We may then experience that conflict finds its way into discussions with particular intensity and persistence!

In working with conflict, and trying to resolve it, we must be clear that there are no rules, models or easy steps to follow. Each situation is unique and demands our full attention and awareness so that we may come to an appropriate response. We are asked to create anew from our inner resources rather than what may be prescribed by social norm or authority. Often we may not know if our actions and solutions are correct for a given situation until we have tried, even experimentally, and then consciously evaluated the results.

New soul/spiritual capacities are slowly and tentatively surfacing in humanity! We may already experience that a colleague or school community member can offer a particular insight or intuition, or can exercise a particular social skill that brings healing to a situation. Lets stay awake to what others can bring. We must also learn to recognize and trust our own intuitions and perceptions, and have the courage to act out of them.

This chapter explores aspects of the nature of conflict and the role it plays within the structure and development of social life. We will examine our own relationship to conflict (including a few words on conflict and karma) and offer possible guidelines and techniques on working with conflict. We will conclude by describing some exercises that schools can employ to help work with conflict.

The Nature of Conflict:

With a couple of possible exceptions, the nature of conflicts in a Waldorf school is essentially similar to what we might find in other organizations. We are living in a necessary phase of our ego development in which the strongest anti-social forces are at work. Name a shortcoming and I can find its echo living in my own being! We can all elaborate on our own countless human qualities which stand in the way of a healthy social life: martyrdom, all kinds of fears and phobias, jealousies, prejudice, dogmatism, want for power and influence — to name a few. We also have the basic human needs to be included, accepted, liked and recognized by others. These qualities are alive and well in most of us and therefore in our communities.

Rudolf Steiner pointed out that sympathy can be just as destructive as antipathy.[1] A sympathetic inclination toward a person can be blinding in recognizing what may be incorrect or even immoral in what was said or done. Seeking to only affiliate with colleagues with whom we are sympathetically inclined, results in cliques and power blocks which exacerbates conflict.

It is interesting to note that some conflicts have an icy-cold, below the surface, quality. These conflicts tend to run over a long period of time and often find no resolution at all. They are unspoken, invisible, but ever-present and could be described as cancerous in nature. Other types of conflicts explode in the heat of battle, often short-lived, but tend to recur in definite patterns. (To familiarize yourself with your relationship to conflict, make a self-assessment of what type of conflict you tend to "favor", and what type of conflict seems to come to you from others.)

The nature of conflicts has an added dimension in Waldorf schools. We have been entrusted with the spiritual content and life-renewing stream of Anthroposophy. This connection has given us access to a tremendous amount of knowledge about the spiritual world, human beings and their inner development, the two-fold nature of evil, temperaments, etc. To the extent that we allow this content of Anthroposophy to be more assimilated by our intellect and less by our soul capacities of Feeling and Will-life, it has the potential of remaining a mere body of information. As such, it can be used to justify all kind of opinions and judgements against our fellow human beings, with the net result that it may gain us a position of power or superiority over them.

We need to mention these things not just to wallow in the negative qualities of man, but clearly to acknowledge that they are operative in conflict situations. If we hope to understand and work with conflict in a conscious way in our schools, it is a that we are awake to these ever-present antisocial forces. Standing fully within the age of the Consciousness Soul requires this awareness of us. On the one hand we must never lose sight of the fact that each human

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[1] Rudolf Steiner, **The Challenge of The Times,** Anthroposophic Press., NY, 1941, pages 119-150.

being is endowed with a higher Self accompanied by benevolent spiritual beings who continuously guide him. However, on the other hand, we all have a strong affinity to these antisocial forces and beings who seek to impair our evolution. If we are not awake, or if we try to ignore or deny the existence of these forces, then we make ourselves more vulnerable to their influence!

The weaknesses of the Waldorf movement, are also its strengths! Rudolf Steiner was very deliberate in his intention to not have a headmaster or head-mistress, or other hierarchical structures and orthodox social norms that people can fall-back on. This fact brings with it a decision-making process that can be much more laborious than otherwise might be the case, and that human differences of opinion and conflict will more easily come to the surface. This, in turn, places a much greater responsibility on all of us to create social structures appropriate to our time and to our geographic and cultural background.

The following are some observations we can make about the psychology of conflict:

- The chance for a conflict to escalate is greater when we ignore or avoid the conflict.

- The more we are emotionally or materially dependent on another person(s), the greater the chance for conflict. In other words, conflict usually occurs within the context of interdependency.

- Two people in conflict often share those negative character traits which they perceive and then criticize in the other.

- Conflicts have their source in our feeling-life and can only be driven and escalated by means of these feelings of hatred, fear and doubt. Pure concepts and thinking cannot create conflict. In the experience of the conflict, intellectual arguments are often thinly disguised emotions.

- Of all emotions, fears of the unknown and loss of control, are possibly the most potent in creating and maintaining conflict.

Exercise: When you are in strong conflict with another person, find a quiet time during the day where you identify the main qualities he/she possesses that bring you into conflict with that person. Then, in an honest self-evaluation, assess what you have in common with that person.

Purpose: A greater understanding of yourself and the other, which will lead to greater acceptance of yourself and seeing, again, the humanity in the other.

The Role Of Conflict:

At the end of Scene Ten of the Mystery Play, **The Soul's Awakening** by Rudolf Steiner, we find the dialogue between Lucifer and Benedictus (Johannes' spiritual teacher and guide) concerning who shall have dominion over Johannes's soul — Lucifer or Johannes himself?

> Benedictus: He will admire you but will not succumb to you.
> Lucifer: I mean to fight.
> Benedictus: And, fighting serve the gods.[2.]

This dialogue may serve as an indication about the role of evil in life. While we should be careful not to automatically equate conflict with evil, conflict certainly has its origin in the dark and shadow sides of man. And, as in the case of evil, it plays an essential and, therefore, a potentially positive role in our own development and that of our institutions. It is often out of conflict, chaos or doubt that new impulses can enter our social creations.

In the unfolding of a meeting, all of us can confirm the experience that after a difficult moment – going through "the eye of the needle" by means of a confrontation – the meeting can reach a deeper level of significance. Once that happens, everyone knows it and is inspired by it. The meeting becomes more efficient without losing the necessary depth of deliberation. The analogy of a thunder storm comes to mind, in which the flashes of lightning, the rolling of thunder, the threatening clouds and the driving rain will send us to seek shelter. Then,

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[2.] Rudolf Steiner, **The Soul's Awakening**, G.P. Putnam & Sons, NY, 1920, page 266.

how fresh and light the world feels afterwards – something has been cleansed and renewed!

To recognize, allow for, and process the expression of conflict and differences among members of a group has many benefits. It provides a healthy diversity which will energize all members of a group. It allows for much greater individual and group learning and growth. A faculty, board or committee will gain greater flexibility and adaptability to meet the ever increasing demands placed on a Waldorf school, the changing needs of the children, curriculum, community life, parent expectations and other social/spiritual questions. Through our differences a more meaningful unity and connection can arise – a sense of purpose. Individual contributions, pertaining to the life and performance of the group, are recognized as being essential to the success of the whole group.

Without conflicts we would fall into blissful but dulling sleep. Among other things, conflict awakens us – it calls us to consciousness! What holds true for us as individuals, holds true for groups and entire organizations, as well.

If conflict awakens us, we may extrapolate that the more conscious we are as human beings, the less life's circumstances are truly **experienced** as conflicts. In other words, we still recognize the difficulties in life but they are experienced as opportunities and gifts. As a life-long process, we slowly gain a different inner relationship to what we used to call conflict.

> The gloom of the world is but a shadow.
> Behind it, yet within reach, is joy.
> There is radiance and glory in the darkness.
> Could we but see; and to see, we have only to look.
> I beseech you to look!
>
> Life is so generous a giver, but we,
> Judging its gifts by their outer covering,
> Cast them away as ugly or heavy or hard.
> Remove the covering and you find beneath it
> A living splendor, woven of love, by wisdom, with power.
>
> Welcome it, grasp it, and you touch
> The angel's hand that brings it to you.
> Everything we call a trial, a sorrow, a duty,
> Believe me, that angel's hand is there;
> That gift is there, and the wonder of an overshadowing presence.

Our joys too: be not content with them as joys.
They, too, conceal diviner gifts.

Fra Giovanni (1386-1456)[3.]

Conflict and Karma:

Living with thoughts about karma and reincarnation may strengthen the main ingredient in all conflict resolution – our inner development!

When considering questions of self-development, karma and social life, we must first learn to live with apparent contradictions. On the one hand, conflict has a role to play in our interpersonal interactions; to be a modern human being means that we will meet conflict as individuals strive for consciousness – we must learn to accept it and embrace it. Neither reject nor fear conflict. We must learn to see and trust that everything that comes to us in due course has a purpose designed to further our individual and social development.

On the other hand, it is very important that we must never seek conflict or, even worse, create conflict on purpose! We must ask ourselves, "How can I best **express** myself?" We must also ask ourselves, "How do I best **hear** the concerns of others?"

Perhaps the central contribution by Rudolf Steiner to the spiritual legacy of mankind is his spiritual research into the questions of karma and reincarnation. Never before has any person articulated this spiritual reality so thoroughly and explicitly. From his works we can gain important insights that can shed a unique light on our topic.

Most events and people whom we meet in life, and the general circumstances in which we find ourselves, are a result of our own deeds and experiences in past incarnations. We know this to be called individual karma. One of the implications of this insight is the fact that the difficulties we encounter in other people and events do not find their cause in these people or events but, ultimately, in ourselves. When we blame our problems and conflicts on the people or circumstances (accidents, for instance), we point in the wrong direction. This is somewhat analogous to a young child who, after running into a chair, blames the chair for his pain.

[3.] Notes taken from a handout from the Waldorf Institute, Spring Valley, NY

We often hear ourselves say, "If only this person or this particular conflict were not part of our school, the school would be so much healthier and we could proceed with our tasks." There is a tendency in us to want to surgically remove a problem and to view it as extraneous to the flow of life rather than embrace it. I believe it is an illusion to think that the 'other person' is the problem. The events and people in our lives are brought to us by spiritual beings who work in close conjunction with our higher self. How often does it happen that we encounter the same patterns and the same kind of people and conflicts? We are drawn like a magnet to those people who seem to present us with our issues and dilemmas. These people are mere vehicles for our growth and development on earth. As the child learns to orient himself spatially, congruent to his awareness of the separation of material objects and his own body, we need to orient ourselves in karmic laws. One of these laws tells us that all events coming toward us from without, are intimately connected with our ego identity and its individual phase of development.

This consciousness needs to grow into a strong inner conviction that recognizes our inner relationship to the difficulties that come our way. As Johannes Tautz phrases it, "We ourselves have sought these difficulties. Man fashions his own destiny. The difficulties that he encounters are his own 'I' mirroring itself in his surroundings, in his social environments." [4]

Considering the unfolding of our destinies, we live within an amazing twofold dynamic. On one hand is the pole of our daily waking consciousness. The world of the senses enter our consciousness and we are aware of how we think and feel about ourselves and others. In response we make decisions about, and we have preferences for, career, people, lifestyle, goals and values, etc. On the other hand of the pole is our will-life that leads us through our limbs to events and people without our conscious participation and choosing.

As an exercise, we need to prepare ourselves so that when a person brings us a conflict, our inner reaction will be of great and genuine interest in that

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[4] Johannes Tautz. lecture in Spring Valley, April 9, 1982, notes of David Mitchell

human being. Can we later recall all the details of that moment in the day; the room in which the conflict took place, the people present, colors, dress, mood, the seating arrangement and sequence of events? We must paint a picture before our soul of everything that was part of that moment. This effort allows us to cultivate an appreciation for the mystery of life and, according to Rudolf Steiner, orient ourselves toward a better understanding of our personal karma.[5.]

What often is called "bad" or "old" karma between two people is, I think, a misunderstanding. Karma leads us to the moment of the encounter, then choices or new possibilities enter and weave into the relationship together with what is "given" and predetermined. To inwardly turn one's back from a long-standing conflict with another human being by judging this conflict as being "bad" karma, is a subtle form of abdicating one's responsibility toward the present reality of the relationship. I believe that personal karma is not only designed to have us repay old "debt", but has within it fertile seeds for future possibilities and the call to develop new capacities of soul.

Next to personal karma, there also is group, national and world karma, and karma connected with the different spiritual streams which flow together under the umbrella of the Anthroposophical movement and her daughter movements. Certain conflicts may have their root cause in the context of these large streams. However, I believe that most conflicts have their strongest affinity to personal karma.

Elements and Objectives in Conflict Resolution:

The following elements and prerequisites are not necessarily in order of priority or importance. All these objectives should live in our consciousness as we work with conflict. They are applicable if you are a party in the conflict, or if you serve as an outside facilitator.

There cannot really be a question of fully 'resolving' a conflict. Some elements in conflict dissolve naturally while others may lead to the next level of challenges in the future. Our first objective in approaching conflict resolution must be to 'unlock' a situation so that **movement** can be brought in the fixed percep-

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[5.] Rudolf Steiner, **Karma Lectures**, Vol I-VIII, Stiener Press, London, 1956.

tions that people have of each other and of issues. If this movement can take place, conflict becomes a dynamic force for change and development.

The second condition is that the **process** of resolution is as important as the end result. It will be in the process that the necessary learning and social skill-building will occur. It is a common misconception that conflict resolution must result in having the parties smile at each other again and shake hands. While this objective can be an important step, the ultimate purpose of our work must be that paralyzing conflict can turn into creative differences and constructive diversity in our schools. Without diversity, our organizations and human relationships turn stale and stagnant. After all, there can be twelve legitimate points of view to each issue. How can these views be part of our deliberations without mutually excluding each other?

In resolving conflict, we must simultaneously work with two additional and seemingly opposing objectives. One very important goal is to create an atmosphere of **trust** among the parties; to have people look at each other with renewed eyes. Some of the exercises in this chapter are designed to accomplish this trust and to have each party 'walk in the shoes' of the other. However, trust doesn't come from exercises, rather it arises out of the **work** that we do **together**; it is born out of the activities and devotion that we experience with each other through working with the children! Still, without a basic level of trust, we cannot constructively work with conflict. The majority of our efforts will be spent building this foundation.

In the process of building trust between people, it is very easy to by-pass our fourth objective. When we're making progress toward having people trust each other, it will be very tempting to think that now we have resolved the conflict. Often this is not the case. Most important is the pivotal rule that the conflict must be articulated and fully described. In other words, the conflict must become **perceptible**. Perceptible not only in its effects (because, most likely, this is painfully clear to all), but we must learn to phenomenologically describe the nature and chronology of the conflict. Similar to a faculty's child study, we must describe and study the 'biography' of a conflict. This process will have a very important benefit. By making perceptible what was hidden, we externalize and thereby objectify it! Invariably, the conflict loosens its destructive grip on the parties. In

many cases, the process of bringing the conflict to our consciousness   by describing it, will be sufficient to allow for resolution.

The fifth condition is to have the **will** to find a solution! While conflict can inflict great misery on all parties (sometimes for long periods of time), people may still be reluctant to seek a resolution. There can be many reasons for this reluctance. Resolution brings with it the necessity for change and for more work on the part of all members in a group. It may, therefore, feel safer and more convenient to stay with the status-quo of existing power structures.

When asked to facilitate conflict resolution, it is very important to assess how committed the parties are to finding a resolution. There are various ways to assess this commitment. We must pay attention to what people say or, more importantly, pay attention to their actions. What is the mood in a meeting? How genuine is the level of exchange and self-disclosure? How willing are the parties to commit to extra meeting time and allot the necessary material and human resources to the process? Individuals and groups can be ingenious in avoiding dealing with the issues at hand. It is important not to underestimate the elements that can stand in the way of conflict resolution.

Intimately connected with the 'will' to find a resolution, is the sixth condition of **courage**. In working with conflict, we inevitably are confronted, not only with the shadow side of the other person, but also with our own. A precondition for working with conflict is that we don't place ourselves above the others in the conflict. Any sentiment that make us feel that another person's problem couldn't be our own, works against the process of resolution. Honest and heart-felt humility joined by a certain 'fearlessness' are all essential ingredients.

A seventh attitude is not to seek fault with a person or to find one party 'right' or 'wrong' in a situation. We must be **nonjudgmental** in all respects and in everything we do. Invariably, both (all) have played their part in the conflict. By drawing sides or pronouncing opinions and 'explanations', we invariably add to the conflict. We should be very careful to **delineate** between the processes of conflict resolution and that of evaluation. The latter aims for a decision or corrective action of some sort. The former, however, is purely designed to accommodate communication and further development.

The eighth requirement is to honor the **freedom** of the other human being. If we recognize that each conflict finds its origin within the souls of the individual parties to the conflict, then resolution must start with accepting our own responsibility in the conflict. We must know that no matter how obvious the shortcomings of the other may be, or how radically wrong his thinking is, I have only the power to change myself. No amount of effort on my part can make me change the other person or have him learn the lessons that **I** think life is teaching him. The idea of honoring the unequivocal freedom of the human being, so central to the impulse of Anthroposophy, must permeate all our feelings and actions.

Two final guidelines are extremely important to remember and to apply whenever we can. One is that, when we are speaking of human interaction, colleagueship and, especially, difficult relationships – it is important that we learn to speak for our feelings and personal needs. It is a mystery and somewhat a contradiction to me that a movement, which excels in enriching the experience of childhood to many, many thousands of children, involves many adults who are so awkward and suspicious of expressing our feelings to each other. In our frailties and striving we bear 'witness' to our humanity again! This brings us to the ninth requirement: **Speak from the heart** in anything you say. Conflict will evaporate when we make ourselves vulnerable to the each other; when we can confidently speak from our own strengths, while allowing others to help us with our weaknesses.

The last condition concerns group work. In the vast majority of cases, a conflict between two members of a working group (for instance, a faculty), will adversely effect the workings of the entire group. This particular conflict will live in the consciousness, and become the burden of the group. Additionally, almost without exception, other members of the group will find their alliances to the conflict and, subsequently, contribute to it. For these reasons (and others), resolution should always take place within the context of the **full group**! The benefit to this approach is simply that other members can become co-responsible for the process and, when resolution occurs, it's redemptive influence will permeate the group and the entire organization. Please resist the temptation to have conflicts resolved in the corners (so-to-speak) of our organizations.

We now can summarize some of the elements and goals that must be present, as necessary prerequisites, to help resolve conflict:

- conflict is intimately connected with our biographies

- conflict must lead to further inner development

- we must 'embrace' conflict, and not see it as extraneous to life

- we must 'dissolve' frozen perceptions of ourselves, others and issues

- all our efforts must be to establish trust among human beings

- we must make the conflict perceptible in all of its aspects

- we must assess and engage the intangible soul forces of the Will, and have the courage to work with conflict

- in anything we do we must be nonjudgmental.– honoring the freedom of our fellow human beings must stand at the core of all our efforts

- we must learn to speak from our hearts and be in touch with our feelings and personal needs

- most, if not all, conflict resolution must occur within the full circle of human beings who are affected by, and contribute to the conflict

Steps:

This outline of steps in conflict resolution, is much more a general guide than a rigid formula. When we facilitate or directly engage in confronting a conflict, our intuitions will guide us through the process. Very often, individual steps may have to be by-passed or it may be sufficient to just cover a couple of these 'check points'. To better illustrate these steps, we will assume that the conflict has escalated substantially, effecting various individuals and different aspects of the organization.

Assessment & Commitment Stage

This first stage is important because it will lay a foundation and set a tone for the entire process. Primarily, we are considering three interrelated steps.

First, there must be an acknowledgment and identification of the 'problem' or conflict, including the individuals who may be involved. Usually, by this time, everyone is aware of the problem and the need for finding a working solution becomes urgent. Second, some kind of an assessment is made about how the problem should be resolved. Decisions are made on how to approach the difficulties. It may just be that two individuals should get together and 'talk it out', or that existing channels of communication and/or procedures should be followed; or, it may be decided that a third party should be brought in (from in, or outside the school community) to facilitate the process. Third, whatever the decision is, the main parties to the conflict must understand, agree and commit to the process! Without some basic form of agreement among the parties, resolving a conflict is practically impossible. In the latter case, a community might find itself, for the school's benefit, making an evaluative decision, some kind of arrangement that will allow for the continued running of the school. These decisions may run from binding arbitration, a negotiated settlement, strict rules and probation, to asking an individual for his resignation. Any of these responses may be legitimate and necessary in certain cases, but it should be remembered that a conflict can easily metamorphose and shift to other areas and individuals in the school community.

Biographical & Descriptive Phase

As mentioned earlier, this phase is crucial. When special care has been exercised to make the conflict fully perceptible, some kind of resolution may already appear. In this phase, therefore, it is our aim to fully articulate what the conflict is and sketch its history. We **"map"** the conflict. While it is important to achieve clarity in describing the circumstances, do not overload the discussion with minute details, but, rather, learn to characterize the essence of the conflict. Sometimes this can even be done with an image. In this process, it will become clear where the story coincides and where it does not. If individuals strongly disagree on the course of events and nature of the conflict, we let these discrepancies stand. These discrepancies are part of the complexity of the conflict. Furthermore, at this stage we concentrate on bringing problems to light; not on solving them. It is a very necessary, often painful, moment in the process, to have all parties (as a group) experience the severity of the conflict.

Perception-sharing & Mirroring Phase

This phase is truly the heart of the resolution process. Following and inter-locking with phase two, phase three focuses on the actual interrelationships between people in the conflict. What are the perceptions that others hold of me? What is the impact of my behavior on others? Are my intentions consistent with my actions? Is what I say consistent with what I truly feel and think about others? (Ironically, many conflicts do not arise out of ill-conceived intentions but, rather,, out of a failure to be honest and straight with others, because we "don't want to hurt their feelings".)

The very definition of conflict is that perceptions we have of each other get fixed, stereotyped and distorted. Even the most caring and humane of us will discard data that contradicts the negative images we would want to hold of a person, and cling to those observations that confirm our preconceptions. Of course, what makes it more complicated is the fact that our perceptions and opinions of people are not just based on figments of the imagination; they all have a grain of truth in them! We could say that the purpose of this phase is twofold: One; to 're-align' our soul forces of thinking, feeling and willing by means of perception-sharing so that our interactions with people can become three dimensional again; i.e. we learn to express what is truly living in us regarding our thoughts and feelings about a person. (The truth is often less painful than a sugar-coated criticism or innuendo.) Two; by using the mirroring or feedback process, we can gradually adjust our reality (self perception) with the reality that other people reflect back to us, thereby allowing the impact we have on others, to be more consistent with our intentions.

Agreement & Contract Phase

If the conflict resolution resulted in the need to have certain forms of behavior and relationship change, then these changes must be clearly documented and agreed upon. For example, it may be that the parties agree to meet together on a weekly basis for the next three months, in order to facilitate continued contact and communication. Or, it may be agreed upon for each party to 'journal' their inner work on the issues surrounding the conflict, and exchange these journals with each other on a periodic basis. Or, it may be agreed upon to assign a 'speaking partner' to each person. This colleague would function as an unbiased listener and advisor. There are numerous ways to accommodate further support and communication to the parties that are in conflict. All these agreements must

be ratified and periodically reviewed. None of these arrangements should run forever. They are merely outer support systems that have a temporary value to assist people in making necessary behavioral changes.

Systems & Organization Development Phase

In some cases, part of resolving the conflict requires that changes be made in the organizational structures of the school. It may be the formation of a new committee, or changes in membership, or that certain procedures and policies need to be amended. In extreme cases, it might even happen that the very foundation (vision & mission) of a school is being challenged or in need of 'revision'. Individual development and organization development are reciprocal – the one effects the other. Rudolf Steiner indicated that any human creation reflects the consciousness of that human being and of the times, whether this is in art, science or our institutions.[6.] I also believe that, in turn, our creations influence our consciousness.

As a rule, though, it would be a mistake to change the organizational structures first, before (or as a substitute to) working with the interpersonal conflict issues! Many organizations resort to making all kinds of system changes, only to find that these collapse because people cannot work together. The old edict is still true,"Organizational structures are as good as the people who work in them".

Review & Implementation Phase

When any decisions are made, then we should be clear who, what, when and how things are to be implemented. It also is important to maintain records outlining the conflict resolution process. Sometimes, down the road, there may be a need to refer back to the proceedings for administrative and/or legal purposes. At all times, maintain a record of the agreements and decisions, and read these back to the group before the meeting adjourns.

[6.] Rudolf Steiner, **Theory of Knowledge**, Anthroposophic Press, NY. 1940, pages 100-118.

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The **review process** is the most important learning tool that we have at our disposal in group and organization development. In it we look back on our 'creation' and glean from it what worked well and what did not. Some of the guidelines regarding conflict resolution, pertain to the review process as well. A properly conducted review neither judges nor intellectualizes. It merely describes and characterizes, in images, what transpired from a detached, but living, point of view. Do not fall into the trap of continuing your discussions and arguments. Make the review brief (7 minutes); just a couple of observations and descriptions will suffice. Stay with your personal learning and insights. Leave others free to discover their own diamonds in the sand. Ask open-ended questions like: What worked best? When was the most difficult moment in the meeting? What image, fairy tale, weather or landscape did you associate with the meeting? How did you personally contribute to the meeting? Where was the golden moment of opportunity? If the meeting were a building under construction, what would it look like? By means of the review, we can learn from even the most difficult and frustrating meetings.

Exercises:

What follows are a few exercises and process suggestions in conflict resolution and related trust-building/biography and mirroring/feedback exercises. In each exercise, any number of variations are possible.

Conflict

(1) Have opposing parties, in twos, sit across from each other and draw a self portrait. When finished, each interprets their own picture for the other. Then, for 10 minutes, both articulate what new insights they gained of the other in relation to the conflict.

(2) Have all parties draw, paint or model an image of the conflict. Then, a general discussion is conducted about the nature of the conflict.

(3) Have each participant, silently for themselves, conduct an imaginary conversation with a person with whom he has a real conflict. The conversation should include a confrontation, and what he would say and do in response. After 15 minutes, the participant writes down the essence of the conversation and shares this with the full group. The participant should identify helpful behavior

and what was most difficult about the exercise. As an option, the full group could offer helpful feedback.

Trust Building and Biography

(1) Have half of the group blindfolded. The sighted people each take a person without sight, and guide this person through the building or out through the garden/park/street. The sighted person gives a full account of all the obstacles on the way. Next, roles should be reversed. Afterwards, the group shares insights and experiences.

All biography exercises are essential for promoting trust. As a guideline, avoid long accounts of a person's life and history. Design specific questions to which people, one by one, then respond. It is important that people can have fun with the exercises.

(2) Describe your favorite room or place while you were a young child.

(3) What is your first memory, ever?

(4) Your first love?

(5) Describe the first time that you truly felt independent (the world is my oyster)

Mirroring/Feedback

This exercise allows individuals to speak and then to hear how what they have said has been heard by the other.(For further explanation refer to the paragraphs on **Perception-Sharing and Mirroring Phase** above.)

Process

(1) When in a difficult phase of a discussion, have one person speak at a time, then afterward, another member of the group paraphrases what was spoken. Then proceed to next point.

(2) Assign two members of the group to sit outside the circle and have them, periodically, reflect back to the group, their observations and further process suggestions.

Sender:
- Whenever possible, seek permission from recipient.
- Address person directly.

- Use "I" statements only.
- Never speak for others or from "hear-say", but from personal experience and how you were affected by the recipient.
- Only use very specific, concrete and recent examples.
- Do not editorialize, moralize or philosophize; just describe.

Recipient:
- Paraphrase feedback.
- Make sure you understand feedback or ask for clarification.
- Ask for examples and seek feedback from others to confirm or modify information.
- Never argue, defend your position or give reasons. Let what is mirrored live in you.
- You may speak to how you were affected by the exchange: confused, helped, relieved, angered, supported, etc.

For all participants:
- Share new insights and what you have learned.
- Remember that in the exchange, the value systems of both recipient and senders are operative; therefore, do not judge.
- Avoid extreme responses.

Process:
- Have sender give one statement at a time, after which recipient paraphrases and ask for clarification, if necessary.
- Repeat process once or twice more, if needed.
- Recipient may request feedback from others.
- Never have one person continuously sit in the "hot seat", but move the process on to other members of the group.

Conclusion:

Our ability to work together as colleagues in Waldorf Schools predicates a consciousness awakeness to our relationships with one another in the social sphere. To be a "social" being is not granted to us as a birthright, quite the opposite, we have to actively work towards it as part of our task in human evolution. It is hoped that this chapter may have shed some light on this path.