

Date: 10/30/96
To: Ronald Heifetz
From: Vladimir Petit Medina (mc-mpa)
Subject: Group Study Questionnaire (Form II)
Group F Week : 7th

1) Are there common or are there competing conceptions of purpose in the group? What effect does this have on the group's ability to proceed with the task?

There are many different perspectives and conceptions of the purpose within the group. In fact, some people think that the purpose is to have a therapy group by analyzing some exclusive insights. Then, they usually start by speaking about themselves and about the way their personalities influence the group. Therefore, we waste much time in trying to give psychoanalytic therapy to some of the members of the group. This wrong road (we are leadership students and we are supposed to consult the case presenter in that field rather than in his or her personal life and we are trying to learn about leadership and not about therapy) usually perverts the task and at the very end we often find ourselves incapable of helping the case presenter. Beyond that, the proper use of the new tools of analysis is postponed. Tremendous failure.

2)What was the initial event of the group meeting?

At the very beginning of the meeting some people insisted on taking a final decision about inviting the TA to our next meeting. This issue became broader because some of the groupmates began reflecting on their feelings and insights. For more than thirty minutes we were trying to focus on just one thing, but we did not get the proper direction and orientation. This could happen because the chairperson was not neutral. She had a preconceived idea and she did not act as a proper director of debate. Then, there was no specific topic but multiple topics.

After a while, we took a vote again. The majority decided not to invite the TA, but immediately, Francisco proposed to continue the discussion because we were supposed to get to what they called the real point. Without any consult, the chairperson decided to continue with insights conversations. Then, everybody talked a lot about Heifetz, the course, their expectations and their aspirations. When we just had thirty minutes left, some people intended to convince Jorge to present his case in just 5 minutes and he refused it. The conversation continued senseless. Finally, I decided to intervene: " this is not a therapy group. If you want to continue like this OK, but we are not learning anything about leadership". Then, Bruce complained because he knew that some special meeting were held and some of us were not invited to them. And the discussion took another direction again. We finally decided to reflect back on the meeting again and take another direction in the next session.

During the meeting, we talked about the following issues: race, religion, friendship, dispute and frustration.

3) Was there any difference between what the CP identified as the leadership dilemma in the case and your own interpretation of the problem in the case? If so, what?

There was not case presenter. But the one who had the initiative was Francisco, who is in constant search for establishing his permanent leadership. He has failed so far, just because he is confused : instead of looking for a leadership position, he is really trying to gain some authority. The strange thing is that he wants durable authority and nobody is likely to give it.

4) What was the primary hidden issue of the consultation group meeting and what was the underlying problem in the case? Was there any parallel? Did the initial event provide a clue?

The primary hidden issue is the absence of communication and trust. The group is not working as it is supposed to. Many people think they are not learning and some of us are aware that learning leadership is a very risky challenge. They speak one language and some of us do speak another. They want to comfort each other up. We want to learn. They want to blame Heifetz for everything. We want to search in the group but not, inside each member of the group.

The ongoing authority dispute deserves some special comments.

At least two people are trying to reach exclusive authority position within the group. I am not speaking about a temporary but a permanent one. They still understand that being a leader is being adored and followed at the time they mix the concept of leadership with the notion of authority. Then, they do not get the idea that leadership is an activity rather than a pleasure an authority is one of the vehicles for it. Also, they do not accept the idea of simultaneous leaderships. They only accept the exclusive leadership idea. And the rest of the group, openly detests this kind of visions.

Finally, the division is clear. Factions are appearing.

The initial event provided a clue. In fact, the absurdous searching for nothing specific was caused by the dispute of two members of the groups who tried to lead the rest of it to a total division.

5.- Identify the most productive intervention of the meeting. What made it so ?

Jorge's intervention clarified the context. He stated that Francisco was not supposed to speak as a representative of anyone but himself. Francisco usually uses the plural to include the rest of us as trying to gain some informal authority but with no destiny and clarity of purposes. He wants to become the leader but What For?. We are not looking for a leader. We all want to lead the group to a productive dynamic. We can do it together, at the same time, respecting one another. But most of us refuse to be directed as robots .Then, Jorge's intervention focused on the real point and Francisco could feel that nobody supported his attempt.

6.-Did the group use any work avoidance mechanism to maintain equilibrium? Did the people in the case use any work avoidance mechanisms to maintain equilibrium? If so, what were they? was there any similarity?

Scapegoating appeared again. instead of facing the real attitudinal and directional problem (we were not analyzing leadership but personal insights), some people blamed Heifetz and invoked their perplexity caused by Heifetz's way of teaching. Also, a classic work avoidance also appeared: flattering as a false attempt to preserve the normal

situation. In fact, as soon as someone talked, some of the allies said: “ that is great and I think your permanent guidance on that” or ..” I think that is very useful for us”.As an example, after an intervention about some insights, Francisco said:..” that is great. How can you leave us without your advice?.” And he really thought the intervention was absolutely wrong, as he confessed it later on.

7.-How were you used by the group? Were you used well or poorly?.-

I was properly used. I remained silent for a long time, but when I spoke, the group decided to turn to another direction. Then, I played my role when I thought It could be useful. And it was because, the groupmates decide to finish the meeting, reflect on the session and try again the next week. I did not mobilize them to the real point, but I could stop them from continuing in the wrong road. Next time perhaps it will be better.

8.-How was the chairperson used by the group?

She did not act as chairperson. She did a great job as case presenter but she was clearly identified with one of the existing factions. Therefore, she lost informal authority and the rest of the group considered her an acting part.

9.- To whom did the group give informal authority and Why?

Many people wanted to gain informal authority, specially those who think they are disputing the hypothetical permanent leadership instead of temporary authority positions. However, the real fact is that no one has gained it yet. Maybe I got some informal authority because at the end of my intervention (which it finished the meeting itself) I asked everybody: ..” Let’s make this clear: who wants to be the leader? the one who is looking for it is wrong. We are looking for no leader, We are supposed to exercise leadership as an activity that involves everyone and which may be exercised alternatively by anyone..”.

10.-Identify one moment when you thought you had something worthwhile to say and you held yourself back? None.

11.- What interplay between your own personal tuning and the dynamics of the small group account for your capacity to intervene? In what ways have the large class dynamics influenced your behavior?

Perhaps I have learned to be patient and to improve my sense of the opportunity. That is the reason why I usually do not speak a lot but necessary. In my real field (politics), the sense of the opportunity is the currency of surviving. I think better opportunities are about to come in order to have a more articulated participation within the group.

The large class today, Thursday, during Federic’os case stimulated my participation but I decided to speak later. I will do it in the next class. I think is time.

12.-Identify two key words from the group and discuss the relevance of their etymologies to the hidden issue?

1. ***Dispute***: from *peu*, to cut or strike or stamp and from Latin *putare*, to prune or clean or settle an account, to think over to reflect. A verbal controversy, a debate which is led by those who do not accept the alternative leadership and the complementary authorities. Then, dispute is a contest for winning. The problem is that they do not understands that winning is not the key question of leadership. It really is the mobilization to do the work and the activity by which we made it happen.

2. **Confuse**: from Latin *confusus* or *confundere*, to mix together. To cause to be unable to think with clarity or act with intelligence or understanding. Those who are trying to mislead the group by attempting to establish the futile idea of a sort of permanent and institutional authority they understand as leadership. Then, mixing together, on one hand, leadership and authority and, on the other hand, ambitions and aspiration, creates confusion .