

Date: 12/05/96  
To: Ronald Heifetz  
From: Vladimir Petit Medina (mc-mpa)  
Subject: Group Study Questionnaire (Form III)  
Group: F Week: 11th

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1.-At what level of abstraction did your personal interests diverge from the dominant interests of the group---at the level of orienting values, general purposes, specific objectives or concrete tasks? What were these interests, yours and the group's?

In the last session Kent was the case presenter and everybody was surprised by his presentation. Not only because his case was about moral values but also because he engaged us with a candid and expressive way of presenting it. In fact, that man that some of the members consider a rude trouble-maker became a soft case presenter. Then, the group was struck and we could be able to focus on Kent's case. *But it worked just few minutes* : the case represented a failure of leadership but its characteristics made it difficult to study. So, a mechanism of work avoidance appeared: people did not want to go to the real point because they fear Kent's reactions. They had in mind his previous attitude and decided not to touch him, at all. I tried twice to focus on the real topic but I did not succeed completely. They did not want to make a real analysis. They just wanted not to disturb Kent. Thus, my interests diverge from the dominant interests of the group at the level of the concrete tasks. I did want to consult to the case presenter and some other people wanted just to hold steady and let the things simply flow. And at the end, everybody was holding steady.

2.-Each member of the group has probably begun to take a particular role for the group. In keeping with those roles, what perspective on the case did each member of your group represent? Please include a paragraph description of the case.

I think Francisco did his job as chairperson this week but he embodied the kind of conductor who does not want to face the issue but to incentive some other people to do it. Then he did not want to take the risk.

Mark, Andrea, Bruce and Darnes resembled the behavior of those who decided to hold steady instead of taking chances from the very beginning. Why? Because they represented those individuals who prefer to preserve some interior peace rather than achieving goals. Also, because they think the important thing is to tell stories in the questionnaires. Like that soldiers who told Kent that Jason was about to quit and he confessed they were not eager to stop him.

Sarah represented a sort of woman with a sensitive perception of the reality and who made important questions. In fact, her set of questions was accurate and useful. But after a while, She was holding steady just because people were afraid of activating new confrontations. Sarah was like those generals in Kent's case who decide to stay apart from problems and decided to intervene just intermittently.

And Jorge and I tried to stimulate the real work but we failed because fear itself was more important than the desire to learn.

Kent represented the threat itself surrounded by potential explosions of anger. Just like most soldiers in sentimental situations.

3.-Sometimes, work avoidance mechanisms are easier to identify than the issue being avoided. Indeed, the timing and nature of the work avoidance mechanism often provide a clue to a hidden issue. What issue was being discussed at the time when the group generated a work avoidance mechanism? What was the work avoidance mechanism? Did anyone intervene to re-direct the group's attention to the issue?

We were talking about the type of reflections Kent made when helping Jason in the case and trying to find out new elements of their relationship when the people understood that the case was really important to Kent. He admitted it. I tried to go forth but suddenly something strange happened: people began looking for side issues and ways to evade the discussion. Issue averting and some kind of flattering and false comforting were the work avoidance mechanisms again. I tried to redirect the attention but people did not want to go for it. The situation remained constant until the end.

4.-Identify the most productive moment of the meeting. What made it productive?

There was a moment in which the whole group was moving forward and the consultation work was in progress. Sarah was making an intense analysis and asking a heavy stuff. In fact, some kind of connections and representations were noticed. Then, Kent talked about his feelings and how deeply he still cared about the case. And that was like a warning shot. Something that people interpreted as a warning: Hey I do not want to explode again so you had better watch out because I do care about this. It was funny but even Mark Torres who wanted to draw one of his imitations of the Pizza graphic, stood for a while in front of the blackboard, but then he took a seat and he never talked again during the session..

5.-In thinking about your interventions this week, was there any difference between what you intended and the outcomes they produced? Did your interventions generate work or work avoidance?

Yes there was a difference, perhaps of magnitude. In fact, I intended to redirect the attention but I succeeded momentarily. Then the said difference is to be measured in grades of intensity and magnitude. I think my interventions generated work but just for a while, because there was a tendency in the air which was more powerful than anything else.

6.-Give an example of an intervention that generated work.

Sarah's set of questions was very useful. She began exploring the real meaning of the relationship, perhaps searching for a holding environment (in this case embodied by a friend). She was looking and identifying the hidden issues of the case and the whole system was moving forward when Kent decided to intervene again. The analysis was abandoned, later on.

7.-Give an example of an intervention that generated work avoidance or no response at all.

Kent's intervention which was considered intimidating and it generated work avoidance: people did not want to go to the real point because they were afraid of Kent's reactions. They did not want to make a real analysis. They just wanted not to perturb Kent.

8.- Identify one moment when you thought you had something worthwhile to say and you held yourself back. What made you do so?

There was not such moment. I was very active along the discussion. I was present and concentrated. I held steady after my last intervention but never back.

9.-Identify one moment when you experienced holding steady as distinct from holding back?

After my second and last intervention, I decided to hold steady for a while in order to let the whole system move forward and observe it again . I was there, active in the reflection, deeply concentrated and very aware of the details and looking for the correct way of redirecting the attention to the point: the leadership failure.

