

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

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 final session of my small group my personal interests diverge from the dominant interests of the group at the level of concrete tasks again. In fact, I thought that it was the opportunity and the proper environment to analyze the way authority was exercised within the group and share the most valuable impressions about the course. And all this stuff was supposed to help us learn about leadership and learn from our experiences as a group. The majority of the groupmates considered this opportunity such an important moment to proceed with some comments about psychological insights and good appreciations and a happy farewell. In fact, some of them were trying to appear sad, but everybody knew that the real collective feeling was relief itself. Kent shared some of my points of view and he also insisted on his previous position about the course. Jorge made a good intervention which aimed at the same task I thought was the corresponding one.

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?

There was no such a case presented this week. So I will analyze the roles that members of the group have been playing during the semester and have constantly resembled some kind of behaviors.

Francisco was in permanent search for individual and exclusive authority and leadership. He represented those very competitive actors who desire to show off rather than learn and at the same time, he embodied the values of those politicians who do not want to be considered so but they use demagogue as a powerful weapon. He did refuse to give his final impressions at the very end of the session perhaps because he did not want to say what he really wanted to say and it could become controversial and also risky.

Mark, Andrea, Bruce and Darnes resembled the behavior of those who need some room to share their insights and internal conflicts, as they confessed during the session (Andrea admitted some traumatic experiences with her father and brothers, Darnes expressed that she was afraid of being hurt as she usually was by her family, Mark confessed his need to discover whether he was capable of exercising leadership as a modern Jesuit or not and Bruce stated that inclusions and exclusions were the dichotomy of his life with his disable mom). That was the reason why they thought the

important thing to do was to tell insight-related stories and appreciations even in this last session .One final comment about these guys: Mark, Andrea, Francisco and Darnes systematically exercised the exclusion (they held their own private meetings) and sometimes they invited alternatively Jorge or Bruce, as a measure to reduce the level of distress this kind of meeting caused within the group. Bruce appeared to be especially affected by the exclusion .

Sarah represented those mysterious people nobody gets to know completely. One can appreciate her political analysis capacity as outstanding, but sometimes she played one role and sometimes she played the opposite one, spontaneously . Sarah represented those people who fear giving and they prefer receiving. But at the same time, she embodied those people who try to get along with the heads of the exclusion in order to become the open gate to exercise inclusion itself.

And Jorge and I embodied the critical part of the group but not the extremist one. In fact, our comments usually brought out some kind of controversy in tolerable terms.

Kent represented the tide and the threat. The majority did not like him so much but some of us thought he played an essential role: the extremist and most critical part of the small group. Something like the dark consciousness or the devil's attorney or those who do not want to be helped and are accustomed to be left behind when they apparently do not care.

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?

Francisco was trying to set the agenda when the rest of groupmates began talking about other topics. Then , Kent, as chairperson, tried to redirect the attention but the people were not so open. The group was so conservative and apprehensive that the discussion was not so fluent. It had some long pauses. Then the issue was the type of relationships within the group and the experiences we got from leadership and partnership . The work avoidance mechanism was to look at the easy stuff (a sort of search for side issues) and to share some common and hypocritical views. Then, the attention was to be redirected. I tried it with my intervention but I did not convince the rest of the group to get to accomplish the concrete task.

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

I think that before leaving, Jorge effectively intervened and it had some impact on the groupmates because they started talking a little bit about it. Suddenly, Darnes started to talk about herself and the attention deviated from the real task. Jorge's intervention was aiming at the real analysis and also was a very diplomatic farewell. Then he mixed both, personal insights and leadership analysis before leaving.

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?

Kent asked me about my opinion and I did make a controversial intervention but the result was frustrating: people avoided the topic and the attention again was deviated. Then my intervention generated work avoidance. So, there was a big difference between my intentions and the result of my action .

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

As I already said it, Jorge’s intervention was the most productive but it did not generate much work.

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

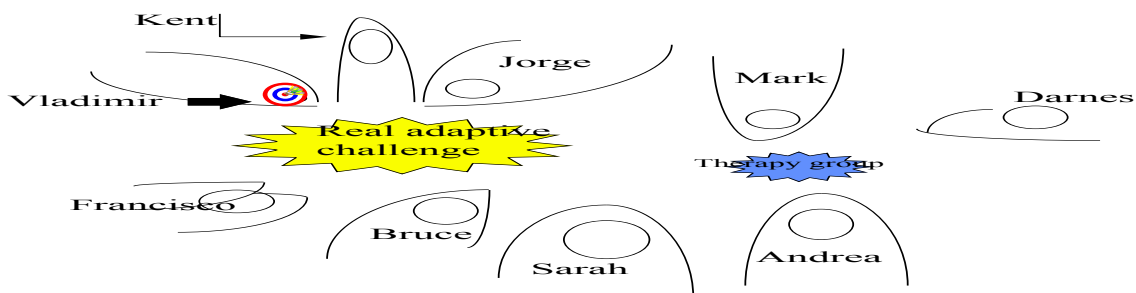
My intervention generated a clear work avoidance. In my turn I analyzed the contexts of the course: the small group, the large group and the teaching staff (Heifetz and the Tas). I gave them my own opinion about Heifetz as professor (brilliant), as performer (persuasive and hypnotic) and as creator (innovator). When I began speaking about the Snake-enchanted style of Heifetz and some of my criticisms regarding the group dynamics and the level and quality of the cases presented in the small group, many people were writing down some notes. Then, after finishing, they decided to continue talking about how sad was the farewell and things like that. Also Andrea responded to my intervention with some confessions about her life and concluded it by admitting that she did not know she could become a leader before taking this course. So, her response was a sort of a psychiatric insight but there was no analysis of the group dynamic in it.

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 a while but never back.

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

After my 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 central issue.



leadership

-Vladimir Petit Medina