

Date: 11/21/96  
To: Ronald Heifetz  
From: Vladimir Petit Medina (mc-mpa)  
Subject: Group Study Questionnaire (Form III)  
Group: F Week: 9th

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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?

It is appropriate to make something clear: the group became divided in two factions: those who still think they are attending a therapy group and those who are trying to learn how to use their best tools to consult the case presenter. Then, talking about the interests of the group is not fair because there is not a clear dominant interest. I would rather talk about two different interests within the group. That is really similar to what happened in my case which was presented this week. (I really felt identified with one of the factions and I think we have a common interest and the real sense of the concrete task).

My interest diverged from the other interest of the group at many levels and it becomes particularly important when working to get to the concrete tasks: some members of the small group tried to bring some therapy and, then, they did not get to consult me with their best tools of leadership analysis. In fact, while this group is just looking for insights as the personal side of the truth, the other faction usually takes those insights as elements of the whole system and they worked on them analytically. Then real recommendations are just made by one faction instead of the whole small system.

Thus, the differences were not at the upper level but at the personal level and at the concrete tasks level.

Sometimes I felt a psychoanalysis going on instead of a leadership analytic work.

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.

The case was about my most important leadership failure: I could not mobilize my own friends members of the national board of my party to adopt a different position regarding President Perez, the future of the organization and Democracy itself.

Kent represents the perspective of those who think that his selective attention is only reserved to take a view to the most important things. I think he appreciated my case as a real leadership failure and in the most critical aspects of the case he became an active participant. He represents the perspective of those members of the party who gave some intermittent attention to what was really happening. Sometimes they were interested in participating but they never were so eager to do it permanently. Intermittent allies, I might say.

Darnes takes real care of the irrelevant. She thought that I was not listening to her and she concluded that I might have failed in the case because I always do not listen to people. That was a risky assumption but I think that it really matched with her personality. She represents those members of the national board of my party who were more concerned about my expressions and gestures than about Democracy itself. She really reminds me a lot one of the Vice-presidents of the party who was very active in the case. She is very resistant to the strategic analysis, as many members of the old-establishment of the party .

Mark has such a powerful capacity to get into something but he does not have neither the determination nor the courage to convince people of their own truth and he is afraid of building authority. He represents those local partisan leaders of my party who said to me : I got your point and I think you are right but I do not want problems with the national authorities of the party.

Andrea is like many people I have had to face during the dangerous years of the case. I think she is intelligent, sensitive and curious. But at the same time she is so ingenue for some kind of things. She is also timid and represents those who did not understand why I was so eager to change some people's minds and they preferred to wait and let the things go.

Sarah is a good analyst when she rejects the attempt to psychoanalyze the people. She represents those people who knew that I was right but sometimes they were eager to support me and some other times they thought I did not deserve any support. She embodied some of the old partymates at the time that shows us a special sense of what taking chances means.

Jorge represents my real allies in the case. Those who took the chance with me . They were not following me but their previous analysis and their instincts.

Francisco is a very active man but in continuous dispute. He is like the people who were with me and at with them at the same time. Flip Flap supporters as some friends who wanted to keep the best relationship with everybody.

Bruce is the mystery itself. Those who felt a sort of neglecting and they preferred to hold back. He embodied the behavior of my father in law in my case. In some way, he represented those who are willing to operate from the margins.

I usually play the role of the listener who limits himself to the necessary interventions and who is committed to assuming a broader perspective of the case. Also, I used to act as a cold analyst but this week I became an excited presenter. In some way, this week I acted as Perez trying to keep the power : vehemently. By the way, I think my emotions activated some system of fear of loses that I did not know before.

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 discussing about the importance of morality in public life and basically, how immoral was one of the main characters of the case when Darnes decided to scapegoat

me. Then the attention was not directed to the system I was presenting but to me as a person and to my personality as the efficient reason of the whole case. This scapegoating, for a while turned to a side issue because two more people insisted on the analysis of listening as the most important issue while the analysis of the case remained equal. I responded to her with more details and facts, invoking them as proofs and I sincerely tried to explain to her how decision is an art that deserves to be analyzed from a serious and complete perspective. Francisco and Jorge intervened in order to redirect the attention.

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

There was a moment in which Kent was trying to get some data about the differences between Perez and Fernandez and my influence on Fernandez. Then he turned to find out my real opinion about democracy and my perspective of the chances to succeed. Immediately Jorge asked me something about the relationship between the rest of the members of the national board and myself. In that moment, they were approaching to the center of the adaptive challenge itself. Also, Kent asked me about my age at that time and my feelings for the old-establishment of the party. They found out that my father in law was one of the most active pro-supporting Perez within my party. They were finding hidden issues and exploring the real system in its whole extent. We were moving forward to get the real systems analysis and that was productive.

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?

I intended to present the case in the easiest possible way and at the same time I wanted to be consulted and to get some important recommendations. I think they understood the case but I am not satisfied with the consultation and the recommendations. Then some outcomes are different from my intended objectives.

My interventions generated both work and work avoidance. Work when the people got the idea and the circumstances allowed us to move forward and avoidance when some people did not want the issue we were discussing or maybe the way I became excited about the case and decided to scapegoat and to look for a side issue.

I feel that I gave my best but in return the small group did not meet my expectations : the assessment of the conflict was vague, only one faction successfully approached to the systemic analysis while the other did not get the main issue and they were just criticizing that I was just too emotional.

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

When Jorge said: have you ever thought that maybe you did not approach the old-establishment in the best way and that was the reason why they rejected to support your position?. Clever comment that guided me to a deep reflection on the possibility of a negotiation instead of the public debate. At the same time, that question allowed the group to build on the topic of the relationships involved and the possibility of misjudgment.

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

Darnes intervention when she asked: I Thought Vladimir was a very good listener but he is not listening to us right now and I think that was happened in the case: he was not able to listen what the people were saying. Those words made me explain with more facts why it was false but the whole group remained silent. After the discussion Francisco and Jorge urged us to get back to the real case.

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. Just because I was the case presenter and I was very active along the discussion. I held steady for a while but never back.

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

After the said discussion with Darnes, 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 a successful intervention but I was not leading actively the discussion. If I had been thinking about something else and truly disconnected from the core of the task I would have held back for a while.

I was the case presenter.

