



Worldwork Methodology

I was always interested in the field of engineering, and in fact, some of my best friends are engineers ;-). If fundamental research studies organic processes that occur in the universe, to find the rules and principles that govern these processes, then engineering is the applied science that looks at how these rules can be translated into practical steps and methods to improve our everyday lives. Often, engineering solutions are discovered before fundamental research has understood the details about how the processes actually work. The engineer understands intuitively how a given process can be broken down into steps that can be simplified and used practically. Due to nature of their developer, Arnold Mindell, Processwork and Worldwork always had a strong focus on an engineering approach to understanding science, spirituality and community life. Mindell, in my view, follows the classical principle of the indigenous mind, in which relationship to the whole, spiritual insight, and practical applications that make life easier form an inseparable whole. As the Hopi saying goes: Does this talk grow corn?

The beginning years of development were especially focused on observing the organic processes that individuals and groups seemed to take. To use the analogy of a river: a river follows the bed that nature made for it, or more accurately, the interaction of the river with the terrain creates an observable river bed in which the river flows. If we study this interaction, we can develop methods for channeling the river along its natural line to further facilitate its flow. In the same manner, the perspective and principles of deep democracy are inseparable from the interventions and methods that we use to bring them to light.

Just as in the Australian Aboriginal tradition, the individual aptitude to hunt for daily food can not be separated from the momentary relationship of the hunter to the dreaming process of the whole, and the role that the community plays within the larger scheme of things, the Worldworker can intellectually understand structure of the collective within



which she works or functions, facilitate the emergence of a whole and understand it at the same time as her own myth of emerging as a person within the collective.

If you think of an organization as being to some extent subject to a “self-organizing principle”, then it is crucial for the organization’s well being that this self-organizing principle is made visible, so that it can be seen and interacted with. The term, “self-organizing” is most often used today as a euphemism for a process that we have no control over. If the process is not organized by a person or the leader, so goes the thinking, it must be self-organizing. Consequently, our awareness is usually focused on what we can organize, and disturbed by what seems to be un-organizable and unpredictable. Worldwork methods aim at making the self-organizing structure visible, which allows for interaction around it. This in turn brings awareness to the different parts of the system, which can then be used for various purposes, including personal psychological or emotional enrichment, learning about who we are, material productivity, increased bottom line etc. In short, they can be used to grow corn.

Self-organizing tendencies can be played out as roles. [Amy Mindell](#) has been instrumental in showing us how roles can be viewed as puppets, dancing on the string of the puppet master - namely the group spirit, quantum mind, or self-organizing principle. Individuals and subgroups “slip” into puppets and act out the scripts that the organizational spirit has written.

Here is a list of methods that can be used for making these tendencies visible. Please explore the site for further details:

Here are some Worldwork Methods.

Role-play, or giving voices to roles: flashing out invariant, non-local aspects of groups. This process depersonalizes these aspects, which allows the group to process them and



access the information without scapegoating the particular member or subgroup that is a local expression of that role.

Ghostrole: A role that is marginalized by an organization or group. Individuals in that group may find themselves having thoughts or feelings associated with the role, but would never express them out loud because of a group culture that is against this particular viewpoint or behavior. Ghostroles come up as gossip or water-cooler talk. They can be found in unintentional signals such as in tone of voice, body posture, and other implicit communication styles.

Edge: the “landmark” at which a possibility becomes real, potential energy turns to kinetic energy, and the quantum wave collapses. Emerging tendencies become manifest. Groups and individuals show particular behaviors around edges. The facilitator can notice these behaviors, hold down the edge, and assist groups in birthing the potential that is trying to emerge.

Hotspot: the point at which a group comes closer to an emerging process, and the atmosphere gets hot. This term is borrowed from geology - infrared pictures of a region show you the hotspots, volcanic processes that are close to erupting, emerging. Not all hotspots are conflictual, but all hotspots require the group/team/organization to change its identity.

Coolspot: After the process around the hotspot has emerged and the group has temporarily changed its identity, a coolspot appears. The group energy settles into a new equilibrium. Coolspots work as strange attractors, pulling the group through turbulence.

Framing: We frame a picture to make it visible. We want it separated from its surroundings so that we can look at it as an entity unto itself, and so that we can understand its message better. Framing takes out a significant aspect of a process and



freezes it briefly in space and time to make it visible, so that it can be seen and used by the participants.

Personal Awareness of the facilitator: In a field, the facilitator is a role, as are the leader and the follower, the elder and child, and the criminal and the law enforcer. In a quantum approach to groups, the observer-slash-facilitator is also non-local, meaning groups have built in self-facilitating tendencies. Some of these tendencies are localized in the facilitator, and others appear in the participants. The Facilitator must use her awareness to track the emergence of these roles, and to support others to step into the role of the facilitator.

Noticing and Unfolding Quantum Flirts: factual experiences, barely lasting long enough to be noticed, and finding their message for the whole.

Directional Work: Directional Work brings together indigenous concepts of directions as non-local field qualities and Quantum Electro Dynamics, which focuses on understanding the paths of Quantum Objects, a modern day myth about understading complex directions, that our lives and the lives of organizations can take.