



1040 Taylor Street
Port Townsend, WA 98368
(360) 385-7118
www.DynamicFacilitation.com

Dynamic Facilitation

What is Dynamic Facilitation?

Dynamic Facilitation is a way to help people address difficult issues creatively and collaboratively and achieve breakthrough results. It establishes a process of talking and thinking, known as *choice-creating*, that builds mutual respect, trust and the sense of community. The results are unanimous.

People in the meetings can just be themselves, relying on the dynamic facilitator to assure respectful listening and creative progress. The dynamic facilitator helps people to determine an issue they really care about, whether it seems solvable or not. Then he or she follows group energy more than an agenda, helping people speak authentically, reflecting so that all “co-sense” results together. She uses numbered lists of: Solutions, Problem Statements, Data, and Concerns on flip charts. A fifth chart of Outcomes emerges from the conversation.

Dynamic Facilitation fosters shifts of heart and mind by following the natural flow of conversation and supporting group spontaneity. Sometimes these shifts take the form of new ideas; other times they bring a new sense of what the “real problem” is; and other times there is a change of heart.

How is Dynamic Facilitation different?

In the long run, the fastest way for a group of people to solve a tough problem and to reach consensus is for them to have a breakthrough. Then, the results are exceptional and each person feels involved, knows what to do, and is committed to the group results. Also, the process builds individual skills, empowerment, trust and the spirit of community.

Most meeting facilitation processes limit the possibility for breakthroughs. They ask people to work only on issues that are possible to solve or that are in their area of responsibility, to mute their passion in favor of rationality, to break big problems into smaller ones and to proceed step by step down a logical path from problem definition to solution. This type of facilitation uses extrinsic factors like goals, objectives, agendas, and guidelines of behavior to preserve order and assure progress.

Dynamic Facilitation takes people as they are, without pre-meeting training or established relationships. The process does not require participants to adhere to a set of ground rules. Instead, it works well with a minimal set of agreements, primarily involving the role of the facilitator. The dynamic facilitator helps each person be themselves, assures that each comment is heard and appreciated, and that the group achieves the optimal zone of talking, choice-creating. The dynamic facilitator is oriented to following the energy in the room and supporting the breakthrough potential of people. Since the purpose of a dynamically facilitated meeting is to

encourage creativity, the meeting does not proceed in a straight line, and participants are not constrained to a pre-determined agenda. Instead, as the facilitator listens to each person's perspectives and concerns a larger pattern begins to emerge that allows the group to see and capture shared insights and strategies.

What is Choice-Creating?

Choice-creating is a quality of talking and thinking, where people pull together to address difficult issues and experience creative shifts. This state of mind often occurs naturally during or after a crisis. Then, prejudices fall aside as people naturally become open-minded and open-hearted.

When is Dynamic Facilitation most successful or appropriate?

Dynamic Facilitation is especially valuable when people face important, complex, strategic, or seemingly impossible-to-solve issues, when there is conflict, or when people seek to build teamwork or community. It's a way to spark ongoing dialogue, systems understandings, trust, wisdom, and to generate the spirit of involvement.

Dynamic Facilitation requires that people be authentic. They can't be playing a role or representing a constituency. It's for when people are really caring about problems and wanting them solved. Because Dynamic Facilitation is so successful at helping diverse people to successfully address difficult or impossible problems, it opens the door to new forms of systems change. In particular, it makes the "Wisdom Council," a new large-system transformation strategy, possible.

What is a Wisdom Council?

A Wisdom Council is a new, low-cost approach for gathering all members of a large system into a heartfelt conversation that reaches shared insights and the will to act upon them. It can be used for students in a high school, citizens of a city, or employees in a company to create a bottom-up vision, build a sense of community, and implement a participative, democratic style of management. It uses a regularly occurring random selection of people, where they present unanimous results to the whole system.

Background

Dynamic Facilitation was developed by Jim Rough in the early 1980's, consulting with mill workers in Northern California. The process was developed further in other organizations and through public seminars since 1990. In 1993 he invented the Wisdom Council process as a way to establish democratic governance in large systems. In 2002 Jim, Jean Rough and DeAnna Martin co-founded the Center for Wise Democracy to help communities in the public sphere.

Resources on Dynamic Facilitation

- *Jim Rough and Associates, Inc.* offers consulting for organizations and regular seminars in Dynamic Facilitation Skills. (See www.DynamicFacilitation.com)
- *Society's Breakthrough! Releasing Essential Wisdom and Virtue in All the People* by Jim Rough. (See www.SocietysBreakthrough.com)
- *The Center for Wise Democracy* was formed to help citizen groups establish Wisdom Councils. (See www.WiseDemocracy.org)