

► **Profound Co-Intelligence** by Tom Atlee **The Co-Intelligence Institute, November 2002**

Some months ago I ran across what I viewed as an interesting innovation. The more I reflected on it, however, the more I realized it was not only profoundly co-intelligent but potentially revolutionary. It is called The Blueprint of WE Collaboration Document. It is the brain-heart-spirit child of Maureen McCarthy of the Center for Collaborative Awareness.

The Blueprint of WE is an agreement between two or more people (or entities, including groups, communities, corporations, and countries) co-created to sustain a high quality of relationship between them.

The Blueprint of WE stands in stark contrast to that ubiquitous document -- The Contract -- which is an agreement to ensure that interested parties comply with certain mutually understood expectations. Contracts usually include an explicit or implicit threat of punishment for failure or betrayal, backed by the power of the legal system.

Contracts and laws are vital to hold together a society of self-interested entities seeking alliances in their competition for limited resources in situations that may involve considerable dishonesty, alienation and temptation. Contracts constitute an effort to nail relationships down so they don't get blown away by some gust of social entropy.

A Blueprint of WE, on the other hand, is a resource for lifting relationships above the storms of social entropy into the realm of vibrant co-creativity. It doesn't nail relationships down. It provides them with a radiantly alive center from which to continually co-create themselves.

The Form of the Blueprint of WE

A Blueprint of WE has a deceptively simple structure. Its 2+ pages emerge from an in-depth conversation in which the following are co-created:

1. A statement from each party on what it is about the other party and the relationship that they find so valuable -- "the 'story' of the individuals as they see one another while things are going smoothly." Whenever the conditions described in these statements are present, the relationship is considered to be in the "state of grace" which inspired its birth. The purpose of the document and its related conversations is to sustain that state of grace.
2. An agreement about the length of time the two parties will tolerate a departure from that state of grace. For a marriage or a close working relationship, that time period might be an hour or a day. For a less immediate relationship, such as between business clients, it might be a week or a month or more.
3. A commitment by both (all) parties that if they are out of their state of grace, they will come together -- before that agreed-upon time period has elapsed -- to have a heart-to-heart talk about the state of their relationship. The aim of that conversation will be to either heal the relationship into its original state of grace -- or to transform it into a new state of grace.
4. There is an assumption here that what is most valuable is not necessarily the relationship's FORM, but rather its QUALITY, the state of grace. If the relationship slips out of grace, that may indicate a need to redefine it to meet new conditions or needs. So the question becomes: What is the NEW state of grace for that relationship? It may involve a new active vision or set of expectations. Or it could involve new ways to live out the satisfying story the relationship began with. It might even involve an honorable, graceful closure to the active relationship, a friendly separation. In any case, it is a renewed state of grace.
5. A set of questions that will be addressed by both (all) parties when they have their heart-to-heart talk. The conversation need not be limited to these questions, but these questions are designed

6. to stimulate a depth of engagement with each other and with the current reality of the relationship. Among the questions suggested by McCarthy:

- What am I afraid of -- including what am I afraid of really saying right now?
- What truths do I need to tell?
- What do I need right now?
- What do we each have to gain by ending this relationship?
- What do we each have to gain by continuing this relationship?
- What part does money play in this situation?
- Have I let you down?
- Is there a power struggle going on between us?
- What do I appreciate most about you?
- What do I have to forgive myself and/or you for?
- Is it time to redefine or redirect this relationship?
- What is the deep down knowing we each have about how this will eventually end up?

Its Origin and Vision

Born through an effort to negotiate a positive divorce with her husband, Blueprint of WE Collaboration Documents now shape the majority of McCarthy's significant relationships, including not only her family and friends, but her business relationships with major corporate clients. Significantly, some of her clients are now using Blueprint of WE Collaboration Documents in their own work.

Regarding her first Blueprint of WE with her husband, Zelle, she writes:

"We know as individuals and as a couple we are not only bound to grow and change, but we crave it. So if change is inevitable, who's to say that our current set-up will serve us or the world from now until we exit the planet? With this in mind we sat down one day and created the first Blueprint of WE.

"It serves as our commitment, not necessarily to stay together as husband and wife, but to honor that place of truth and love in one another, ourselves, the relationship and, in our case, a Higher Power. When we focus on maintaining a graceful relationship, we don't dance around difficult conversations, we commit to having them sooner rather than later and thus relieve any built-up tensions before they get too big and ugly. We come together from a soulful place and look for ways to remember the love and respect we have for one another as we work through to a solution... Once I saw the power of The Blueprint of WE between Zelle and I, I began to create them with my friends, clients and family."

The document sits, on-call, for whenever the relationship hits hard spots. McCarthy describes its use in her marriage, where the time allotment before a heart-to-heart conversation is three hours: "If we feel out of a state of grace, we commit to sitting down within three hours and beginning the process of finding our way back, even if the conclusion is that the relationship as we know it is over. For some people three hours is too long, for others two years is the right amount of time. It depends on your temperament, style of relating to one another and to what degree you need alone time before you can calm down enough to have a more loving conversation."

She summarizes: "The Blueprint of WE is a radical new way to see the world. It's a tool for those who are searching for a non-litigious way to resolve a difficult situation. Or in the cases where [we] would never resort to that, but the pain of a bad ending leaves us exhausted, it's a remarkable path to peace." It's a concept that will cause great transformation in the world, when adopted, because it addresses the potential for problems up front and in a loving manner. As a society we avoid saying the marriage could end before the ceremony has begun, the job might not work out as planned, or the business partnership might not continue to be the best route as we move forward. Reality says it's all possible, but it seems so distasteful to acknowledge it. With the Blueprint of WE Collaboration Document a new and very elegant approach has been created to address the possibilities, while keeping the love, honor and integrity intact.

For more information, including sample Blueprint of WE Collaboration Documents, see her website at <http://www.BlueprintofWE.com>.