

Questions and comments from Michael's "Spirit of Institutions" Open House and Update

AKA Michael's homework for the next year!!

Sept. 30 2009

Spirit of systems:

- What can one person do?
- Quiet, consistent presence leads to change
- Does the law have to change before corporations in general can decide to do what is right by people and the earth regardless of effect of stockholders?
- Have you found an organizational structure which seems more or most conducive to a broadly life-affirming spirit?
- Some grow in fertile soil, others under the pavement. How do we hear one another's wisdom?
- Does power corrupt? Does "absolute power" correct absolutely? How does this apply to organizations (nonprofit? For profit? Government? Academics?)
- Most institutional change do take several generations, but don't some few happen quickly if the right moment is now?
- Is it really too late to bring God, by name, back into public institutional discourse?
- What have you learned about how to create a right spirit in an organization, and about how (as much as possible) to transform the spirit of an organization?
- How can we tap into that presence?
- Spirit of systems change – who can address this in the prisons?

Spirit of tasks:

- What you think across the 4 categories, what might be conditions that are present across (so scalable), that foster the "wholeness" the integrated living you describe?
- Could you given an award to a task, not only a human?
- Is there energy for creating support groups for all the folks asking these questions to support each other?
- Agree with lacing all interactions with presence!
- How do we teach "practicing the presence of God" in everyday life?
- Is there a different spiritual dynamic at play in each category (individual, group, system, task) or is it essentially the same manifested in different working contexts?
- What about the spirit of simple love and caring?

Spirit of the group:

- How can I bring these ideas forward from a middle leadership position?
- I'm struck with the themes of centeredness, contemplation, quiet leadership. Your graduate degree is in conflict transformation. How does conflict and struggle fit in the spiritual lives of people in institutions? And with the spirits of institutions themselves?
- What are ways we can listen and share our faith?
- It seems to me that leadership and participation in organization requires a lot of patience—how do we "grow" patience in ourselves and others?
- Relationships are central. How does high tech stuff impact these categories?
- The spirit is alive at St. Joan of Arc Church.
- How does an institution identify ideological differences among its members/participants and encourage dialogue about those differences?

- I think that the questions about how much an organization enables its members to draw on their place of guidance and rejuvenation is just a great thing to think about—and to ask.
- What kind of issues, histories get in the way of organizations “feeling” “Knowing” the support the invisible world?
- For organizations or people who don’t think it “spiritual” ways, how do you engage them in these discussions, or move their thinking in these directions?
- The facilitator: servant and guardian
- Wouldn’t “relationships” be at least as important to the spirit of the groups as strategy?
- What most characterizes dysfunctional organizations?
- How has God’s accent become easier to hear since you’ve reflected on these qualities in the 4 groups?
- Giving leadership to each person in the group looking for, watching for the things each person is good at. So that is acknowledged everyone in the group is good at something—this becomes the strength of the group.

Spirit of the individual:

- It is heartening to know that there are so many institutions that seen whole and well led. What are the steps to take more of this to the political arena?
- In Buddhism, the self is an illusion. How might this square with the power of an individual?
- How much can the individual “spirit” impact the group spirituality?
- The ones who received the awards would be great resources to help all.
- How does an organization heal when the leader is not well and not leaving?
- So how do you transform institutions?
- How do you stand up for what you think is right, when it seems like everyone else things you are wrong?
- To learn to remain grounded in the Spirit in times of crisis requires practice—so we must seek out crises in which to practice.
- Do you think that one person can alter the spirit of an institution?
- How can a person who is predominantly in one category be a meaningful agent for change in a different one?
- One practice fits or may fit all 4! Stop, look, listen examen, step 10, 11
- I’ve enjoyed (found useful) reading “Steering by Starlight” how to find your own north start by Martha Beck, a life coach.
- What are the most common barriers to getting an organization to open up its spiritual side?
- What do you do if you know that the people who are delivering services are wounded, and that their woundedness is affecting delivery of these services? There are a lot of wounded people.