



The Facilitation of Groups

DALE HUNTER · ANNE BAILEY · BILL TAYLOR

The Facilitation of Groups



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

The Facilitation of Groups

Dale Hunter, Anne Bailey and Bill Taylor

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 1996 by Gower Publishing

Published 2017 by Routledge

2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

Copyright © Dale Hunter, Anne Bailey and Bill Taylor 1996

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Notice:

Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Hunter, Dale

The facilitation of groups

1. Social groups. 2. Interpersonal relations. 3. Social facilitation

I. Title II. Bailey, Anne III. Taylor, Bill

302.3'4

Typeset in Palatino by Bournemouth Colour Press, Parkstone

ISBN 13: 978-0-566-08153-8 (pbk)

Contents

Preface	vii
Acknowledgements	ix
Part I Facilitation	1
1 Preparing the ground	3
2 Facilitating yourself	9
3 Facilitating others	19
4 Facilitating a group	31
5 On the edge of the sword	47
6 Working on the different levels	59
7 Getting to agreement	69
8 Cutting through	75
9 Facilitation and the client	89
10 Facilitation and change	105
Part II Toolkit	111
<i>A Design</i>	113
1 Workshop design	113
2 Meeting design	120

THE FACILITATION OF GROUPS

3	Project design	128
4	Evaluation design	136
<i>B</i>	<i>Facilitative Processes</i>	141
1	Being with another	143
2	Being with a group	143
3	My world, your world	145
4	Mining the gold	147
5	Speaking the vision	149
6	Empowering interpretations	151
7	Identity check	152
8	Situation check	153
9	Role plays	154
10	Uncovering sabotage patterns	156
11	Clearing processes	159
	a One-to-one clearing	161
	b Group clearing	164
	c Clearing yourself when facilitating	166
12	Getting fully present	167
13	Getting complete	169
14	Speaking the higher purpose	171
<i>C</i>	<i>Facilitator's Training Programme</i>	173
	Appendices	199
	Contract confirmation model	201
	Meeting record sheet model	205
	Recommended reading	207
	Index	209

Preface

The Earth is running out of energy resources but there is a source of special energy which has scarcely been tapped. It is the power available in groups – the power of group synergy. Tapping into group synergy is made possible through powerful group facilitation.

Effective group facilitation is an artful dance requiring rigorous discipline. The role of the facilitator offers an opportunity to dance with life on the edge of a sword – to be present and aware – to be with and for people in a way that cuts through to what enhances and fulfils life. A facilitator is a peaceful warrior.

Group facilitation is moment-by-moment awareness; awake and being in action – awake in the way a hunter stalks a tiger or a mother watches over her newborn infant. The facilitator protects the group culture at the same time as cutting through unproductive or sabotaging patterns to get to what enhances and fulfils the group purpose.

This book reveals the secrets of the art of facilitation. It provides access to the source of group empowerment and shows how to create this with ease.

The Facilitation of Groups is the second book by the authors of *The Zen of Groups – A Handbook for People Meeting with a Purpose*. That book

THE FACILITATION OF GROUPS

focused on the role of the group member and explored how effectiveness can be vastly increased through accessing synergy. *The Facilitation of Groups* provides a deeper cut into developing group effectiveness by focusing on the role and skills of the facilitator.

The purpose of the book is also to provide a training resource for facilitators, and to enable group members to understand and take on this role. Part I draws on the co-operative beliefs and values underlying facilitation and examines in depth the art of intervention, which is the working mode of the facilitator. Part II is a toolkit of facilitative designs and processes, including a facilitation training programme. You will need access to or a copy of our book *The Zen of Groups* (1992, Gower) to use the 'Facilitator's Training Programme' in Section C of the Toolkit. The appendixes contain some additional resources.

When working with groups, the authors use the first person 'we' to include themselves in any statements. In this book, on the advice of our publisher, we have mainly used the second person 'you' to address the reader directly. This does not imply we know better or that we are separating ourselves from the reader. On the contrary, we find it empowering to know that we don't know and that we are always learning and in training.

Dale Hunter
Anne Bailey
Bill Taylor

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to thank Tony Coates, and the members of the First Advanced Facilitation Training Group held at the Kohia Teachers' Centre in 1993. Scattered throughout this book are some wonderful insights into the art of facilitation, courtesy of the members of that training group. Look for these gems in boxes.



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

Part I

facilitation



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

1

preparing the ground

What is facilitation?

Facilitation is about process – **how you do something** – rather than the content – what you do. A facilitator is a process guide; someone who makes a process easier or more convenient. Facilitation is about movement – moving something from A to B. The facilitator guides the group towards a destination. Facilitation makes it easier to get to an agreed destination.

Facilitate = to make easy or more convenient

You can facilitate yourself, another person or a group. This book is primarily about facilitating groups. However, to facilitate groups effectively you need to facilitate yourself – your own processes (external and internal). And you need to be able to facilitate others individually as well (coaching or one-to-one facilitation) as groups are made up of individual people who come together to fulfil a particular purpose.

So, to become a powerful and effective group facilitator you need to train yourself in self-facilitation, the facilitation of others and the facilitation of a group.

What are the beliefs behind facilitation?

Why are we focusing on facilitation rather than other ways of working with groups, such as management, team leadership or being a 'boss'?

The main belief behind group facilitation is that full co-operation between all people is both possible and desirable – values of equality, shared decision making, equal opportunity, power sharing and personal responsibility are basic to full co-operation.

The skills of group facilitation grew out of co-operative movements around the world and are based on ensuring that everyone in a group can, if they wish, fully participate in all decisions that affect them.

Our society has a democratic model – not a co-operative one. Democracy requires co-operation between people and participation in decision making, but says that the majority is right and majority decision making is the best way to make decisions.

If you draw a continuum of decision making, with autocracy (one person deciding on behalf of all the rest) at one end, you will see that 'co-operacy' (new word) is at the other end, with democracy in between.



We are not saying democracy or autocracy are wrong. Both are useful and have a place in decision making. However, we have a bias towards co-operacy and believe it is not used more often because its skills are not part of our culture. People want full co-operation and participation, but when it comes to the crunch, they believe the only thing to do is to take a vote and have the majority rule.

The shift from democracy to co-operacy is of the same magnitude as the historical shift from feudalism (autocracy) to democracy, and will be as big a culture shift. It could also be described in personal development terms as the shift from dependence (autocracy) through independence

(democracy) to **interdependence** (co-operacy).

Most people know something of committee procedure and rules, and how to take a majority vote – these skills are very much part of our culture. However, when you want to reach a consensus or collective decision, you can often come unstuck as it seems too hard to get everyone to agree. You believe it is impossible or impractical:

'It would take too long to get agreement.'

'We'd still be here next week.'

'Our business would go under while we deliberate the issue.'

These comments are often the immediate reaction to the idea of using co-operative decision making.

The authors have learnt many of the skills needed to make co-operative decision making a practical and workable alternative to democratic or autocratic models. We want to pass them on to everyone so people can have a real choice as to what model they use. We want co-operative processes to be as well known and accessible as committees and majority voting.

What is more, we believe using co-operative methods makes it possible to access a very important and critical resource for the world more easily. This is group synergy – the alternative fuel for the twenty-first century.

We may be running out of some key energy resources, but group synergy is one which has scarcely been tapped. We are in the nursery in relation to working together as groups, organizations, businesses and nations. The planet needs group synergy to survive because it is group effort on a small and large scale which will save and heal our planet.

So you can see we are very serious about writing this book. Our mission is to contribute to creating synergy on the planet.

It is important to mention here that we assume group synergy is a neutral resource like oil or coal – that it can be used for good or ill. So we need to do our very best to pass these skills on with care and integrity. However, we believe group synergy at a higher level is not ultimately neutral – that on a global scale it will only be positive.

Over the last 30 years much work has been carried out in the area of personal development. It has now spread throughout much of the world and individuals have undertaken a wide range of personal development methods. Much of this work has been done in groups although the focus has been mainly on individual growth and development.

We believe we are on the verge of a quantum leap – that of group consciousness. Foreshadowed by family therapy, organizational development research and experience gained by living in communities, we are now in the pioneering stage of this quantum shift in human consciousness. We believe it will open up possibilities we can barely dream about. For the planet to survive this leap is imperative.

The role of the facilitator

The role of the facilitator is somewhat similar to the chairperson of a majority voting model such as a committee. The facilitator knows how to guide a group of people through co-operative processes, including collective decision making, so that the group can fulfil its purpose as easily as possible.

Before we wrote this book, we wrote *The Zen of Groups – A Handbook for People Meeting with a Purpose*. That book provides the concepts and tools to be an effective member of a co-operative group. If you are new to this kind of group, we suggest you read that book first. This book is a resource for people to facilitate co-operative groups. It contains the concepts and tools for working effectively and powerfully with co-operative groups.

Key concepts

For the purpose of clarity and completeness, the key concepts from *The Zen of Groups* are briefly outlined here:

Individual uniqueness — Each member of the group is unique and has his or her own world view expressed through ideas, beliefs, culture, memories and patterns of behaviour.

Baggage — This is everything you bring to the group – ideas, beliefs, opinions, feelings, desires, patterns, hopes and fears (your identity). It is all those things which can get in the way of you being fully present, moment by moment, to yourself and others.

Leadership — This comes out of the group. A leader can lead only with the active or tacit agreement of the group. There are no leaders without groups, though there can be groups without leaders.

Power — Power is always a factor in group life, and power issues need to be identified and worked through. There are different kinds of power – positional power, assigned power, knowledge power, personal power and factional power. Aim to share power as much as possible.

Feelings — Feelings are important and need to be acknowledged. They are not rational. Group members need to learn to have feelings, rather than be had by them.

Trust and identity — A group develops trust and identity through sharing. Attending to leadership, power issues and feelings will encourage the bonding of group members, leading to a stronger group identity and deepening trust.

Stages in the life of a group — Groups have a life cycle and move through various stages before reaching maturity. Most groups never reach maturity but get stuck and do not have the skills to work through conflicts and power issues and readily access synergy.

Roles people play — There are lots of behavioural roles you play in groups; some are constructive, some not. Avoid getting stuck in a particular role – for example, placater, blocker, tension-reliever, devil's advocate.

Process and task — 'Group process' is about taking care of the group members as they fulfil their 'task' – that is, the project, objective or purpose of the group.

Group-assigned roles — A group will assign the roles of facilitator, recorder and timekeeper. Roles can be rotated to increase participation and skill learning. A facilitator can also be brought in from outside the

THE FACILITATION OF GROUPS

group if more objectivity is needed. The facilitator does not take part in the content of decisions and cannot vote.

Group purpose — Every group needs to be clear about its purpose. A group without a purpose is purposeless, and so ineffective.

Ground rules — These can be set by the group to clarify and protect how it will operate. They may address confidentiality, being on time, personal responsibilities or any matters of concern to the group. Ground rules need to matter or it is better not to set them.

Being present — You are partly ‘unconscious’ most of the time and so not fully present to yourself and others. Being present is an ongoing, moment-by-moment discipline. In addition, you get tripped up by your baggage (see above) and are not ‘all there’.

Speaking and listening — Being in a group is about speaking and listening, but especially listening. The more skills you have in communication, the better.

Withholding — Withholding is not saying things which need to be said to have you fully present in the group. You withhold out of fear. If you keep thinking about something in the group and not being present, there is something you are withholding. Sharing ‘withholds’ can be scary at first, but deepens the trust in the group and takes it into the synergy zone.

Conflict — Conflict is normal in groups. It needs to be attended to and worked through promptly. Unattended conflicts become skeletons in the cupboard that come back to haunt the group. (See Chapters 7 and 8 for lots more on conflict.)

Collective (or consensus) decision making — This means that everyone agrees on every decision. (See Chapter 7.)

2

facilitating yourself

Facilitating yourself is like going on a journey for life – a scary and exciting journey which will take you to places within yourself which will surprise, delight and disgust you. Facilitating yourself is about self-awareness.

The way we grow and develop ourselves as conscious human beings is by facilitating ourselves and being facilitated by others. This happens on an emotional, mental and spiritual level.

Much of our physical development is also self-facilitated. Your body shape, tone and stamina are affected by exercise. You can modify your body to build up certain muscle groups for the performance of special functions as sportspeople, musicians, dancers and singers do.

Many people in the healing professions now believe that sickness, including life-threatening illnesses such as cancer and Aids, and healing of the body is largely influenced by the mind (our thoughts). There is a universal acceptance of the importance of healthy food on the development and maintenance of the body, although there is incessant debate on what is the 'right' food. Clean air and the absence of toxic substances from the body are also recognized as important to healthy living and the length of our lives.

THE FACILITATION OF GROUPS

You could debate to what extent physical, emotional, mental and spiritual development is natural (just happens), or is facilitated by yourself or others. But the debate is not important. Why not consider that most of your development is self-facilitated and that you can increase this through your own actions? That way you take responsibility for your own development.

Being with yourself

The first step in facilitating yourself is to 'be with yourself'. To get access to being with yourself, it will help to consider the following questions:

- Are you comfortable with yourself the way you are right now?*
- Are you comfortable with your body?*
- Are you comfortable with your feelings?*
- Are you comfortable with your thoughts?*
- Are you comfortable with your sex and sexual orientation?*
- Are you comfortable with your cultural and national affinities?*
- Are you okay about being you?*

Many people live lives of quiet desperation.

'I'm not okay, and I hope you don't find out how awful I am.'

Life is a process of covering up and compensating for your own 'not okayness'.

Before you get involved in facilitating other people you need, in the main, to accept yourself and be at work on this. Facilitating yourself is about growing, developing and training yourself – but not about fixing up yourself. Can you get a sense of the difference? 'Fixing up' is always about compensating for something being 'wrong' – it actually holds 'wrong' in place.

Accepting ourselves is the biggest hurdle for most people:

'I accept myself completely.'

'I am a magnificent human being.'

'I am fully alive now.'

Empowering yourself

Through self-facilitation you can empower yourself. Empowerment is 'coming into your own unique place of power where you are most truly your own self'. It is about recognizing when you are 'in your power' and how you experience this, and bringing it into all aspects of your life. It is about being at home in your body and in your personal space. It does not always mean being strong and confident. You may be most 'in your power' when you are feeling very vulnerable – it is more to do with being truly authentic and present.

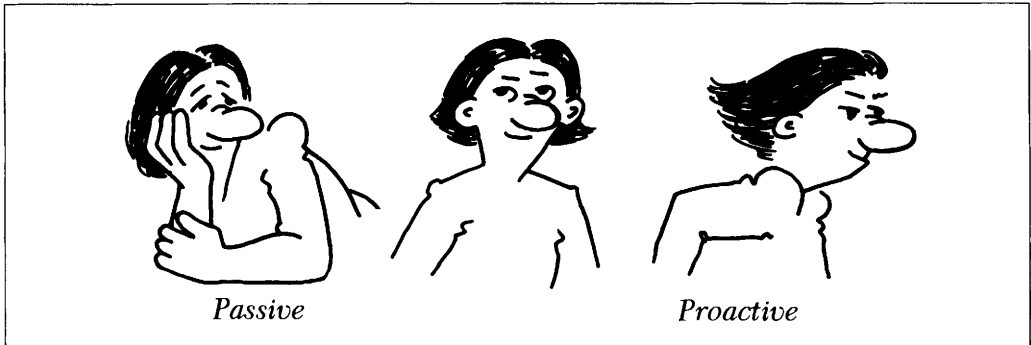
Being strong and confident over the top of nervousness and vulnerability will be experienced by others as just that – a cover-up or just a sense of incongruence they can't put their finger on. When you are in your power, your words and actions have a different ring to them – things happen more spontaneously and you have access to synchronicity and miracles. You can train yourself to keep coming back 'into your power' and get others to coach you when they notice you are out of your 'place of power'.

Our next book, *Dancing to Another Rhythm*, will explore empowerment and creativity, and how they can be accessed in individuals and in groups.

Passive and proactive

Self-facilitation is about empowering yourself. You can do this passively or proactively. Passive self-facilitation happens when you put yourself into a situation where things will happen to you which you believe will be empowering. You may choose a particular house to live in with ready-made flatmates or work at a particular workplace with other people. You

THE FACILITATION OF GROUPS



may put yourself into a training programme of some kind. You may choose to watch a movie or go to certain cafes or bars or on holiday to a particular place.

Through placing yourself in certain situations, you are provided with experiences which affect you more or less profoundly. An extreme example would be if you sat in the middle of a busy road at night – you would be passively facilitating getting yourself killed or injured. (This is hardly likely to be empowering, however.)

Proactive self-facilitation is when you consciously choose to alter your behaviour – to interrupt how you normally do things, believing this can benefit you. You may choose to speak or listen or behave in a new way, start meditating, expressing feelings you usually hide, sharing secrets, wearing different clothes, and so on. You take the initiative – it is your idea, your choice, your action.

You can allow and move through the thoughts, feelings and body sensations which resist the change in behaviour and use your will as the impetus or touchstone to keep you on course. Exercise your 'free will'. As you become more and more proactive, your will also becomes stronger. Just as taking on a fitness programme will develop and strengthen your body, 'exercising' your will to change your behaviour develops and strengthens the will – and your capacity to be proactive.