FACTSHEET No #5

INTRODUCTION MAKING DREAMS COME TRUE: USING DRAGON DREAMING TO BUILD AN OUTRAGEOUSLY SUCCESSFUL PROJECT: A COMPREHENSIVE STAGE APPROACH

John Croft

update 1st April 2014

ABSTRACT: *The fundamental process of the Dragon Dreaming approach to project development is here explained, together with an explanation of the symptoms that appear when projects become blocked.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

"Large masses of peoples are really in suspense about the impending advent of something unknown which could change their collective fate entirely….Man (sic) does not know how to be a truly modern man…Man invented the story of the Bad Dragon, but if ever there was a bad dragon, it was man himself*….Here we have the human paradox: man trapped by his extraordinary capacity and achievements, as in a quick-sand – the more he uses his power the more he needs it."*

Aurellio Pecceci, founder of the Club of Rome

BUILDING A BRIDGE FOR GETTING THERE FROM HERE

How do you make your own, or other people's dreams come true? Today, everywhere there is always a gap between how things are and how things might become. This gap may be narrow and easy to cross. For others the gap may yawn wide, deep and terrifying. In certain cases the trends may point towards greater problems in the future as unfavorable probabilities seem to increase, and the possibility for a favourable outcome may seem to evaporate.

In 1983, when in Mendi, in the Southern Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea, I was working with the World Bank funded Southern Highlands Integrated Rural Development Project, a project designed to bridge this gap. This project had an interesting history. The Southern Highlands Province was the last part of the country to be penetrated by European explorers. Today, with a population of nearly half a million people, most in the province were first contacted by European explorers and administrators only in the 1950s and 60s. Until then, most people believed the universe ended where the sky met the ground on the other side of the mountains that surrounded them, and Europeans were literally, the "men from outer space". First contact for them was an experience not unlike if extra-terrestrial aliens contacted us from outer space to inform us we were really part of an intra-galactic empire.

In 1983 the Papua New Government, embarking on its second five year plan, had decided that it was going first to ask each province to create their own plan. The National Planning Office would then

consider which parts of the plan were identical in each province, that, according to the national constitution, should be addressed nationally, which parts of the provincial plan were unique, and could be supported nationally and which parts were omitted and could be addressed at a national level. Such an approach still has much to recommend it and could be favorably applied to any "peak organization" that has a federated structure representing the interests of smaller groups of people.

The Provincial Government of the Southern Highlands Province, at my urging had decided to do the same, and we had agreed on using a "Search Conference" technique, pioneered by Fred Emery of the Centre for Continuing Education, at the Australian National University, Canberra. A "Search Conference" is a technique where you bring together all opinion makers, and those who can influence a situation, to consider the question of the gaps between the preferred, possible and probable futures, and after considering those factors that hinder or help us achieving our goals, we design strategies to help us achieve what we collectively want.

To these workshops in the seven districts of the remote mountain valleys of Papua New Guinea, we invited the Headmaster of the local high school, provincial administrators, local politicians, village court magistrates, literacy class supervisors, health care workers, members of the District Management Team, missionary and church workers and youth and women's group leaders. Working together for a week, they were to come up with the priorities for local development to be included in a district plan. District plans were then to be woven into a Provincial Plan of the kind desired by the National Planning Office.

I remember sitting next to Francis Awesa, then the Provincial Planning Officer, when an old man, who had not spoken during Mendi proceedings stood up. Bare footed, he was wearing a battered suit coat, a bark belt and a village woven apron or lap-lap, with cordyline leaves covering his buttocks. An expectant hush fell over the room as he began to sing. As someone who could not understand the local language, Anggal Heneng, I asked Francis in a whisper "What is he saying?" Francis asked me to keep quiet and he would tell me when he finished.

It appeared that the man was from the village which overlooked Mendi, the Provincial capital. He was the man, who, when a boy, had met the first Europeans and led them up the valley. Until then his people had no idea of an outside world. He was also the leader who a little later persuaded his people to release the disputed land upon which the provincial capital was now built. He sung of how, sitting on his hill, watching us Europeans he had seen things he had never dreamed were possible. Many were marvels that were greatly needed for his people. He said, however, that he had seen us Europeans doing other things that were completely stupid, and no way should they be spread amongst his people.

Looking at the ways of the Kondol or "red men" as he called us Europeans (from the sunburn we get easily from exposure to the sun in the thin atmosphere in the highlands), had allowed him to look at his own people in a new way. He saw things amongst his own people that were truly wonderful, and urgently needed by the Europeans. At the same time he saw things that his people did that were equally stupid, and should not be allowed to spread.

True provincial development, the old man said, was a new kind of bridge built between the two. It could start, he suggested, as a simple rope bridge, but it should have a gate at each end. From the European side it should let on the characteristics needed for a desirable future, and exclude those that were undesirable. The same should happen from the end attached to the Papua New Guinean traditional villages. As more and more people came onto the bridge, it should be rebuilt, first as a

timber bridge, then with steel and concrete, allowing more and more of his people to come onto the bridge. One day, he prophesized, everyone would be on the bridge, and when this day came, it would be possible to dismantle the gates at each end, as true development would have taken place. His singing oratory was a virtuoso performance, probably not seen now-a-days. He sat down in a respectful muted hush that fell over the room.

For me this graphic image, created by this song of an illiterate, but wise old man, embodies the true source of the sustainable art of Dragon Dreaming, the secret of making our dreams come true. Dragon Dreaming is the art of bridge building, creating a structure that links where we are now to where we would like to be, and that allows us to move safely across this bridge from where we are to what we might become. Unlike normal bridges, however, it is a bridge we build as we travel. And like all such journeys, it begins with a single step.

THE ALTERNATIVE DRAGON DREAMING WAY

From much of our experience, Western methods of project managers frequently claim ownership of the whole process of organizing and running projects, trying to control the outcome, but this is the result of drastically inflating the importance of the "management" process. It also stems from an attempt to achieve "power over" the world, rather than realising that such a power is ultimately built upon the myth of the power of coercion and redemptive violence. "Manage the project successfully" we are told, or else you will find that it takes control of you. Thus to successfully run a project, we are told we need "Project Management", involving the steps of Project Integration, Project Scope, Project Time, Project Cost, Project Quality, Project Human Resources, Project Communications, Project Risk, and Project Procurement. But this conventional approach confines our thinking purely as a totally linear, logical "left brain" activity and completely misunderstands the true nature of a project. From our experience, such project "management and administration" is only one of 12 essential processes required in running outrageously successful projects. There is much else needed before and after this management process can even start to be successful, and the taking over of a project by project managers is often a way to kill the spontaneity and creativity essential for a successful project to occur.

When looking at any project we find that every project start as the dream of a single individual person. But what kind of dreams are we here talking about? T.E.Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) wrote that *"All men dream; but not equally. Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their minds wake in the day to find that it was vanity: but the dreamers of the day are dangerous men, for they may act their dreams with open eyes, to make it possible."* The creativity that is liberated by such dreaming, however, is frequently sourced in the dusty recesses that Lawrence dismisses.

Unfortunately, all too often this dreaming is as far as the project gets, as from our experience as many as 90% of projects get "stuck" and fail to progress beyond the dreaming stage. This dreaming process we are talking of here involves the individual to engage with their own deepest motivations. The Pinakarri process of "deep listening" is one not just of listening to the world, but also is necessary to truly listen within oneself, to catch the faint sound of our deepest needs and aspirations. Our culture, unfortunately considers "Dreaming" to be an unreal subjective state, outside of time. Accusing someone of being a "daydreamer" is seen as an insult, and is said to be a quality of someone out of touch with "reality". But as Martin Luther King said in his powerful speech

that rocked the Civil Rights movement into being, "*I have a Dream*", it is powerful dreams, convincingly expressed that enables us humans to see possibilities that never were, and commit the time and effort into making such dreams come true. Such dreams are only possible because of our awareness that we live in a fallen and broken world, an imperfect world, a world that does not work equally well for everybody, and that improvement is not only possible, but in some degree is essential to the process by which we ourselves are created. As Australian Aboriginal people knew, and as Carl Gustav Jung demonstrated, dreams give us access to the collective consciousness of humankind, and provides a source that enables the deep healing of both ourselves and the world.

Projects that get stuck in the dreaming stage, are often shelved until one day "I'll get a round to it", or put into a never-never land of "If only I could ---". They remain private unrealized fantasies.

In order to move beyond the "dreaming" stage a project needs to be shared with others. The project needs to be undertaken by a "dream team", who come together to achieve a joint or collective dreaming. A project, which remains locked in the imagination of one individual person, is a project in name only. To be successful the project needs to engage the wider, external world of the individual person's environment. Into this process the individual contributes personal inputs – inputs of time and effort, energy, imagination, skill, wit and wisdom. It may perhaps even involve a monetary investment from the initiator. These inputs are essential to the success of any project.

Successful projects however, also have an output, a positive effect or impact upon each person who gets engaged in the project. Outrageously successful projects have a transformative effect upon their lives. The people engaged will discover things about themselves and their world that previously they may have thought were impossible. They will gain skills and abilities, many times that they just did not know that they did not know, and the quality of their lives will be immensely improved in the process. A successful project may also increase a person's capacity and capability to work calmly in traumatic or crisis situations that may, on current trends, arise in the future. Unsuccessful projects, however, may have negative effects, effects that can activate instinctual responses such as freeze, flight or fight, producing a deep depression. Such responses can entrench coping strategies that may be maladaptive in future circumstances, preventing solutions being found to important personal or social problems and difficulties. However, even unsuccessful projects may result in individual or organizational learning. They can also, unfortunately result in negative consequences such as the dehumanization and disempowerment of the people involved.

It is always in the world where we engage within our projects. Although it is true that we create our own realities, this process of creation does not come exclusively from within ourselves, or only through our intentions or awareness. The world with which we engage is an alive, radically "other" reality, completely separate from "the individuated self" of the individual person. Whilst this boundary between "self" and "other" is a negotiated boundary, created second by second, we need to recognise that we are not a "skin encapsulated ego". The membrane around a living cell is ultimately an organ of communication between the interior life of the self and exterior life in which it is engaged. Similarly the boundary between "self" and "other", between "individual" and "environment" is also semi-permeable membrane and is in itself an organ of communication. Hardening this boundary to achieve security, or invulnerability, will actually reduce the communication process necessary for community resilience, responsiveness and flexibility. It leads to the attempt to achieve "invulnerability" in an attempt control others by escaping from being controlled oneself. It reduces the ability to respond and thus finishes by creating irresponsible individuals, organizations and projects.

By sharing this dream with others, through a "*Dreaming Circle*" the dream becomes a collective dream of the project team. Successful projects require you to learn to dance with your dreams, whilst simultaneously facing your some of your deepest fears. It will require you to discover that you are much more than you think you are, to strengthen the community of which you are a part, and to contribute to the healing of the world by working, in some small degree, in service to the earth. All Dragon Dreaming projects are deeply embedded within these three principles, drawn from the Gaia Foundation of Western Australia.

- ***personal growth*** - commitment to your own healing and empowerment. All of us are more than what we think we are. In Dragon Dreaming workshops I frequently say that the worst form of prejudice, far more savage than racism or sexism, and far more damaging is prejudice against yourself, as this is the only form of prejudice from which, ultimately, from which you cannot escape. Yet all of us do carry a deep personal prejudice against ourselves to some degree. It is called a "self image" and it curtails those things which we think are possible. We confuse this image with whom we really are, not realizing that we are *not* this image, but rather we are the person who created that image. Dragon Dreaming projects are always founded upon this principle of growth beyond the confines of who we think we are.

- ***community building*** - strengthening the communities of which you are a part. Communities may be communities of location, culture, interest or organization. Community building is essential to Dragon Dreaming, as in times of rapid socio-cultural, political, economic and environmental change, those people who live and work in supportive and caring communities are those people who will most easily cope. Those alienated from their community, living isolated and hyper-individual lives are those who are most dependent upon vulnerable, fragile complex systems, easily disrupted, and they will suffer the most. We need to build community as if our lives depended upon it, as they do.

- ***service to the Earth*** - enhancing the wellbeing and flourishing of all life. Unfortunately we have built economies that treat the earth as a limitless supply of resources, and a never ending sink to our wastes. We have taken and taken from the Earth, rarely giving a thought about what does the Earth itself need to maintain its health and vitality. The damage we have done and continue to do daily is a result of our excessive "taking" from the Earth, and in this way we are consuming the life of the planet in our desire to turn it into money. Dragon Dreaming projects are all based upon the principle of giving more than they take, of rebuilding damaged environments wherever possible, but also in ensuring in some small way that the environment is enhanced for all of life, as a result of its existence.

At conception we start as a single living cell. This cell is totipotent, capable of developing into all the tissue types found in the living human body of each of us. Already the degree of organisation is impressive. Contained within its living membrane is the instructions on how to engage with the living world of the womb of the mother, to negotiate the resources required to grow into what will be born as a separate individual, and how to eliminate toxins which if allowed to accumulate would poison the developing individual. But it is not just the instructions we get from our mothers or fathers. It is also the structures which allow this set of instructions to communicate within the interior and exterior environment in which the cell finds itself. Rather than just slavishly following a set of instructions, as we have been led to believe by genetic engineers, the process of building a new life can rather be seen as a blueprint to outline a process for communicating with the environment in which the single living cell finds itself. It is through the responsive organisation of inputs and outputs, between the cell and its environment that allows the new life to develop.

Because the specific environment is found to be responsive and nurturing, the single cell divides and divides again. But each division is not strictly identical. The environment of the cytoplasm of the cell and the special organisation of the cell within the womb and even the gravitational field of the earth interact to create specific planes of cleavage between cells. Already these special orientations between the cell and its environment create axes of orientation, which begin to change the speed and composition of subsequent cell divisions.

In a frog embryo, for instance, two points on the developing forebrain are chemically induced to bulge out at both sides to form the *optic vesicles* which continually expand until they com in contact with the cells located at the surface of the head. The tissue of the optic vesicle produces another chemical signal — the inducer — that goes to the surface tissue. The surface tissue of the head in the region of contact with the optic vesicles thickens, forming a *lens placode*. The lens placode bends inward, folds over on itself, and ultimately detaches from the surface of the head to produce a structure that will develop into the transparent lens. The lens in turn induces the surface tissue that is now over it to develop into a cornea. The optic nerve strengthens with the first stimulation of the retina of the eye with light from the external environment. Nerves that are not attached to receive such stimulation go through a pre-programmed death, a process of apoptosis. In this way, those cells that are not in communication across the boundary of the individual membrane, atrophy and die. The question is which comes first, the inducer or the signal that stimulates the production of the inducer. This "chicken and egg" pattern is meaningless as it would appear that it is organised as a system of complex intercommunication that is seamless – with no beginning and no end. So it is with our projects. In our engagement with the world, between the individual and the environment, it is seemless, a process with no beginning and with no end.

ESTABLISHING A FRAMEWORK

How do we use these understandings to build a truly successful project? Whilst no two projects are the same, and there are vast differences between a government initiative, a business enterprise, a community service or an individual activity, surprisingly they all tend to follow the same underlying pattern. Even when people are totally unaware of the fact, successful projects of any kind tend to follow the same process. Unsuccessful projects usually fail as a result of neglect of some critical factor that, if present, could otherwise result in the project's success.

Every project ever undertaken starts with an idea, an intention of a single person. It is this idea that gets "thrown forwards" in front of a group, who come together for the specific purpose of achieving the project. In this way the project is a little like throwing an idea in the face of an obstacle with the intention of overcoming the obstacle and fulfilling the idea. This is as if one would throw a hat over the wall, with the view to finding a way, over, under or around the wall and so retrieving the hat.

Only some ideas have the potential to become projects. Again, the idea of "throwing forward" helps us achieve an understanding of a possible project idea. In every case a "projectile", if thrown with intention, aims to hit a target or goal. To create a project around one of your ideas it is important that this idea be expressed in a way that enables it to serve this function.

A goal is an object of effort, ambition, destination or objective at which one aims. Ideas such as these are being created all the time. Even without noticing it the average person creates a goal idea

at the rate of about one every ten minutes of their waking life. Over ninety percent of these goal ideas die stillborn. They fail to get acted upon. Less than one in ten make it to the next step.

With everyone creating ideas all the time, there are many billions of possible project ideas all in circulation at any one time. In fact there are more possible project ideas than there are heads to hold them. In this way, project ideas compete for space, head space, in order to grow to the next stage. Thus most ideas disappear into the "background" just becoming the "noise" of our thoughts. If you don't know what "chatter" I am referring to here, it is the voice in your head that just asked the question, "What is the chatter that he is referring to?"

If as suggested above, all successful projects are the result of an encounter between an individual and their environment, how do we use this knowledge to make our dreams come true? In this encounter the individual contributes inputs and gains outputs. If successful, the environment also contributes inputs and gains outputs and there is an open interface between the individual and the environment. This can be shown diagramatically as follows.

Into this encounter, the individual who originates the project invests something of themselves. It may be just a little time or effort. It may be something more considerable. The greater the investment, the greater the "stakes", the greater the possible return. Invest little and you will gain little. Thus the individual's "input" into the encounter of the project will have a very real effect determining one's "output". In many projects the output is less than the input, and the project is extinguished – it becomes too hard or too difficult to continue. The demands of the individual are not seen as commensurate with the rewards. In these cases, what is called "burnout" results – the imbalance of "giving" more and "taking" less means that your participation in the project is unsustainable.

The environment involved in any project encounter is not passive. The world is not an inanimate machine or simple mechanism – a series of levers or buttons which one manipulates to get one's ends. The world, the environment you encounter is fully alive. It is as alive in fact as any individual, in fact it is more alive than the individual – as the individual draws his or her own life from out of this larger life.

Thus the environment too has inputs and outputs in the case of a successful project. These inputs come in many forms. It can come from other people, who you enrol into your project. It can come from the more than human world of which you are a part in the form of resources and material drawn from that world. It can come in the form of information of which you were previously unaware, or new sources of energy or inspiration.

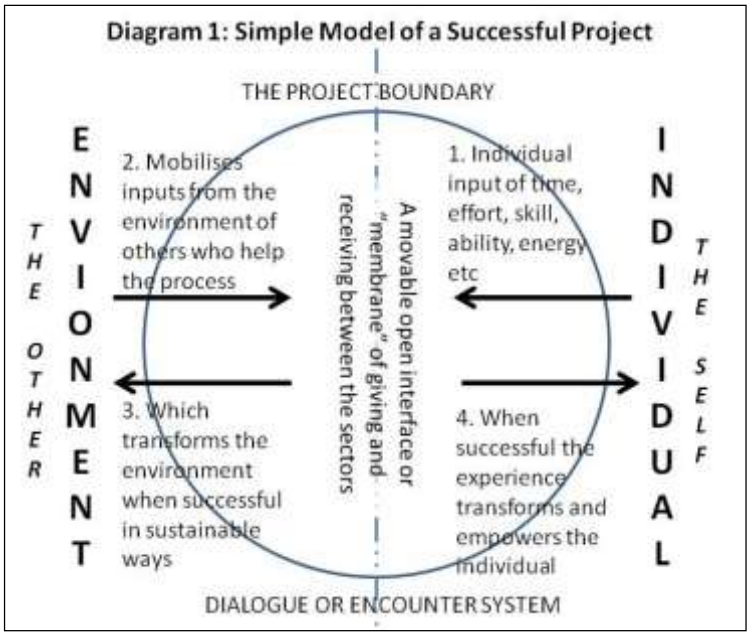
Outputs to the environment are equally important. The environment, like the individual will be changed as a result of its participation in your project. Is this change beneficial for the environment or will it in some way do harm. The name we give to this harm is "pollution" or "destruction" or "exploitation". Many projects in the past have not considered the effects on the environment – aiming merely to capture the benefits for the individual. These projects are also unsustainable. Eventually, if unattended, the environment will suffer the equivalent of "burnout" and your project will collapse. Thus the "give and take" of inputs and outputs applies both to the individual and to their environment.

Between the individual and the environment is an open interface, a "semi-permeable membrane" which has an intriguing effect. We are used to thinking of an individual as defined by their persona,

or personality. This "personality" we gauge from a person's words and deeds, what in Latin was called "per-sonae" – the mask warn by ancient actors on a stage. It is this personality which defines our "self-image" the internalised picture each of us holds of ourselves. Most people spend most of their lives as if this "picture" is who they really are. And in this way they limit themselves.

"I cannot ….." (fill in the missing word) and this helps define the extent of your abilities. This kind of self-limitation leads to the collapse of community, the destruction of the environment, war, famine and disease. It is not in fact really the individual that is so limited, but a construction made by that individual, assembled out of experiences with past environments, that leads us to assume this self-image is in some way true. But it isn't. The self-image is a construction, built by the individual as a result of their participation in past failed or successful projects. In this way a project becomes essential to how you and others define yourself. It determines who you are and what you can become.

Unfortunately many people have a very limited view of themselves and what they are capable of. Negative experiences in the past have caused them to adopt a shrunken sense of themselves, and their self-esteem has suffered as a result of these experiences. To avoid further disappointment these people seek to disengage, and they do not get involved in projects as we have defined them. They say "what difference does one person make? I cannot do anything to make a difference!" This statement, so long as it is held by the individual, is undoubtably true. But in another way it is totally false. It is true because it leads to an avoidance of projects that could make a difference. And it is false because the ting that prevents the individual from "making a difference", more than anything else, is their own narrow and restricted self image. The worst form of prejudice in the world, far more damaging than any racism or sexism is prejudice against yourself – as ultimately this alone is the only form of prejudice from which you cannot escape.

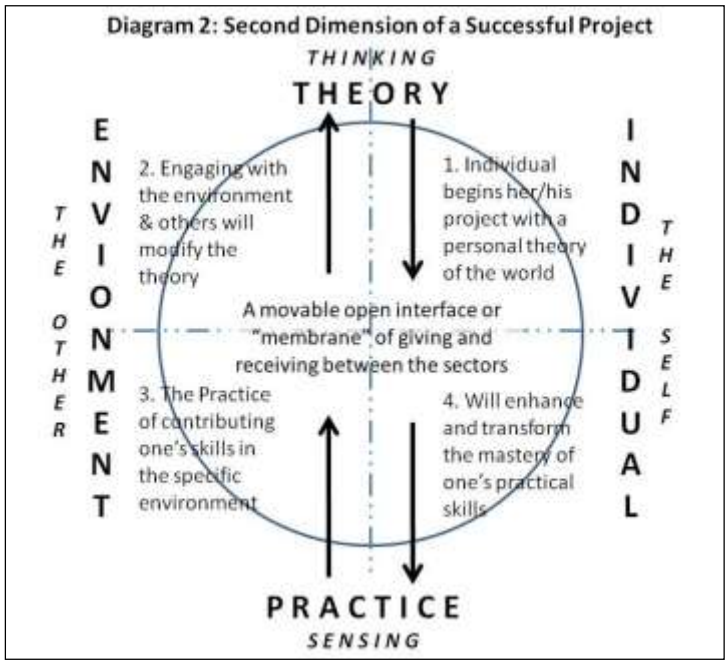


What abilities do you possess now? Participate in someone else's successful project and you will gain greater skills and abilities. Create a successful project of your own, and you will grow in ways you cannot possibly imagine. Everyone who undertakes big things in life, who "makes a difference to the world" is a person who is actively and continuously creating and participating in their own and others' projects. In fact, participation, engagement with the world, through involvement in "projects" is the way life itself grows and is sustained. It is both what creates the sense of "self" around which the personality develops, as well as creating the sense of "the other", the world or environment in which you live. Should you seek to change either your sense of self, or your view of the world, the only way that truly works is to engage in creating your own project.

The model of the project we have created so far, of the projects "encounter" perched between the individual and the environment with inputs and outputs on both sides, and an open interface down the middle is only part of the process. In life, activity is always the greatest at the "edge" closest to the boundary or the membrane. Living membranes are maintained by exchanges, of information, energy and materials, which pass in an ordered fashion across the membrane. They are flexible and shift and change.

This is exactly what happens in a successful project. When a project starts, this open interface is displaced towards the environment, indicating that most of the input, most effort, energy and resources comes from the individual, and there is little contribution from the environment. This stage of project development is also associated with little return for the individual involved - their input to output ratio may be of the order of ten units of effort input to one unit of output returned. There will be not much happening on the "environment" side of the boundary. Thus the first part of the project is the phase in which the individual gives the most to the success of the project. The "open interface" will thus have shifted. It will be displaced to the left, as all the activity will be on the individual's side of the line. Towards the completion of a successful project, most of the energy, material resources and information will be coming from the environment. The individual will be just part of a team of people involved. At this stage the individual is able to take some return from the project, even if that return is something as insubstantial as acknowledgement of their achievement or recognition of their effort.

And ultimately, if the project is to survive, the initiating individual will have to leave the team. Eventually, if truly successful, the individual is able to leave the project altogether, with all of the effort now coming into the project from an empowered environment. In such cases your project can survive your departure. These situations are shown diagramatically above. At this time the boundary between the individual and the environment will have been displaced well over to the right. The second stage is when the environment gives the most.



Failure to recognise this fact, or to create a structure that allows for this give and take between the individual and the environment is a major cause for the failure of many projects. Some people in life are really good at initiation – they are natural "givers", who may take leadership positions. Others are good followers and supporters, people who, whilst not prepared to take the initiatory role are excellent at supporting the ideas of others. A successful project needs both kinds of people.

This "model" of a successful community, however, has a number of weaknesses. Firstly it is only one dimensional - treating the project as a system with inputs and outputs in two directions only. This model also considers your project as a "black box". It does not show us what systems are operating

within your project that will secure its ultimate success. To enhance our model we can impose on this system a second dimension as follows.

Truly successful projects are those that integrate thinking and sensing, and theory with practice. This is because theory with no practice is irrelevant and practice without theory is blind. What this means is that thought is essential in the process, your view of the world with which you start the project is vital to its success. You must not ignore any theories that have any impact on the practical considerations of your project, as otherwise you risk failure. Equally, if you are engaged in a practice for which there doesn't exist a sound theoretical framework, then you are also risking a disaster. Once again, as before, there are inputs and outputs from your theory. This means that as you start you will tend to contribute theoretical understandings and beliefs in undertaking your project. Equally, as your project proceeds, your theoretical understandings will be changed by the experience of your project. Similarly there are also inputs and outputs in your practice. Again an open interface exists between theory and practice, asthe diagram illustrates.

Once again, as your project proceeds, this open interface moves. At its commencement, your project will be largely theoretical. As it proceeds, so the practical component must grow, as shown in the following diagram. Eventually, perhaps the practical considerations may seem to overwhelm the theoretical, and you may arrive at a point where things occur almost "automatically" without much thought at all - similar to the situation found with an experienced person driving a car. This can be dangerous to your project, as truly successful projects see this line separating theory from practice moving backwards and forwards, as people reflect critically upon how their project is going. This backward and forward movement between theory and practice is called "Praxis", and an effective praxis is vital to the success of any project you may undertake.

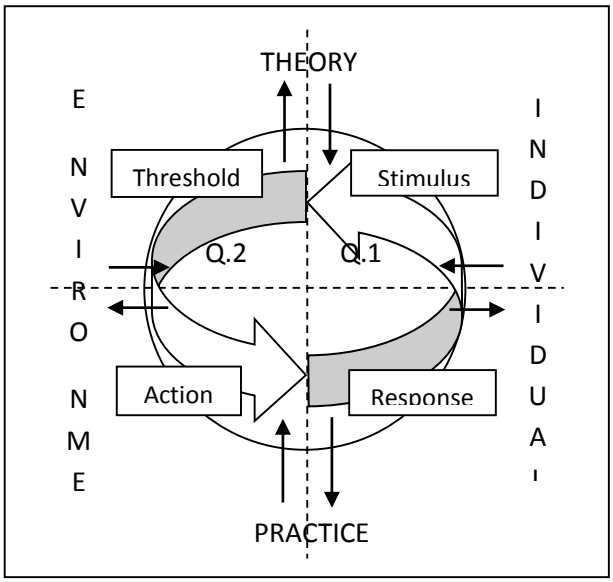
We can now superimpose this second dimension upon our one dimensional model created above, as follows. This gives our project four quadrants, and provides a framework for any successful project. This framework, however, still considers the process essentially as a "black box" into which there are different inputs and outputs, but it does not allow us to consider the process of successful project development that occurs inside this "black box".

ELABORATING THE PROCESS

The process we will use here is derives from Gregory Bateson, the philosopher, biologist, anthropologist and psychologist, and from the General Systems Theory of Ludwig Von Bertanlaffy. In his book "Steps Towards an Ecology of the Mind", Bateson proposed that we have a profound cultural misconception about the nature of intelligence. We believe intelligence resides merely in the head, and that some people have more "head stuff" than others. But in fact intelligence is "a pattern which connects" an individual with their environment. It is a "pattern behind the pattern". For example, Bateson invites us to consider a man who undertakes to chop some wood. From where does this intention come. Does it start with the individual, or does it start with the environment in which chopped wood is a possible part? As Bateson shows the degree to which the individual can undertake this task is determined by a constant series of multiple feedback loops between the wood, the chopper, his posture and stance, how he holds and swings the axe, the resistance of the wood and where the axe falls. This in return determines how the chopper will raise the axe, and swing his body to give the axe maximum velocity. The intelligence resides in the

interconnectivity of information which flows from the environment to the man, back to his environment and back again. The elements in this scene are connected by unceasing flows of information, energy, matter and entropy, creating a coherent behaviour in the world-individual environmental continuum. Bateson considers that information may be defined, in this way, as "a difference which makes a difference", a "pattern that connects". Too much information results in "information overload" in which the bits of data become indistinguishable from "noise". Information therefore starts as a stimulus. But the stimulus by itself is not enough, as the system needs to recognise the stimulus as a signal, different from background noise. The stimulus therefore needs to cross a recognition threshold. Once the stimulus crossed this perceptual threshold and has been recognised, this then results in some action on the part of the environment. This action is perceived by the individual as a response. These four steps for the flow of information - Stimulus, Threshold, Action and Response can be considered as the first level of analysis of the stages of the process for any successful project.

Think of any successful project with which you are familiar. This successful project began with a stimulus. See if you can identify the stimulus to the project you have chosen to do using the Dragon Dreaming process. What was the intention behind the process that got your project started? This stimulus is important, but it is likely that it was not enough however, for the project to get started. This stimulus needed to cross the threshold of recognition for a significant number of people before it could become successful. What thresholds can you identify in the case of this successful project? Crossing the threshold then results in action taken by the community environment in which the project was working. What action did this successful project solicit from the environment? Finally, what was the response that this action produced that determined its success?



Having worked out the four steps in the case of a previous successful project, now take the time to consider the four steps in the case of the project you are planning.

The response stage generally produces one of two results. Either it can act to positively reinforce the stimulus, producing the possibility of a stronger stimulus, greater recognition, more action and even more response, thus resulting in some kind of chain reaction, or it can negatively reinforce the stimulus, leading to its extinguishment, bringing the change to an end. Between these two results is a response which increases if it falls below a certain critical value, but decreases if it is higher than this value. One example of such a response is the thermostat which governs the motor of a refrigerator. If the thermostat shows the temperature has risen to cross a critical threshold, it will turn the motor on and cool the interior. If it gets to cold and crosses another threshold, then it will turn the motor off, and slowly the refrigerator will warm up.

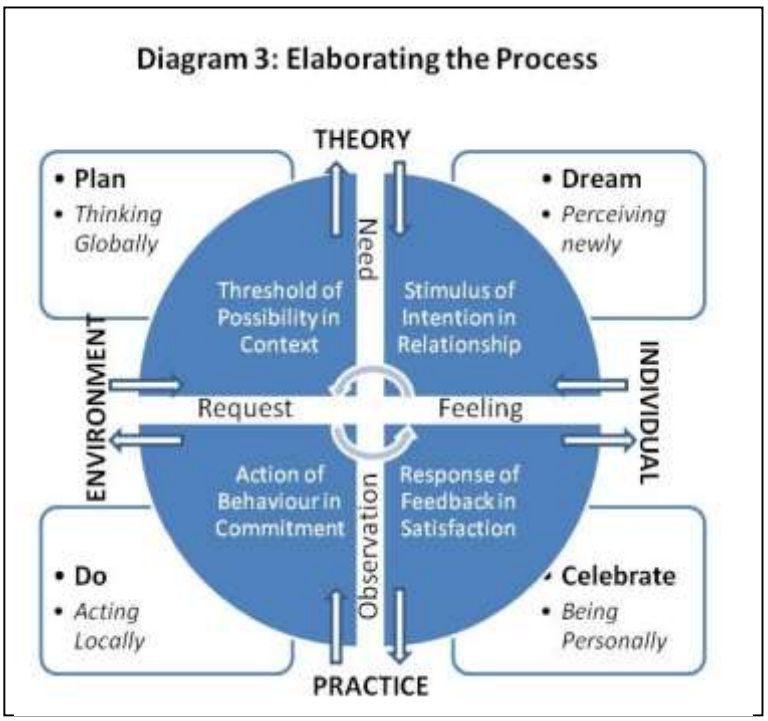
These different kinds of behaviours are found, in various sequences, as stages in the development of all successful projects. Thus at its start, a successful project seeks to encourage a chain reaction of

care and concern on the part of the people involved, to mobilise the resources required and to grow strong enough to undertake the work that it seeks to accomplish. Eventually, however, the successful project will arrive at a second transition where continued explosive growth becomes counterproductive or indeed, may even damage the outcomes the project is seeking to secure. At this stage a "negative feedback loop" similar to that described above linking thermostat and motor of a refrigerator is required. At this stage your project needs to focus on achieving long-term sustainability, responding to changes in the environment that may perturb its success, and keeping matters on an even keel.

Again thinking of your example of a successful project, consider the first stage of that project in which people were aiming for rapid growth in the start up phase. In what ways did they build up the "critical mass" required for the chain reaction, in which responses produced an increased stimulus? How did they then move to the negative feedback loop, establishing limits above and below the desired optimum condition? Now try to consider the case of your proposed project. How will you build a "chain reaction" at the start of your project, and how do you plan to shift to a sustainable level for the long haul?

Diagramatically, the situation of the process for a successful project is shows as follows.

The stimulus stage to your project starts with your intention. Unfortunately most projects get stuck at the stimulus stage, and there are many good ideas and intentions that never cross the threshold into action. The threshold here is the detailed examination of possibility. It is this stage that carries the intention into action. The action that will show up in your project will always be significant changes in the behaviour of the people involved, whilst the response acts as a feedback loop to the beginning. Although as described the process is circular, successful projects are in fact positive spirals, as by the time you return to the start there has been a number of positive developments that give your project a sense of direction. Unfortunately unsuccessful projects are also frequently spirals, although in this case, the feedback loop will weaken the intention, robbing people of motivation to continue, and possibly disempowering those involved in such a way as to make them less prepared to consider a project of this type in the future.



Each of the four quadrants Stimulus/Intention, Threshold/Possibility, Action/Behaviour and Response/Feedback, is also associated with an outcome. Thus the outcome for the first quadrant is the building of relationships, relationships between you and the possible project, between all people who come to hold and accept the intention of the project, and a relationship between you and the environment in which the project

will be working. The outcome of the second quadrant will be a better understanding of the context of the environment, its available human, material and financial resources that can be tapped, and hopefully mobilised for your project. The outcome of the third quadrant will show in the degree of commitment the people have to undertake the actions required, whilst the outcome of the fourth quadrant will show up in the amount of satisfaction the individuals working on the project gain from their involvement. Table 1. illustrates the situation regarding the four stages of your project.

Table 1: Tasks and outcomes of the stages of a successful project

Stage of Your Project	**Task required**	**Success criteria at completion**
Quadrant 1: ***Stimulus***	Generation of project ***Intention***	Establishment of all of the project's required ***Relationships***
Quadrant 2: ***Threshold***	Examination of all ***Possibility***	Understanding of the project's environmental ***Context***
Quadrant 3: ***Action***	Ensuring the necessary ***Behaviour***	Mobilising from all concerned their ***Commitment***
Quadrant 4: ***Response***	Maintaining the information ***Feedback***	Ensuring the results of the project produce individual ***Satisfaction***

In the case of the successful project that you have been considering consider the following questions. Then think about your proposed project. How will you answer these questions in your case?

1. *The Stimulus of Intention in Relationship:* How were relationships between the people involved in the project established and maintained? Did all people involved have an understanding of the intentions of the project and a clear relationship with the environment in which they were working?

   - This stage can be summarised by the word ***DREAMING***
   - It involves a person in ***PERCEIVING NEWLY***

2. *The Threshold of Possibility in Context:* Were all possibilities uncovered by the project considered? How, when and by whom were they considered? What was the

environmental context of the project and how was the proposed project effectiveness tested? How will you achieve this for your project?

- This stage can be summarised by the word ***PLANNING***
- It involves a person in ***THINKING GLOBALLY***

3. *The Action of Behaviour in Commitment:* The successful project brings around changes in people's behaviour and generates commitment to these changes. How, in the case of your example of a successful project was this achieved? In your project what will you do to ensure that people involved become committed to the change of behaviour?

- This stage can be summarised by the word ***DOING***
- It involves a person in ***ACTING LOCALLY***

4. *The Response of Feedback in Satisfaction:* Successful projects ensure that satisfactory outcomes are achieved, and that recognition of achievement occurs, and those involved are achnowledged for their efforts. How did this occur in your successful example of a project and how will you do this in your project?

- This stage can be summarised by the word ***CELEBRATING***
- It involves a person in ***BEING PERSONALLY***

THE NEXT LEVEL OF DETAIL

Having considered the nature of each stage in the process of developing a successful project, we now need to examine in detail the nature of the processes which occur within each quadrant. The model here resembles a hologram, and is, like many semi-chaotic processes, fractally organised. What does this mean?

Firstly; a *hologram* is a special kind of photograph produced by lasers, from which three dimensional images can be generated. Holograms are incredibly rich in information, and have the property that if you examine a part of the hologram, it will still contain the information required to generate the whole image. A part of this part still contains the whole.

Thus the Stimulus/Threshold/Action/Response model not only determines the differences between the four quadrants, but equally it is contained within each quadrant. What that means in the case of successful projects we will examine shortly.

Secondly; a *semi-chaotic process* is a process which exists on the "edge" of chaos. If one considers the extremes in this case as "order", in which everything is controlled, and "chaos" in which

everything is randomised and spontaneous, then the “edge of chaos” is the state in which maximum change is possible without producing dissolution and collapse. This edge is where successful projects obtain their vitality and resilience, as well as their ability to meet new challenges.

Thus, it is important to take risks, to not try to control everything and allow people to innovate and use their creativity as much as possible, without “falling over the edge”. You may like to consider how the example of a successful project you have been considering existed on this “edge of chaos” and how you propose that your intended project can foster this innovative creativity on the part of the people involved.

Thirdly; a *fractal* is an image in which as one looks at each part, one sees as much, if not more information than there is in the whole. For example - how long is Australia’s coastline? One way to find out is to get a small map of Australia and wind the coast with string. When checked against the scale of the map it will give you an answer. A more detailed map of Australia, will give a coastline with more bays, peninsulas and promontories than your small map, making Australia’s coastline even longer. Collecting small area, but highly detailed maps of the coast will generate still a longer coastline. Thus we can say that the length of our coast is determined by the scale on which we examine the data. The figures are isomorphic, the same features appear at different scales.

So with our model. Each level of the model here is fractally organized, so that each step has the four steps within it, and they each can be seen to have the same steps within them and so on, ad infinitum. The scale you will need to use will be determined by the complexity of your project, the amount of resources it requires and the number of people who will need to become involved. Small projects can stay at the level of the four stages we have already discussed - Dreaming, Planning, Doing and Celebrating. More complex projects require a more detailed examination

THE FIRST STAGE – DREAMING

In quadrant one, the stimulus to any project is an individual person’s level of *awareness*. This awareness may be something that is cultivated for a considerable length of time before a project starts, or else it may be some idea that comes to a person with a blinding flash of inspiration, apparently clear in every detail. Dreaming is a process that exists outside of linear left-brain thinking, and results from being open to the timeless “everywhen”. Such awareness is cultivated best through *mindfulness*, cultivating Pinakarri for the world around you. This awareness, while necessary as the stimulus to your project is not sufficient to get your project to happen. Most projects die before they leave the realm of being someone’s “good idea”. What is required is that you cross the threshold and become *motivated* enough to do something to make your protect happen. Successful projects are never done in isolation and are always shared, and sharing your awareness and motivation with others can be a good way of increasing your awareness and getting others to become motivated in turn. The action that results from motivation is always the *gathering of information.* This information can come informally from others as a result of your process of sharing your awareness and motivation, or else it may be produced more formally as a result of a research project, or market feasibility study to test the applicability of your idea. The result of gathering information will always have a response feedback loop that reviews and, possibly deepens and extends the nature of your awareness. The four stages of the first quadrant of a successful project therefore are

Stimulus - Awareness

Threshold - Motivation

Action - Gathering Information

Response - Review

You can now apply these four steps to your two the past and present projects.

Firstly consider ***awareness*** of each successful project. Who first had the awareness? How was it shared? What ways did the initiator use to spread his or her awareness to a larger group? How do you propose to maintain your awareness for your new project in the light of the competing demands for your time and attention? How will you spread this awareness to those people who may become stakeholders, clients or customers of your project?

Secondly consider ***motivation*** in your new project. How did the initiator maintain his or her motivation, and how did they motivate the others who gave help and assistance? Motivation may be intrinsic - the result of the satisfaction in achievement of a task well done, or it may be extrinsic, by a reward or threat of an external sanction for unsatisfactory performance. What mix of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations did the successful project use? What will you do for your new project?

Thirdly consider ***gathering information*** in the new project. What information was needed to gathered that was vital for the success of the successful project? What about your new project? Where was and is this information available? What skills were or are needed in gathering this information? In the successful project, which others gave assistance in gathering the information required. In your project, who will you have to consult with, when and where will they be available?

Finally consider the ***review*** of the information gathered in the two projects. Did the information strengthen or weaken the case for your successful project? What about the case for your own new project? Is the information sufficient to need, or do you need to go around the cycle a second time, gathering more information that may be required? What information gathering, research or analysis skills did the successful project require? Do you have the skills you will require, or are they available elsewhere.

What is happening here is that from the gestalt pattern recognition of the dreaming, we are proceeding towards theory and moving towards ever great linear or logical thinking. In summary we can say, therefore, that stage one of the project proceeds as follows

Stage 1: From the Individual to an Understanding of Theory

DREAMING - The Stimulus of Intention in Relationship

Components:

Stimulus - Raising Awareness

Threshold - Generating Motivation

Action - Gathering Information

Response - Review

THE SECOND STAGE - PLANNING

Stage two of the process of a successful project crosses the boundary between the individual and the environment. Crossing such boundaries is always a risky business. How will my project be received in the world? Will it gather sufficient support and commitment from others? Through using the Dream Circle technique, by now your project should have ceased being the project of one person and become the "property" of a group. The individual who started the project needs to be able to "let go" at this stage, to trust the process and trust the others involved. In the Dreaming Stage contradictory ideas may seemingly be held, but these conflicts are held at the level of strategy, not of need. But in planning, conflicts may erupt as others may have different ideas and give a different emphasis to the project than that held initially. Successful projects are those that manage conflict creatively, and can capture the different perspectives without dissolving into the fracas of interpersonal recrimination and unresoved negativity. This second qudrant, like the first, also has four components.

The stimulus here is *considering alternatives.* There will be a range of alternative theoretical approaches to the problems your project will have uncovered that need to be thought through, and your information gathering may have uncovered a range of different strategies that might work. No matter what we think, there are always alternatives that exist. Considering alternatives, while a stimulus, however, is not enough, as one can consider alternatives forever. By itself, it wont lead to a successful project, it has to cross a threshold. The threshold in this case is the *design of a strategy.* People don't plan to fail they only fail to plan. Your strategy, planned as a group will help to create the shared norms of satisfactory behaviour on which your successful project will depend, as well as identify the human, material and financial resources required, and the time frame in which actions can be sequenced to secure a successful outcome. Strategies, by themselves will not produce the results you need, as the case of the five year central planning of the economies of the old communist block countries demonstrated. The action that is required is a *test or trial* of the strategy, perhaps, in complex cases even a pilot project. In simple cases, this trial may be as rudimentary as a group of people jointly considering the question "what could go wrong with our project?" In more complex projects you may need to seek the opinions of other stakeholders, clients, customers, or informed people elsewhere. The response of your test or trial will be a feedback process which leads to a *re-consideration* of the original alternatives and the strategy you have designed.

The four stages of the second quadrant of a successful project therefore are

Stimulus - Considering Alternatives

Threshold	-	Strategy Design
Action	-	Test or Trial
Response	-	Reconsideration

Now, just as you applied these four steps to your example of a successful project, and then thought through what you would require in your project for the first quadrant steps, do the same now for the second quadrant. This may take some time, as it is wise not to hurry things at this stage. A factor left out or ill considered may cause your project a great deal of grief later on.

In summary we can say, therefore, that stage two of the project proceeds as follows

Stage 2: From Understanding Theory to Involving the Environment

PLANNING - The Threshold of Possibility in Context

Components:

Stimulus	- Considering Alternatives
Threshold	- Designing a Strategy
Action	- Testing and Trialing a pilot project
Response	- Reconsideration

We will return to give greater attention to some of the factors discussed here once we have finished analysing all four quadrants with greater detail.

THE THIRD STAGE - DOING

If you have come this far on your project, you have arrived at the point where you are crossing the line from theory and are getting into practice. Here begins the hard work, as this is where the bulk of the effort of your project will occur. If you have successfully completed the first stages, this work, though difficult at times, will have a clear direction and a focus, and everyone involved will see the goal to which all effort is being expended. You may even have arrived at the wonderful position where people understand so clearly what is involved that their performance is enhanced, so that two people working together effortlessly seem to achieve more than twice what two people working alone could ever hope for. This synergy and comraderie which results helps build people's

commitment to the project outcomes and ensures that they maintain the focus and application that the project requires. Again stimulus, threshold, action and response are required in this quadrant as follows.

The stimulus here is *implementation.* This involves mobilising all the resources required, and bringing them to bear upon the issues you are working with at the right place and at the right time. Doing it successfully means that you continually need to consider the threshold issues of *management and administration.* Many people consider these to be boring, but they are vitally necessary if stress is to be minimised, and time is to be managed effectively. One technique successful projects have adopted to ensure that this works smoothly is to decentralise management and administrative decisions as much as possible to those people most involved. This way they can feel it is their decision and ownership of the outcome helps to maintain that commitment so necessary at this stage. The action that is required here is continual *monitoring of progress.* It is so easy at this stage for a project to "get off the rails" as the detail of the work can seem to displace the awareness of overall goals, and tasks seem to become ends in themselves. The feedback response here is a *re-examination*. This re-examination will act like steerage on a car or like a rudder of a ship, and change the nature of the implementation, possibly having consequences also for administration and management.

The four stages of the third quadrant of a successful project therefore are

Stimulus	-	Implementation
Threshold	-	Management and Administration
Action	-	Monitoring Progress
Response	-	Re-examination

Just as you did last time, now try to consider how the successful project you have been working with managed its implementation, management and administration, how it monitored its process and how it re-examined itself to perhaps change direction mid-stream as required to achieve its overall results.

In summary we can say, therefore, that stage three of the project proceeds as follows

Stage 3: From Involving the Environment to Creating a Practice

DOING - The Action of Behaviour in Commitment

Components:

Stimulus - Implementing Your Ideas

Threshold - Management and Administration

Action - Monitoring Progress

Response - Re-examination

THE FOURTH STAGE - CELEBRATION

Most people have been exposed to this model as far as this stage, and it is often used, with varying modifications as the stages of effective problem solving, or, as "forming", "storming", "norming" and "performing", as the stages of group formation. Many community organisations that get the first three stages right, however, do not give sufficient attention to this fourth stage. They then wonder why project management meetings are so boring, or such hard work, why people do not come to annual general meetings, why staff morale seems to always be falling, or why volunteers quickly get burn-out and they leave. This is partly a cultural failing - the Protestant Work Ethic which led to the creation of industrial capitalism, believed in the ethic of "deferred gratification", which was seen as somehow very virtuous. Celebration was seen as somehow mildly "sinful", something which could be quickly dispensed with or else forgotten altogether.

All successful projects, however, involve a balance between "give" and "take", but this is often forgotten, and people are often expected to give, give more and keep giving, as though this makes for continuous success. Unfortunately this is a situation of injustice and exploitation, and will result in a widening gap in the project between those who are powerful and who dominate those who are powerless and are submissive. This injustice will accumulate and lead to a loss of commitment. Extrinsic and coercive sanctions will need to be applied to get the tasks complete, which will generate still more resentment. People may then resort to self-sabotaging behaviours that limit the project's effectiveness. Celebration is the process by which your project moves back away from a concern mainly with the environment, back towards the individual people concerned; back from the task towards group maintenance.

Truly successful projects are also those that occur in what has been called "learning organisations" and successful learning always requires recognition for good work, and acknowledgement and celebration of the achievement. It is this that gives true validation to the overall task. Conviviality helps build a strong team that can continue in the face of adversity, that always results in any project. For these reasons I usually advocate that 25% of the efforts of an organization, and 24% too of the costs, should be spent in celebration. The stimulus, threshold, action and response stages to this fourth quadrant therefore are as follows.

The stimulus to celebration, to the response of feedback in satisfaction, is always the *acquisition of new skills*. By this stage everyone in the project will have discovered that they have talents they did not know they possessed, or else by working on the project may have come to understandings, changed attitudes, or developed abilities that they did not have before. Empowerment results from this acquisition, and should always remain an important goal of every project. In the case of the successful project you have chosen, what were the new skills that those involved in the project gained from their involvement. Were these skills learned "on the job", incidentally to the activities

conducted, or did they receive some formal training and accreditataion for these skills? Are these skills continually in use, or were they used "once-off". Unfortunately, people have a "forgetting curve", and information not revised quickly becomes stale or is lost. How do you propose to "skill" those people who will be involved in your project. Is formal training an answer? Will you have an "induction program" for new staff or for new volunteers who come to join you? A useful technique is to have an "understudy" attached to each person, so if, for some reason that person has to leave, continuity is maintained and time is not lost by their replacement who may, otherwise, have to learn everything from scratch.

These new skills, by themselves are not enough, unless they cross the threshold of providing *transformative results* for all the individuals concerned. These results are being felt all the time, but often they are sub-consciously perceived, and remain below the level of awareness. For example, do staff or volunteers finish the day feeling wrung-out, tired and exhausted, or do they feel energised though "well-spent"? Are people enthusiastic about the possibility of coming together for working on what needs to be done next, or do they find it difficult to summon the energy to arrive on time, and find that they would much rather be doing something else? These are symptoms which show you "all is not right with the state of your project", and something needs to be done fairly soon.

Upon these skills, the action the individuals involved take is an exercise of *discerning wisdom*. This discernment is an act of non condemnatory judgment, which is required in every successful project. Unfortunately judgment today has a bad name as it has become associated with control and coercion, of the powerful supervising and assessing the powerless. Supervision in fact means "over-sight", and is required by everyone, in order to ensure that they feel satisfied about what is occurring. In actual fact the most successful projects are those characterised by "peer supervision", in which everyone, even project coordinators are supervised, possibly even by their staff or volunteers. The way this peer supervision may occur is by a regular contact, perhaps weekly, perhaps once a fortnight, on a friendly, informal basis, considering "one-to-one" the following questions;

"What have you been doing this last period?",

"Has it been successful?",

"What could have been done to ensure it was more satisfactory for you?",

"What do you plan doing for the next period?" and

"Are there any difficulties you foresee at the moment?"

The response of these discernments is a *re-evaluation* which will determine how the individuals involved will use their new skills to see that they can be best further applied. Finding opportunities to publicly acknowledge and recognise the efforts that individual members of your team make are also vital to project success. Again, these may take the form of an extrinsic reward (for example some financial bonus or special future consideration), or they may be intrinsic - just a statement of heartfelt appreciation acknowledging the value that this person brings to the project team. Opportunities for conviviality - "sundowners", birthdays, difficult tasks completed, new people coming to join your project, or older, valued members departing etc, should never be overlocked or missed as a celebratory opportunity.

The four stages of the fourth quadrant of a successful project therefore are

Stimulus	-	Acquisition of New Skills
Threshold	-	Transformative Results for Individuals
Action	-	Discerning Wisdom
Response	-	Re-evaluation

Attention to these details will always lead to program success. Neglect them and you will risk failure. Consider now, the case of the successful project you have been using as an example. How do they celebrate their project? What do they do to assist staff, volunteers, customers, clients or the community feel valued? Now consider what your project will do to ensure that repeated celebration is an important part of your eventual success.

In summary we can say, therefore, that stage four of the project proceeds as follows

Stage 4: Creating a Practice to Acknowledging the Individual

CELEBRATING - The Response of Feedback in Satisfaction

Components:

Stimulus - Acquisition of New Skills

Threshold - Transformative Results for Individuals

Action - Discerning Wisdom

Response - Re-evaluation

Thus we close the circle, as discerning wisdom leads back to awareness.

Putting the model together gives us twelve steps, as follows:

Again, these twelve steps should not be followed in a slavish, mechanical fashion, but rather can be seen to exist concurrently, side-by-side as an organic process. This is as a result of two reasons.

Firstly, the 12 steps themselves are a fractal, as each step contains all twelve. Thus, for example, if you are gathering information (Step 3), you need to be *aware* of what information you need to gather, *motivated* to go out and get it, *consider alternative* ways of getting it, *design a strategy*, *test and trial* your strategy, *implement* the information gathering task, *manage and administer* the

process, *monitor your progress, acquire new skills* which will produce *results for you*, and about which you will have to exercise your *judgement*. It would be possible to produce 12 step wheels, based upon this sequence for almost any activity.[1]

Secondly the wheel does not describe a circle, but in fact describes a spiral, as the awareness one returns to is not the same awareness with which the project started. As T.S.Elliot said in "Little Giddings" one of his Four Quartets

You shall not cease from discovering,

And the end of all your exploration

Shall be to arrive from where you first started

And know it for the first time.

Through the unknown, remembered gate

when the last of earth left to discover

is that which is the beginning;

at the source of the longest river

the voice of the hidden waterfall

and the children in the apple-tree

not known, because not looked for

but heard, half-heard, in the stillness

between two waves of the sea.

quick now, here, now, always –

a condition of complete simplicity

(costing not less than everything)

and all shall be well and

all manner of things shall be well

when the tongues of the flame are in-folded

into the crowned knot of fire

and the fire and the rose are one."

In fact, the feedback loops within each quadrant are interconnected across the centre by powerful connections which enforce the organic nature of the process. This central position of the wheel is in fact the magical point of power. This is the point, for instance, where theory and practice are fully integrated, and where the distinction between an individual and the environment can no longer be separated and the two become one. It is at this central point of the wheel that we find the magical state of grace, where people work together with the same grace and ease with which a school of fish can change direction, or a huge flight of birds all take to the air simulataneously and never hit each other. Truly successful projects are therefore not one spiral process, but two, as they are continually spiralling into and out of that point at the same time. The pattern created is thus a double helix, similar to that found in the giant galaxies, or in the microcosm of the DNA molecule at the heart of each cell.

The power at the centre of this model breaks down when one of the tasks identified has been overlooked or left out. At this time, instead of the project resulting in strengthening of interpersonal communication, of empowerment, humanisation, interdependence and autonomy, the process will become characterised by breakdown in interpersonal communication, disempowerment, dehumanisation, dependency, alienation and angst, and rather than being an easy transition, each step will seem like a mechanical repetition.

The reasons for this project breakdown are due to many factors. It may be that the project is inappropriate for the environment in which you are working. This would indicate a breakdown in the stage of *gathering information* concerning the viability of the project. You may not have been able to gather this information because it was not available, or because you had not *acquired the skills* necessary to conduct the appropriate survey, or because in *designing your strategy* for information gathering you had not identified sufficient resources to enable this task to occur in an appropriate fashion. Ultimately, the reasons relate back to the dimensions of a project which we identified in the framework. Breakdowns can occur as a result of

Individual Reasons: The people involved in starting the project were unable to generate or to sustain the work required for personal reasons.

Environmental Reasons: The environment in which the project was to be located was innappropriate for social, economic or environmental reasons.

Theoretical Reasons: The people involved had insufficient information, or insufficient understanding or knowledge to make the project successful.

Practical Reasons: The tools and techniques used by the project were limited or were inappropriate in some fashion to achieving the objectives set for the project.

THE STAGES OF PROJECT GROUP DEVELOPMENT

Obviously to carry your project through to successful completion will require the efforts of many people. It has been said “a success has many parents, only failure is an orphan”. Various models of group development are available. All of them fit to a greater or lesser extent within the model outlined. One of the most appropriate models developed considers the following four aspects:

1. The personal and interpersonal relationships that occur
2. The task the group needs to achieve to move on to the next stage
3. The typical behaviour observed at this stage in group development
4. The group emphasis at this stage of its development

This model considers that there are five stages of development, which nevertheless can be fitted fairly comfortably on our model as follows

- Pre-Forming: is concerned with the formation of your project group. It related to Awareness and Motivation (steps 1 & 2) in our 12 step model
- Forming: is when the group comes together for the first time. It relates to Gathering Information, and Considering Alternatives.
- Storming: is concerned with issues of decision making, leadership and power and conflict.. It is concerned with the steps of Designing Strategies, Testing and Trialing (steps 5 & 6) in our model
- Norming: is concerned about establishing agreed operating principles. It relates to Implementation, Management and Administration, (steps 7 & 8) in our model
- Performing: is concerned about achieving the tasks required. It relates to Monitoring Progress and Acquiring New Skills (steps 9 and 10) in our model
- Transforming (or Mourning): is where the results of a project actually occur, both for the individuals and the environment in which they are working. It is often concerned about effectively replacing members in the group, saying goodbye to old leaders. It relates to Results for Individuals and Discerning Wisdom (steps 11 and 12) of our model

INDIVIDUAL LEARNING STYLES, LEADERSHIP AND PERSONALITY TYPES

This model for projects is has immense explanatory power. Looking at the relationships built between people show connections with personalities, individual learning styles, and the requirements of leadership.

GETTING FROM HERE TO THERE: A TOOL FOR DIAGNOSING WHAT GOES RIGHT AND WHAT GOES WRONG

In this paper we have suggested that successful project lead to interdependent empowerment of the people involved. Unsuccessful projects will result in situations of disempowerment and dependency. You can actually use this set of symptoms to diagnose the strengths or weaknesses of the various stages in your project.

Table 2: Symptoms of Empowerment and Dependency

Stage of Project	Symptoms of Empowerment	Symptoms of Dependency
Awareness	Growing awareness of your self, of others, and the environment. Growing self esteem and self acceptence	Lack of awareness of self or others, "false consciousness" and ignorance of self
Motivation	Highly challenged by the situation, keen and enthusiastic for the project	Low motivation. The issues seen as too big or too fuzzy to effectively deal with
Gathering Information	Actively searching for new perspectives and relevant information about the issues concerned	Little access to relevant information. There is no appropriate theory on which to shape action
Considering Alternatives	Great "Lateral thinking" occurs about new alternatives and possible solutions	No alternatives are perceived. There is no real choice available
Strategy Design	Practical propositions are made which can transform the possible suggestions into the probable events.	A fatalistic attitude prevails. People tend to apathetically accept the status quo. No change is seen as possible
Test or Trial		

	People accept risks appropriately. Willingness to "give it a try"	People avoid the situation in an attempt to minimise all risks
Implementation	Engagement with the environment, concentrating on "the job to be done"	Distracting activities occur in order to withdraw from contact with the situation
Management and Administration	Creativity is channelled and focussed, minimising stress by keeping sight of the goal	There is no future vision. People minimise stress by living from day to day
Monitoring progress	The outcome of personal inputs are clear. Actions are modified swiftly and appropriately	Impractical solutions are attempted. Actions are not changed, confirming feelings of powerlessness
Acquiring of new skills	Personal skills are enhanced. Mastery is achieved and new abilities gained	Deskilling of the individual occurs. People involved have a growing negative self image
Transformative Results	Positive results contribute to an improved quality of life of all concerned.	Progressive loss of control, with lowering self esteem of large groups
Discerning Wisdom	Increasing validity and accurate discrimination of discernment	Acceptance of limits determined by others. Mimicry of the powerful

This chart can be used in any project to see where an individual blockage or holdup occurs. When you see the appropriate symptom, in the case of dependency it will be because either there is a weakness in your project at that point which needs to be addressed, or else in the case of empowerment it is because your project may be strong and well developed in this regard. The way to get out of the difficulty lies in accepting a degree of common ownership for the issue, and as a group, focusing attention in a non-blameful way on finding a common solution. In cases of conflict, third party mediation may be appropriate, but in any case, this knowledge of "where you are stuck" can be immensely helpful.

Where to from here? This Fact Sheet a part of a series of papers which provide practical and applicable tips and techniques, hints and helps for a variety of situations. Depending upon where

you are at in your project you may find information here is applicable. Alternatively you may like to contact the John Croft,) email: jdcroft@yahoo.com. Good luck with your project.

[1] John Croft's "Dragon Dreaming: A Manual in Personal Empowerment, Community Building and Environmental Action" has considered 120 different tasks using this model.