

TRANSFORMATION IN COMPLEX ADAPTIVE SYSTEMS (CAS)



Gilbert Brenson-Lazan
Adapted from a model by Glenda Eoyang (2003)*

OUR CHALLENGE AS CHANGE FACILITATORS



A SELF-EVALUATION

“Every time I finally find an answer, someone changes the question.”

Mafalda



1) WHEN I CONTRACT WITH A NEW CLIENT...

1. ...I guarantee specific results or deliverables
2. ...I determine the expectations of the client as far as results are concerned.
3. ...I indicate to the cliente what I expect as a result.
4. ...I recognize that the results are going to emerge during the length of the process.

2) WHEN I BEGIN A NEW PROJECT...

1. ...I follow the process step by step.
 2. ...I begin with a clear plan y am willing to modify it during the process.
 3. ...I begin with a plan and fully expect to change it frequently during the process.
 4. ...I only plan the first step and then I plan each further step as the group develops more information and insight.
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3) MY INTERVENTION PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES...

1. ...almost never vary.
2. ...are standardized but I make some changes depending on the client.
3. ...generally follow similar patterns, formats or protocols.
4. ...are designed to meet the specific needs of each client.

4) I BELIEVE I CAN PREDICT THE REACTION OF AN ORGANIZATIONAL CLIENTE...

- 1.** ...almost all the time.
- 2.** ...usually.
- 3.** ...sometimes.
- 4.** ...almost never.

5) WHEN I PLAN AN INTERVENTION, I MEET WITH AND COLLECT INFORMATION FROM...

1. ...top management.
 2. ...top and middle management.
 3. ...key people and stakeholders in key departments.
 4. ...a diagonal sample of all departments and levels.
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6) THE INDIVIDUALS OF AN ORGANIZATION SHOULD BE MOST VALUED AND REWARDED FOR...

- 1.** ...obeying the rules and and complying with prevelant norms.
 - 2.** ...their honesty regarding sources of successes and failures.
 - 3.** ...their willingness to improve their level of competencies.
 - 4.** ...creating new patterns or networks of interaction.
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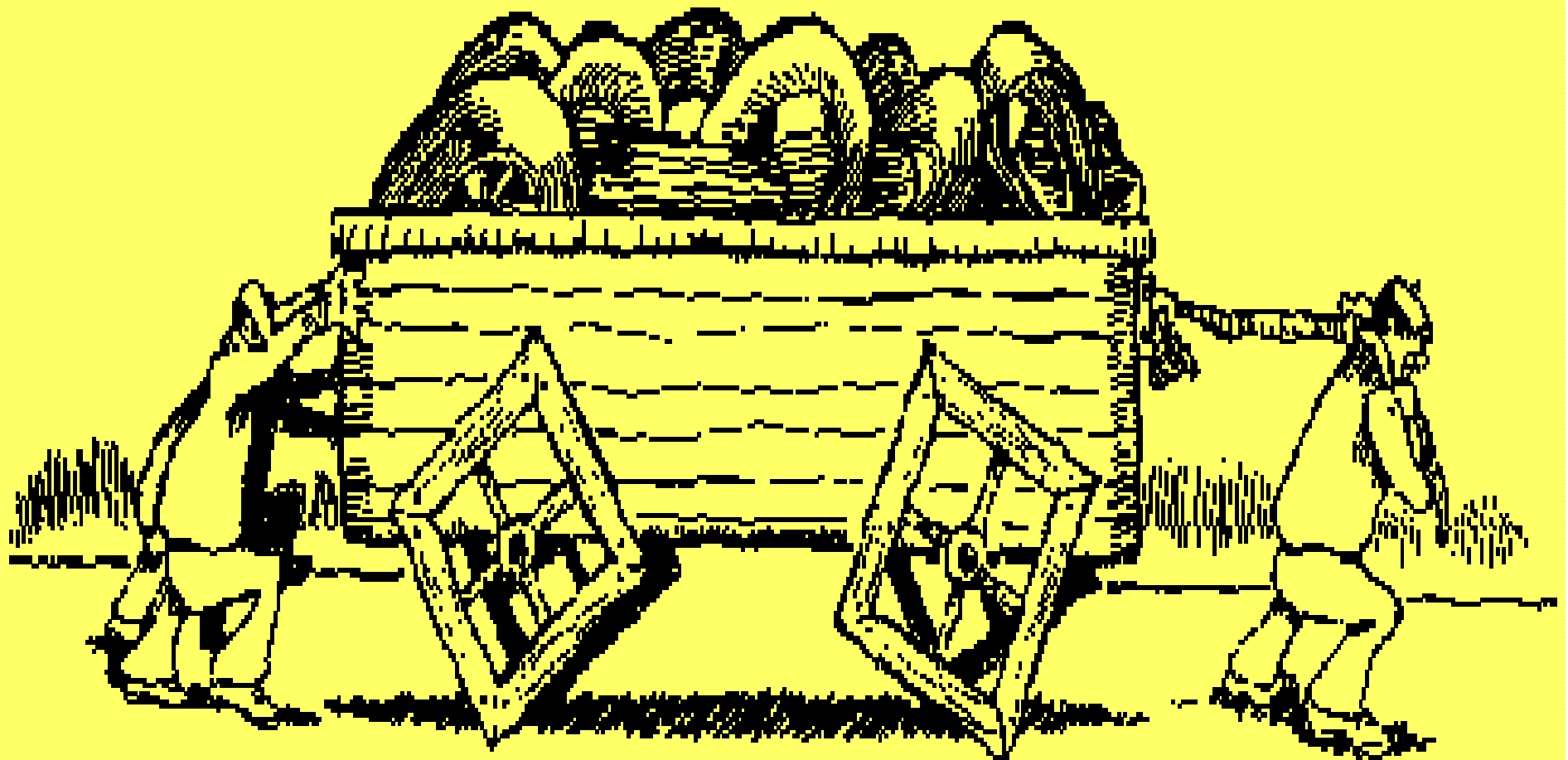
7) I PREFER TO INITIATE MY INTERVENTIONS WITH...

1. ...top management.
 2. ...key decision-makers.
 3. ...the people or groups the most require the change.
 4. ...any level or group within the organization.
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8) THE SUCCESS OF A TEAM GENERALLY DEPENDS MOST UPON...

- 1. ...a strong or charismatic leader.**
 - 2. ...the quality of its interactions.**
 - 3. ...alliances and synergies with other teams.**
 - 4. ...the autonomy of its members.**
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WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

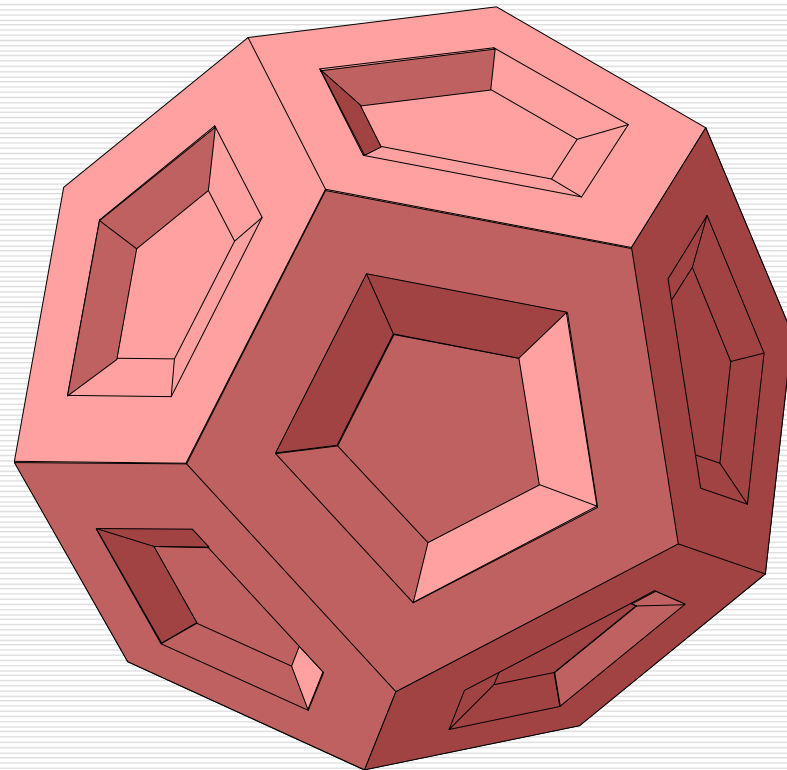


Scott Simmerman, Square Wheels

CAPRA'S VISION:

- ∅ "We must advance from the scientific administration of Taylor y Fayol, to a form of the systemic administration: the vision of an organization as a living social system."

Fritjof Capra, 1996



THE THREE SACRED PARADIGMS OF TRADITIONAL THINKING

Ø #1: Transformation
begins at the top.

Ø #2: Efficiency depends on
control.

Ø #3: Results can be
predicted.

COMPLEX ADAPTIVE SYSTEMS

- ∅ The Complex Adaptive System (CAS) evolves in accordance with three principles:
1. Order is emergent and not hierarchical.
 2. Organizational history is irreversible.
 3. Organizational future is unpredictable.

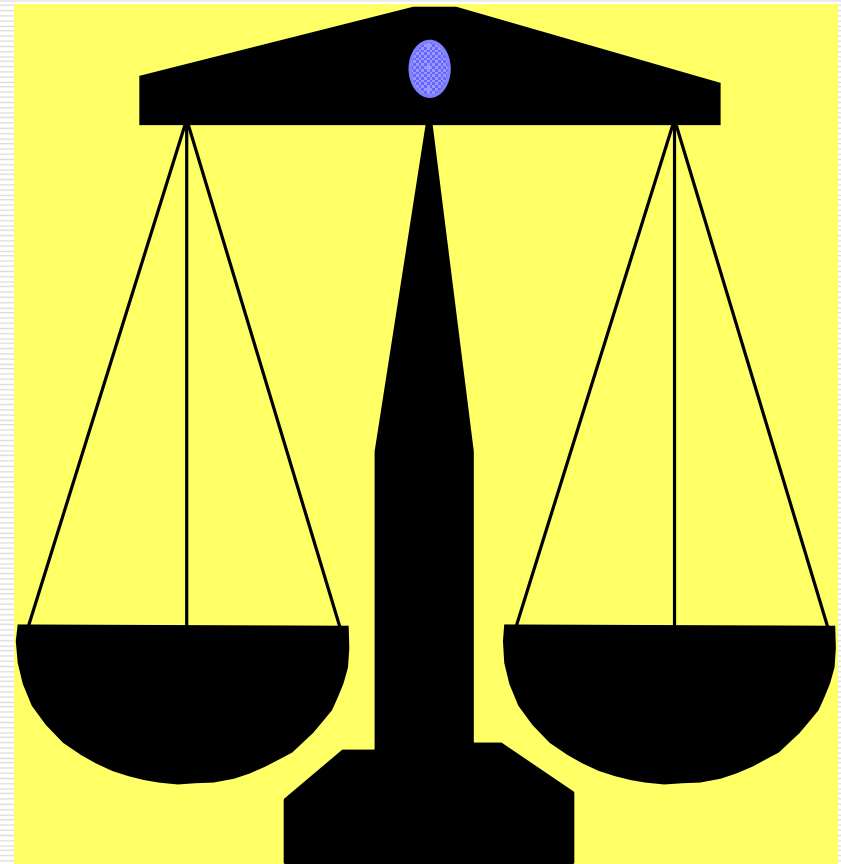
DIFFERENT NAMES; SAME PROCESSES

- ∅ Autopoiesis (Biology)
 - ∅ Sistemas Adaptivos Complejas (TI)
 - ∅ Deterministic Chaos (Mathematics)
 - ∅ Dissipative Structures (Termodinamics)
 - ∅ Emergent Structures (Social and Biological Sciences)
 - ∅ Fractal Geometry (Matematics)
 - ∅ Non-Linear Dynamics (Engineering)
 - ∅ Self-Organizing Criticality (Computarized Simulation Models)
 - ∅ Self-Organized Systems (Biology)
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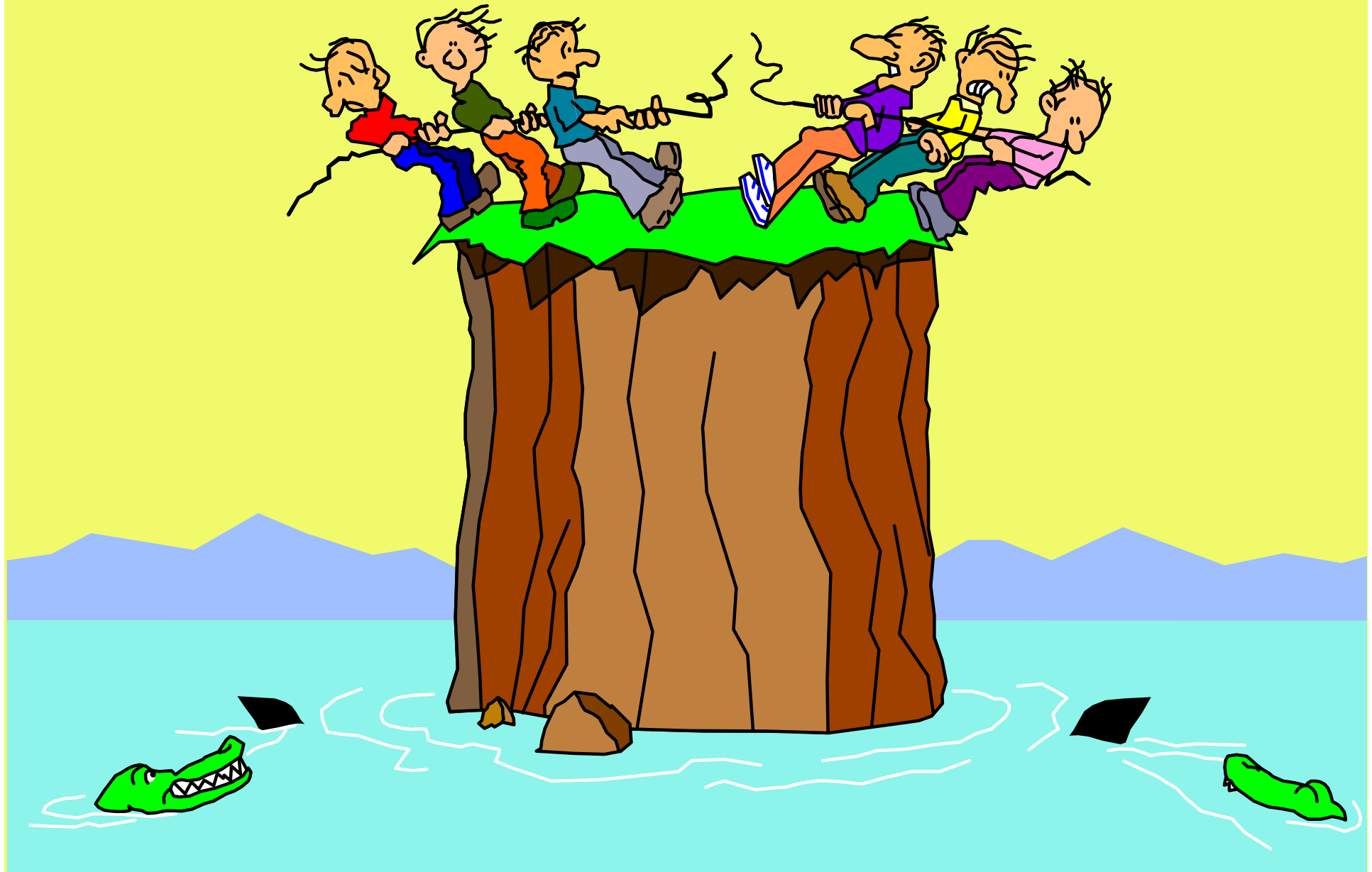
CHANGE AND ORDER

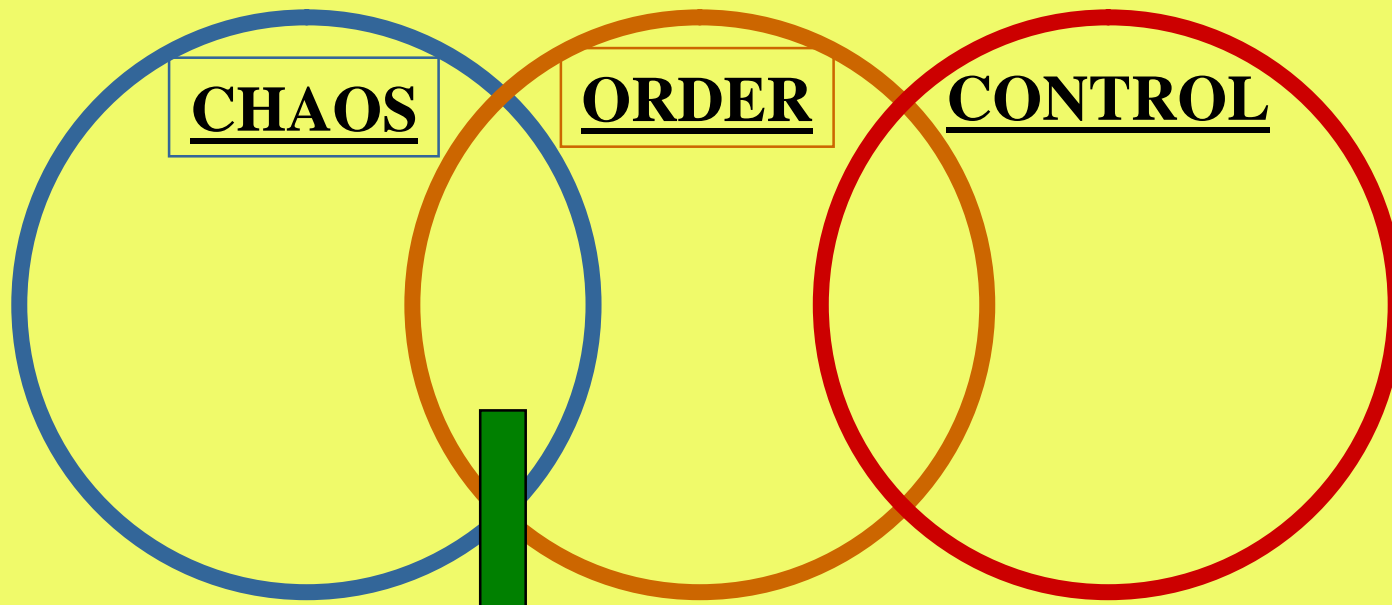
∅ “The art of progress consists in maintaining order within the change and change within the order.”

Alfred North Whitehead



CHAORDIC TRANSFORMATION





CAORD

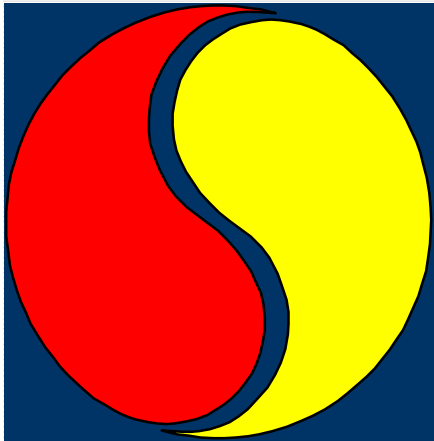
THE ELEMENTS OF CAS TRANSFORMACIÓN

∅ Delimited Spaces

∅ Diversity of Content

∅ Synergistic Processes

DELIMITED SPACES



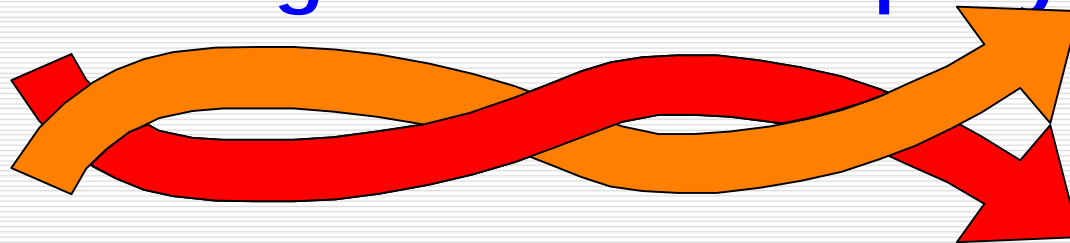
- ∅ A space in which new patterns and relations can emerge.
- ∅ Semi-permeable limits of the system to permit the creation of organizational identity.
- ∅ They can be physical (geographical, offices, etc.), organizational (teams, departments, functions, etc.), behavioral (identity, culture, etc.) and conceptual (mission, norms, etc.).

THE FACILITADOR CREATES AND MAINTAINS APPROPRIATE SPACES

- ∅ **Stimulating reduced specifications:** *“What are the minimum necessary specifications that we need to achieve the results we want?”*
 - ∅ **Distributing control:** *“How can others participate? What do they need?”*
 - ∅ **Generating expectations of results:** *“When we reach our goal, what will have been the principle milestones?”*
 - ∅ **Stretching or shrinking boundaries:** *“What’s missing? What can we eliminate or reduce?”*
 - ∅ **Defining the business:** *“Why are we here? What makes us different?”*
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DIVERSITY OF CONTENT

- ∅ Synergy requires diversity and diversity requires inclusion.
- ∅ The greater the diversity, the greater the potential for synergy...and the greater the difficulty in achieving it.
- ∅ The required differences may include levels of power, formal education, experiences, gender, ethnic, age and thinking, learning, communicating and leadership styles.

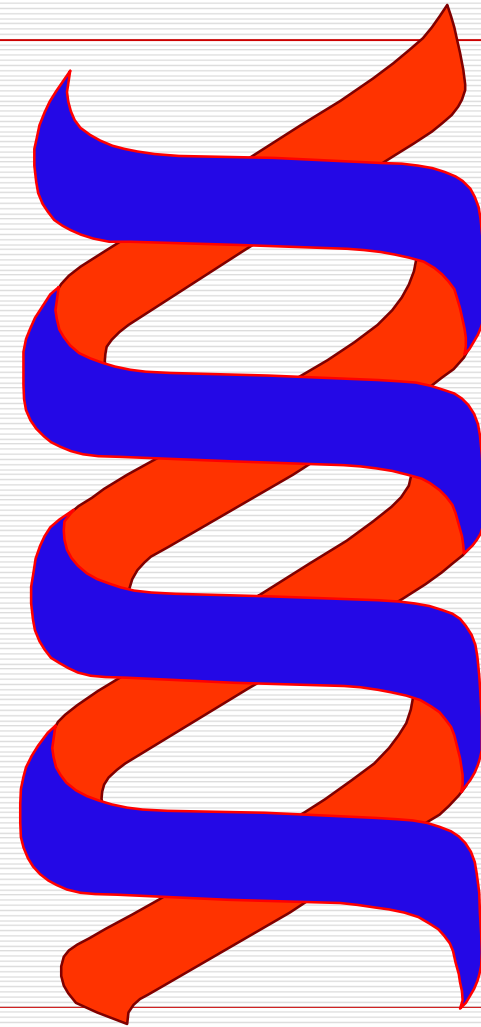


THE FACILITATOR VALUES AND AFFIRMS SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES

- ∅ **Exploring divergences:** *“In what other ways can we look at this?”*
 - ∅ **Accepting and valuing conflicts:** *“What are you thinking or feeling that and we are not yet talking about?”*
 - ∅ **Asking difficult questions:** *“How are the different scenarios looking now?”*
 - ∅ **Stimulating a diversidad of participation:** *“Who else should be here at the table?”*
 - ∅ **Looking for differences in the organizational environment:** *“What innovations would create new patterns in this organization?”*
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SYNERGISTIC PROCESSES

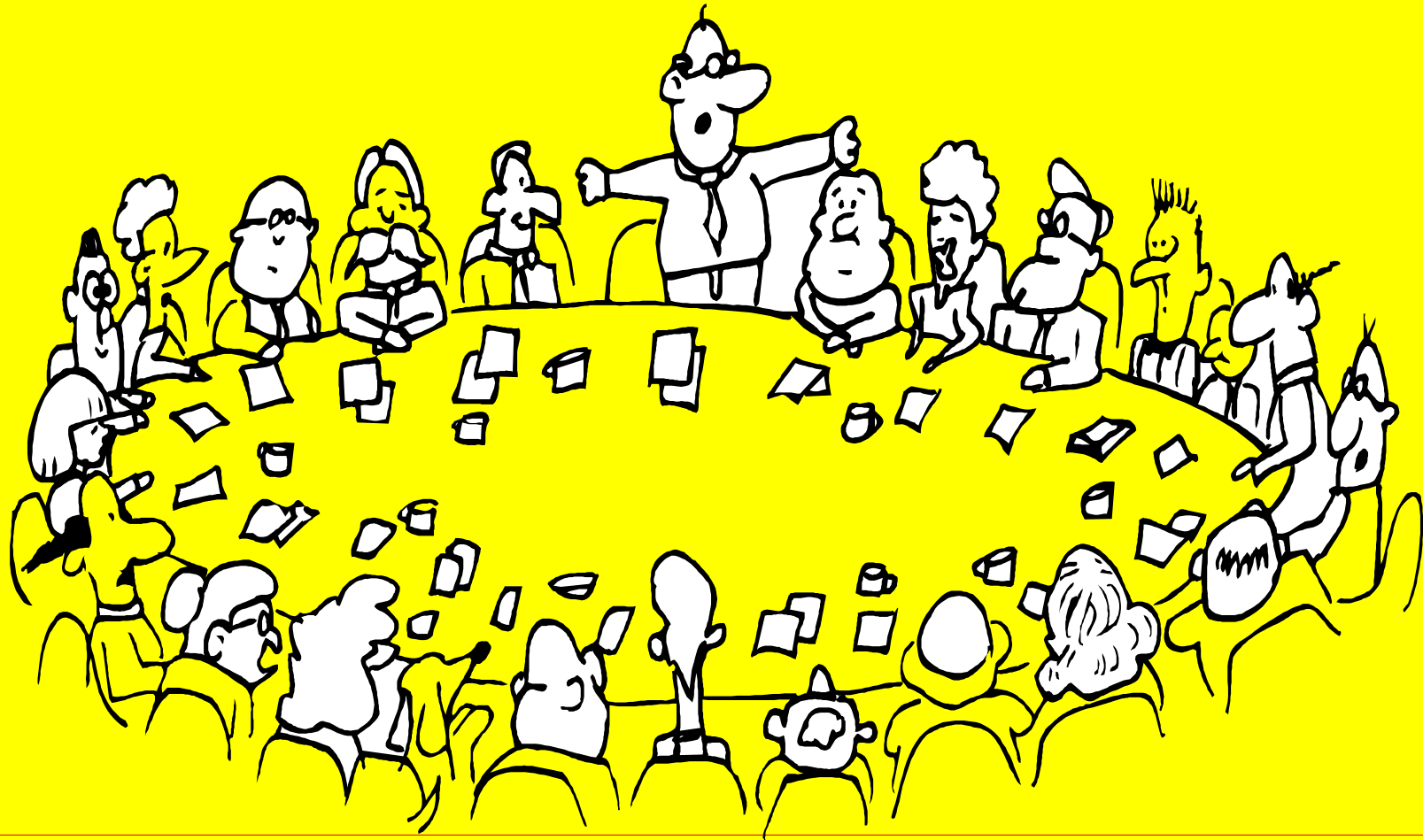
- ∅ Connections between agents that transform the interchange of information, money, energy or other resources.
- ∅ They can occur in meetings, transactions, alliances, dialogues, email, teams, consensus-building, etc.



THE FACILITATOR HELPS DESIGN TRANSFORMATIONAL INTERCHANGES

- ∅ **Stimulating and modeling feedback:** *“How am I doing? How are we doing together?”*
 - ∅ **Connecting communities of practice:** *“What professional networks can we use?”*
 - ∅ **Transforming networks:** *“How can we improve the information flow?”*
 - ∅ **Stimulating individual and organizational learning:** *“What have you learned from this situation? What questions do you still have? Where can we get some answers?”*
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SUMMARY OF MY LEARNINGS





**Everything can be taken away from a person, less one thing:
the freedom to choose any attitude in any given situation.**

Dr. Víctor Frankl

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Parts of this presentation were taken or adapted from:

Olson, Edwin and Eoyang, Glenda, FACILITATING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer, San Francisco, 2001. ISBN: 0-7879-5330-X

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