

THE IDEAL MODEL OF PSYCHOSYNTHESIS FOR BUILDING A SHARED VISION OF THE FUTURE OF ORGANIZATIONS

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Introduction

For many years, I have been involved in adult training and team coaching within both private and public organizations. One aspect that has always struck me in many of these organizations is the low awareness of the ultimate goals toward which the organizational group is directed “... where are we going?”. There is also a distinct lack of attention given to listening to and integrating the diverse viewpoints of its members regarding the future, as well as listening to their deepest aspirations.

I experienced this firsthand during a team coaching intervention conducted with officials from eight Apulian-Lucanian municipalities in the Ionian area. Before we could even work on specific goals, it was necessary to bring to light just how differently—and often in isolation — each person viewed the future of their own administration.

The consequences of this lack of a shared awareness are frequently observed as:

A split between management’s vision and that of the employees, who do not feel involved in top-down objectives imposed without real dialogue.

Latent conflicts between different organizational positions.

A widespread sense of frustration and pessimism about one’s own future and that of the organization.

Witnessing this reality is what prompted me to design and implement an intervention framework for various groups and organizations. This path is centered on building a shared vision of the future through a process that I will henceforth refer to as the “Workshop.” It offers participants coaching activities that highlight the deep connection between personal growth and professional fulfillment.

Presentation of the Program

The primary goal of the Workshop is to guide working groups to visualize the future of their organization and build a shared “Vision.” Secondary but significant goals include equipping the group with a methodology and operational tools for teamwork (which remain useful long after the intervention) and improving interpersonal and collective communication.

In bringing to light the vision that each person holds for their organization, we rely on the Ideal Model. Developed by Roberto Assagioli, this is one of the fundamental techniques of Psychosynthesis. It harnesses the plastic and creative power of mental imagery for self-transformation.

The goal is not to project an unattainable fantasy, but to construct a realistic and dynamic mental map, facilitating the transition toward the best achievable version of oneself and the group.

Several individual and collective processes are set in motion. Each participant will feel invested—even if only at an imaginative level—with a role and decision-making power that may be greater than what they actually possess. They will explore areas of desire and positive perceptions, momentarily detaching themselves from the actual feasibility of the vision. When imagining their organization, they must necessarily identify and describe their own role, outlining desired skills and duties they wish to avoid.

Many organizations only clarify their future vision during times of crisis, whereas it is highly beneficial to work on sharing this vision throughout all stages of organizational life.

This type of work yields several benefits: it reduces the perceived distance between leadership and employees, makes everyone feel more involved and motivated regarding organizational choices, and often brings to light unsuspected value systems that had not been previously considered.

Another objective of the Workshop is to value the personal potential and vocations of each individual. This is achieved by exploring and tapping into the contents of the “Higher Unconscious,” from which—as Roberto Assagioli notes—emerge “intuitions, creative inspirations, ethical insights, and transpersonal states” (Assagioli, 1973). Furthermore, it aims to build a shared perception of the workgroup as a supportive tool for both individual potential and the realization of the shared vision.

The relationship between the individual, the workgroup, and the organization can vastly improve if it is perceived

as mutually enriching, and if points of unity rather than opposition become clear.

To achieve these goals, we introduced the concept of *the Zone of Proximal Development*, defined by Vygotskij (1980) as the psycho-cognitive zone where unexpressed capacities and skills lie in seed form. Social interaction, such as the intervention of peers or a coach, has the power to make these seeds blossom.

More recent re-evaluations (Zuccheromaglio, 1996) have shown that the zone of proximal development is not just an individual domain. Companies and organizations of various kinds also have their own zone of proximal development—an area where intervention is needed to achieve growth and progress.

Individuals and organizations can work jointly to identify their respective areas for improvement and develop strategies for mutual growth.

Participants in the Workshop are asked to think precisely in these terms: to identify their own and others’ zones of proximal development, to think about the development zones of their organization, and to find ways to act as exploratory and activating agents of these growth processes. Through these processes, it becomes possible to identify common ground among various visions and create a collective vision that is far greater than the simple sum of individual ones.

In fact, interaction within a workgroup allows members to explore various developmental zones and activate creative processes. It stimulates the recognition of overlooked aspects, unperceived limits, and unexamined responsibilities (both personal and corporate). It integrates different and sometimes seemingly conflicting viewpoints, generating innovative solutions capable of pushing the boundaries of new zones of proximal development even further.

Work Methodology

The Workshop is preceded by a preparation phase: setting up an appropriate space for group work, sharing core guidelines - confidentiality, individual responsibility,

suspension of judgment -, and introducing the theme, often through a brief brainstorming session.

The groups, structured heterogeneously to maximize diversity, then work through four distinct phases, alternating between individual, small group, and plenary sessions:

1. Imagining the future vision of the organization.
2. Critical analysis of the current situation.
3. Defining strategies and the path to transition from the current state to the future vision.
4. Implementation, follow-up, and coaching.

These steps are supported by individual questionnaires, summary slides developed in groups, and a plenary presentation where the shared vision is unveiled to all participants. Facilitators use prompts and guiding questions to steer the conversation away from generalities and clichés. Furthermore, the discussion is structured through peer interviews, where participants take turns offering reflections and suggestions, reinforcing both individual awareness and group alignment.

Working with Metaphors

To transform the future vision of the organization from utopian to possible, the Workshop utilizes metaphors, which strongly structure our way of thinking, being, and acting. Prompting visual imagery often allows individuals to express concepts that are difficult to define due to emotional, cognitive, or social barriers. It brings to light contents of which we are not fully aware through a process akin to *free drawing* (Assagioli, 1973).

The first metaphor, offered by the facilitator as an example, is that of the “Bridge,” viewed as a path connecting the perception of the current situation with the future vision.

The pillars represent intermediate objectives, the spans

correspond to action plans, and the beginning and end of the bridge represent the present and future states (Zaccaro, 2001). This method allows for a dynamic formulation of goals, which can be revised based on achieved results and emerging needs.

All participants are then invited to express their ideas through metaphors. In the intervention with the officials of the eight Apulian-Lucanian municipalities mentioned earlier, some of the metaphors describing the current situation included:

- Meteorites acting like rogue splinters wandering around and destroying everything they encounter, instead of building together.
- A carousel of broken-down, inefficient cars.
- An old-fashioned 45 RPM record player, but the screw is turning at 33 RPM; it’s up to us to flip the lever.
- A soccer team where not all positions have been assigned.

The future visions, on the other hand, almost always expressed a desire for greater competence and improved interpersonal relationships:

- The sun with the entire planet
- A European train for integration
- An athlete running
- A mother with her children
- The arrival point of an arrow
- An orchestra where everyone plays an instrument to execute a shared score

Building a bridge between such diverse visions may initially seem like an impossible task. Yet, it is precisely the group discussion sparked by these images that brings concrete strategies to the surface. Each person reflects on their own responsibilities, insights emerge regarding long-crystallized situations, and the possibility of change gradually appears less remote.

The final stage of the journey is entrusted to the coach, who supports each participant in fulfilling their path through *powerful questions* and the discovery of new resources, helping them take ownership of their goals.

During the implementation phase, following Assagioli's framework, the work typically unfolds across three stages: regular contemplation of the image or metaphor of the future, leveraging the psychological law that "... images tend to produce the physical conditions and the external acts that correspond to them."; the internalization, where the image is introjected until it feels like a natural part of one's own field of consciousness; the external translation, in which the act of Will (Assagioli, 1977) leads the individual to act "as if" they already embodied that model, eventually consolidating the new behavioral pattern.

Long-Term Effects

What is most striking during follow-ups conducted months after these interventions is not necessarily the exact fulfillment of every stated objective, but rather the persistence of the guiding image. Even a year later, groups spontaneously return to referencing their metaphor - "...we are still at the stage of the first pillars," "...that train has left but it's moving slower than expected"- as a shared framework to interpret their progress and setbacks.

In several instances, the work has left a legacy of permanent practices— such as periodic alignment meetings among colleagues or the autonomous replication of the vision exercise in other areas of the organization - this indicates that the impact of the program does not end in the classroom but continues to work silently within the group's culture.

Conclusions

The use of this methodology proves to be both rich and innovative. Executives and staff members can bring the deeply psycho-social aspects of their experience into play, test the creativity of teamwork, and give voice to elements of their professional and human lives that are often undervalued.

For the author, this means focusing more than ever on the value dimension and the potential of individuals and their groups, fostering genuine well-being and healthy

growth at the personal, team, and organizational levels.

The Ideal Model, presented here in its application to workgroups, remains just one of the viable paths within Psychosynthesis and organizational coaching. Techniques such as working with sub-personalities, training the will, or disidentification practices can open equally meaningful pathways toward the same destination in different contexts and for different goals: creating organizations that are more aware of themselves and of the people who inhabit them.

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