

Use of Self

Background and History

- What we know is that Use of Self has been a part of the helping profession for quite some time
- The breath and depth of this topic from consciousness to shadow to behavior patterns can be found in the literature
- This is by no means a comprehensive history rather an overview of highlights
- Introduction of the term “**Use of Self**” came from Frederick Alexander who developed the Alexander Technique in 1890 focused on the integration of the mind/body system and the relationship among psychological and physical functioning and the role of consciousness
- Great minds in OD have long emphasized the importance of “self” in helping roles :
 - When talking about self as instrument, Bob Tannenbaum used to describe it through the concepts of social sensitivity (accurately reading the environment) and action flexibility (having the capacity to act in different ways as appropriate to the situation).
 - In the late eighties, whenever Dick Beckhard came to teach at Pepperdine, he always made the point of highlighting how important it is in consulting to know yourself in order to distinguish between “your stuff and their stuff”.
 - Charlie Seashore emphasized the linking of self-awareness, perceptions, choices and actions and the roles of self-efficacy (the ability to produce a desired or intended result) and agency (a means of producing effects) in creating more conscious, intentional and deliberate choices to act on.
 - Edith and Charlie Seashore – they were expert facilitators in that they embodied the action of “holding up the mirror” in order for people to see their full selves. Only through awareness of self can change happen, and Charlie was an expert in the development of “Use of Self”.
 - For Charlie “Use of Self” answered these questions:
 - How do I use myself in any situation I may find myself?
 - What pattern of behavior, traits, or scenarios do I constantly find myself?
 - How can I change them for a better and richer impact?
 - Charlie also used the phrase “core of rot” which is that place we all go to mentally that stands in the way of being our best self. He worked with many people over 60 years in the field, sorting out the “core of rot” that people bring into business situations.
 - I met Charlie when I attended his session Use of Self at a conference also for those of you who know of CCP – I was part of the first CCP event and Edie and Charlie were the Senior leads – holy cow what an experience!
 - Edwin Nevis Gestalt Institute focused on Presence and defines it as: The living out of values in such a way that in “taking a stance” the intervenor teaches these important concepts. That which is important to the client’s learning process is exuded through the consultant’s way of being. A Gestalt –oriented consultant attended to the client system, attended his own experience, attended to the energy or lack of energy of the client system, facilitate clear, meaningful, contacts between members of the system, and help system achieve heightened awareness of its process in completing work and addressing problems.
 - We will work with one of the key tenants of Edwin’s work later in the session
- We can only “do” what we can see, understand and act on.
- That involves our conscious self and shadow self perceiving, interpreting and behaving.
- It involves what we know and have competencies to do.
- It involves checking in with yourself on how well you are equipped and tuned into your “self as instrument”?

Two definitions in the scrapbook

Articles will be posted in the Library or on the Internet

Just a note about References – I always look at the end of an article to see who the writers read, those are also good references on the topic

Use of Self – Framework

From OD Practitioner Summer 2010 by Jamison, Auron, and Shechtman in their article they present a simple yet elegant framework for Use of Self:

- Three core competencies: seeing, knowing, doing - horizontal
- Three levels of development: – vertical
- Overview of framework will give you a way to look at your development and where to take action - the portfolio of “ourselves” is always evolving over time

Core Competencies:

Seeing:

- What we take in using our six senses
- Being aware of the world around us, **take in as much data as possible**; Self, others, context, the system.
- Key to this competency is the ability **to see “reality” as others see it** – free from our own biases be they cultural, societal, operating metaphors, assumptions etc
- See both what is visible and what is below the surface – covert – multiple types of data
- Social sensitivity to the surrounding system
- Maintain a spirit of inquiry and openness (what can trip us up is fixing too soon)

Action:

Make time for reflection, meditation, journaling, quiet, centering, our fast pace keeps us from this silence – for me walking, swimming, running, meditation, without music – notice what comes up for us and if we get hooked with our biases or assumptions

Knowing:

- Biggest piece – this is knowledge, learning, education and how we use it in our work
- Making sense of what we are seeing by using our knowledge and experience to organize the information; what are our hunches, conclusions, interpretations, there are multiple ways of knowing (empirical, rational, somatic, and we may use several at the same time, this is how we create meaning and gain confidence in our work. There is no one way that is right
- Knowing is comprised of two key interpretive domains: **learned theory (Objective)** and **internal mental models (Subjective)** learned from experience. Both are crucial to the knowing process and can operation simultaneously
- Objective domain: theories, models, frameworks etc, from these we can gain insights based on commonly held existing knowledge – OD programs, workshops, classes all contribute to support and challenge our existing knowledge
- Subjective domain: personal maps, mental models, use our internal belief system, deeply held values, tacit knowledge, life experiences, street smarts etc.
- At higher levels of development, we may have deeply internalized knowledge which can come to us as intuition (making space for reflection gives our intuition a chance to work)

Actions:

- Read professional journals and research – when I read this article I knew in my bones this would be valuable not just to know but also to experience
- Understand your different learning styles and ways of knowing: whole brain or linear for example
- Work on integrating theory and experience into usable knowledge (the hammer and nail theory)
- Recognize and know your values
- Develop awareness of your cognitive and emotional components of knowing (so you do not get tripped up by them)
- Raise your consciousness of your personal preferences and influences in decision-making

Doing:

- Capacity for executing a full range of behavioral and action choices
- Recognizing options
- Demonstrating behavioral flexibility
- Exercising personal skill and courage to deliver what ever is most helpful
- Executes the culmination of the previous two competencies: data intake, interpretation process → appropriate behavior.

Actions:

- Understand your habitual preferences – feedback is helpful and can be very revealing
- Develop the ability to execute, implement, and follow through

- Develop a portfolio of action alternatives
- Enhance your ability to manage resistance – knowing what gets triggered in you and your assumptions about that is helpful
- Develop a skill repertoire for yourself

Levels of Development:

Competencies are constantly changing: projects, books, learning

Levels of Development will be different depending on the topic

We can move up and down the levels due to a variety of internal and external factors

Functionality:

- Stage of knowing how to do something
- You have learned what to do and how to operate based on basic aspects of seeing, knowing and doing
- You must pay attention to the steps
- Feeling like you are following the book and hopefully getting it right
- Conscious incompetence

Efficacy: Capable of producing a desirable result – developing aptitude

- Increase flow – less concentration – more intuitive
- Seeing, knowing and doing become less challenging
- Expanding your ability and confidence in taking action – caution do not be lulled into overconfidence you might miss something
- We are better able to integrate and trust our ability to take in data, make meaning and take action
- Conscious competent
- You begin to feel like you get it

Mastery:

- Highest stage of development
- Characterized by fully integrated and seamless work
- One's presence has greater impact
- Seeing, knowing and doing are simultaneous
- One trusts in the process, outcome and their role in it
- At this stage one's presence, living out of one's values becomes the greatest technique for impacting change
- Unconscious competence

In Summary

- Jamison, Auron and Shechtman did good work – I hope I have represented their work in a way that they would feel honored and respected
- This model is very fluid.
- When I saw it, I got it in an instant, this is a lens for knowing where so you can begin to take action and increase behavior choices – the part of the puzzle of Use of Self that was missing – it is more than just awareness
- There is a lot more to this model
- Much more than I could present tonight
- I encourage you to print the article and see what is there for you

Evocative / Provocative

- Edwin Nevis from the Gestalt Institute added a concept to the thinking about Use of Self: Evocative and Provocative, they are modes of influence in the implementation change. In 1996 I attended a Use of Self weekend at Gestalt, we looked at the influence of Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Mother Theresa and how their persona and courage stimulated and evoked action. While the definitions in the scrapbook are brief. I think you get the point.
- During the weekend one of the most memorable activities we did was to sit in a circle with someone in the hot seat, they passed around a tape recorder with a blank tape in it: each person was asked to speak into the microphone and provide their answer to this question: When I am in your presence you evoke in me... I still have the tape and the experience and the tape have stayed with me over those many years.
- While we have not been working together for several days we have spent enough time for people to get a sense of us, since we bring who we are to what we do and how we show up. I would like you to have this kind of experience. Doing this activity was the driving force to not talking about your jobs so people in the room would get a sense of who you are.