



VALUE CLARIFICATION - AN EFFECTIVE PROCESS TO FACILITATE ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE AND BUILD A CONDUSIVE CULTURE FOR GROWTH

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When an accident deprived the village Headman of the use of his legs, he took to walking on crutches. He gradually developed the ability so much that he could dance and perform pirouettes. He also trained his children in the use of crutches.

By the fourth generation, no one in the village could walk without crutches. It had become a way of life.

One day a young man demanded to know why everyone had to walk on crutches. The amused village elders, in order to teach him a lesson asked him for a demonstration.

On Sunday at 10'O clock in front of the whole village gathering the young man stood upright and dropped his crutches, took a bold step forward and fell flat on his face. With that everyone made fun of him for the attempt he had made and confirmed their belief that it was quite impossible to walk without the help of crutches.

Culture is the very essence of an organizational life; to bring about change in the culture we need to touch the very core of the being. The very survival of an organisation depends on the way the people in the organisation respond to change. While layers and layers of conditioning has rigidified each one of us, like the villager's conditioning in using the crutches, any attempt to bring about a change without touching the very core of the individual would hardly make any difference. On the contrary it would be made fun of like the villagers made fun of the young man's attempt. As seen in the parable what really happens as we grow is rigorous conditioning which limits one's world view of things. Each one of us draw the picture of our own world from our own limited experience and begin to believe that our picture of the world is what the world is all about and this obviously limits our learning and growth. This limited world view of each one of us is the very core of our individual life. It is what he/she believes in and what he or she values in his/her life. The whole process could be illustrated in the box.

In today's organizational context many of our efforts to bring about changes seem to be at a superficial level. We still seem to be focusing our attention on the effects (by effects I mean the overt behaviour of the individual) than on the causes (by causes I mean the very root of the behaviour of the individual).

In "change" while attempting to match the individual values with the broad organizational values we quite often forget the much more fundamental mismatch which is the individuals own cherished values and his/her lived values and what is more surprising is that the individual himself /herself is not much aware of this gulf within. Until we help the individual to recognize and bridge this gap within, it would be difficult to expect him/her to match his/her values with the values of the organization and if by using the organizational authority one forces the organizational values on the individual, he/she only follows it as a rule so as to protect oneself from being reprimanded than internalizing the same. Under such circumstances the commitment of the individual towards the organizational values would be very low and this would affect the performance of the organization. To illustrate, let us say a company values 100% quality. If the executive in quality department does not believe in this what he then does is, to simply reject those products which are not within the specified limits and feels he has done his/her job. On the contrary if the same person believes in quality and cherishes it as his/her own value, he/she gets into the cause for every rejection and tries to look for remedial measures which would result in higher quality in future.

Laying down broad organizational values are of value only if someone transformed those values into every day reality. It is like throwing the seeds on a barren land and expecting them to grow. One or two seeds grow while majority of them find a natural end. On the contrary when you prepare the soil and then sow the seeds, majority of the seeds sprout and grow.



It is a fact that the work life of a Manager is filled with problems and choices that have more of human element than cognitive and technical aspects. This is true in almost all the industries, be it servicing sector or those that produce and distribute artifacts and other goods. Quite often, managers ignore or are unaware of the value conflicts which confront them and attribute their recurring and persistent problems to conditions beyond their control. The training of professionals is much more focused on relevant knowledge and technique and their effective use, than on sensitivity and skill in clarifying and coping with ethical dilemmas. In the long run, to build a positive organizational culture, it is essential to take the professional who are primarily responsible for the building of the culture in the organization through a process which will facilitate a fundamental shift within.

One of the major roles of the field of Organization Development has been to help organizations guide the direction of their evolution, that is, to enhance cultural elements that are viewed as critical to maintaining identity and to promote the “unlearning” of cultural elements that are widened as increasingly dysfunctional -Argynis, Putnam, S Smith 1985.

In analyzing, the culture of a particular group or organization it is desirable to distinguish three fundamental levels at which culture manifests itself

- (a) Observable artifacts
- (b) values and
- (c) Basic underlying assumption.

It is in this context that value clarification as a process intervention plays a vital role in addressing all the above areas.

WHAT IS VALUE CLARIFICATION?

Even before one goes into understanding value clarification it is essential to get the meaning of values right. To me “Values are the beliefs we hold within ourselves which governs our actions/reactions in any given situation. Some of these are known to us while others are not. The whole process of value clarification is to discover those values which we are not aware of but yet are being guided by and gain further clarity on those values that we are aware of.

THE PROCESS

Through the value clarification process one facilitates the understanding of values and further proceeds to show the gulf that exists between one’s spoken and lived values. Further one goes in to understanding the sources from where one has picked up his/her values and also look at the very process of valuing. In this process one also get to see his/her own value profile and its implication in the real life context. It also addresses the core values and their impact in the every day life.

WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT THIS PROCESS

Value Clarification breaks away from the traditional mode of prescribing what is good and what is bad. It presents the reality in front of the individual with all its dimensions and allows him/her to make the choice of how to proceed further in his/her own life. Value Clarification deals with the causes of issues than the effects and therefore the impact in longer. Also, since the decision to change is the individuals and not something imposed, the ownership and commitment to the change is higher.

IS IT REALLY POSSIBLE TO BRING ABOUT MEANINGFUL CHANGES AT A MUCH DEEPER LEVEL IN AN INDIVIDUAL?

Looking at some of the experiences shared by the individuals picked up randomly, who had spent six months on the job after having gone through a value clarification process, and the answer seems much closer to "Yes". Let us look at these experiences and see what kind of changes have really taken place.



1. BECOMING A PERSON

A supervisor from the stores department had the following to share as changes he sees in himself:

"Earlier if my child or wife was not well I never used to bother but recently when my child was sick, I personally took him to the hospital."

"In the past when some one used to ask for material I use to ask them to go and look for themselves. Now I personally help them in locating it, as I know where they are."

"I used to throw waste anywhere I felt like before the workshop. Now I find a dustbin to throw the waste and also ask the others to throw the waste in the dustbin".

"Earlier I used to come for work and just do the job for name sake. Now I think it is my own job and I do it with greater care".

"I never used to tally the bin-card and the actual material available earlier. Now I personally tally them.

"If I was to talk to senior executives I used to be scared and always chose to go through the in charge. Now whenever there is a need I can approach them directly."

2. TAMING OF THE EGO

Another supervisor from stores shares the following as the changes he seems in himself.

"Earlier I used to dictate and there was no scope for second opinion. Now I consult before taking any decision. My subordinates say that only now I am treating them like human beings". When asked to share a specific incident he stated that "Earlier I used to insist that location chart should be made but nobody did. After the workshop I called the concerned staff, stated the problem, and asked them for a solution. They suggested that location charts could be made and also took the responsibility of making it and they are also trying to improve it continuously. Like now they are adding the photograph of the component in the location chart".

"Earlier all my subordinates together used to oppose me. They sometimes used to tear the bin-cards or throw away the material just to get me into trouble. Now we all work together in a group. We talk freely and there is a lot of trust between us".

"Before the programme, everyday I used to fight with someone or the other. After the workshop I have lost my temper only three or four times and whenever I felt I was wrong I went to them and apologized. Earlier I never used to apologize".

"Earlier I never used to think before I acted. Now I think before I act"

3. EXTENDING A HELPING HAND

A staff from accounts department shares the following as the changes he sees in himself.

"Before the workshop if someone be at a friend, colleague or relative said anything, I never used to bother but now I listen and try to respond".

"At the office earlier I used to refuse to do the dispatch work thinking it is a dirty man's job. Now I do it willingly as I understand the problem and also feel every job is important".

"Earlier I never used to volunteer for any job for fear of committing mistakes. Now I am willing to volunteer and take responsibility. During the sports day celebrations I decided to be a volunteer".



"I am currently doing my M.Com and before the workshop I used to think that the syllabus is too much and I may not be able to do it as I am working. Now I have started feeling that I can do it and also I have become more organized. I have made a study schedule and try to follow it as much as possible".

"In another incident, as I was leaving my home to attend my friend's engagement, another friend came for some help and I willingly helped him and then went for the function. Earlier I would have just refused and gone for the function".

4. UNFOLDING ONE'S POTENTIAL

A Supervisor from QC had the following to share as the changes he sees in himself:

"Earlier I never used to bother to discuss or share my ideas, now I take the initiative to discuss and share my ideas wherever opportunity exists".

"After the workshop I had applied for and completed a six week programme with ATI on Quality Management. Further I have applied for SQC six months part-time course and have cleared the entrance test and also joined the course".

"On the work front on my own I am developing a training programme for workers and vendors on quality inspection".

"Earlier I had never gone on any tour or out of Andhra Pradesh. For the first time I went on an assignment (which was totally a new job) to another state and dealt with the client and the job very well". When asked to share how this happened he shared that "Before going I took the value pricing definition sheet and read it a few times and saw each value beyond words and felt very confident".

"Earlier I used to make commitments and not bother very much to keep them, now I think before giving any commitment and once I give a commitment I keep it at any cost".

5. LEARNING TO ASSERT

A senior executive had the following to share as changes in him:

"Earlier in Divisional Management Committee Meetings I used to feel shy and stiff and this used to prevent me from participating fully. Now I feel more open and relaxed and thus in a better position to contribute".

Earlier when someone shouts at me I will either withdraw or accept what they say. Now I don't run away but share my thoughts wherever I differ.

6. BECOMING OPEN

A supervisor from PPC department had the following to share as changes in him:

"Earlier when my subordinate used to tell me "you are going in the wrong direction", I used to tell them I am right. Now I listen to what they say, examine it and if I am wrong I correct myself. E.g. I used to fight with stores department blaming them that they are not issuing material and because of it my staff and I were wasting time and when they used to blame my boys I used to simply defend my boys. After the workshop when in a similar incident the stores people blamed my boys, I went and physically saw what my boys were doing and found that what the stores people were saying was right. Later I sat with the stores department and sorted out and improved the method of issuing the material with their support".

"Earlier there used to be no communication from the stores, responses to the queries were nil but now Production Planning and Control and stores together find solutions for the problems and solve them. In a similar situation earlier I used to blame and now I try to solve the problem.



"Earlier I used to get tense because of work pressure and if anybody comes to me I used to shout at them. After the workshop I have not lost my temper. Now I try to understand the other man's problem and try to sort it out than getting angry about it".

Earlier to the workshop I used to watch something like three to four movies a week now I just limit it to one film a week. Earlier I used to limit myself only to production and now I feel that I will have to understand other departments, the problems and then see how the problems could be solved together".

7. PASSIVE PARTICIPANT TO ACTIVE FACILITATOR

A senior executive from Quality Department had the following to share as the changes he sees in himself.

"During the workshop I had referred to a three month old incident for the first time to the person concerned. Now in a similar situation I sort out the issue the very next day and don't carry it on".

"At home I never used to bother on what was happening. Now I at least enquire and my wife is quite happy with it".

"Earlier I never used to open my mouth in any meeting, now I am being seen as a facilitator as I have started observing and giving my comments to the group and the same is being accepted too. I have moved from being a passive participant in meetings to being an active facilitator".

"Earlier the fear of hurting others was suppressing my very expression, now I share my feelings and am also willing to face the consequences. The consequences have been very positive and now the conviction to express my feelings has become deeper and also a part of me".

8. LEARNING TO FEEL

Another executive from the materials department had the following to share as the changes in his behaviour.

"Earlier I never used to take initiative. I just did my job. Now I take more initiative and think of everything in a larger perspective".

"Earlier when there was any critical shortage I used to take it casual and ask the vendor to do that job. Now I ensure 100% and see that I follow the material till it reaches the shop floor".

"Earlier I used to go through the shortage list and inform the vendor. But now I go week by week and cover all the items by 15th of the month for the entire month's production. For the current month, of the 72 items left which will come in a day or two".

"Earlier I shared whatever I felt like now I try to understand the other person and accordingly deal with him. This has increased my relationship with others".

9. BEGINNING OF QUESTIONING WITHIN

Another supervisor from the materials department had the following to share as the change in her behaviour.

"One day while I was working on the computer a supervisor from accounts department came and asked for the computer to just get a small letter done which was very urgent. I refused and he went back. Immediately I thought of my own action and felt that my work would any way take at least two days to complete and since the letter is very urgent I asked myself why can't I release the computer for just 15 minutes for him. I immediately called up and asked to come and use the computer. Earlier, if I refuse once, that is the end of it".

"My job is preparing MIS reports. Earlier I used to compare 1700 items with the budgeted figure manually and this used to take something like 10 days just comparing all the models and I never used to find time to make the variance report. Now I thought on my own and have started using the computer. I



have fed all the data and I will be getting the output for the last month. I went and asked others to help me and have been successful in getting the help. Earlier I would have just continued".

THE SHIFTS WITHIN

When one gives a look at each of these sharing there is a visible shift that each person has made from where he was to where he is. Some of the areas in which the shifts have been perceived strongly are:

AWAY FROM	TOWARDS
1. Being ignorant or not concerned Of one's own behavior	becoming aware of the need to look into one's own behavior and recognize the changes that are taking place in oneself.
2. Lack of concern for one another	respect of each other
3. Being closed and rigid	becoming open and receptive
4. Not being responsible	becoming accountable to oneself
5. Being too egoistic	becoming humble
6. Being inactive and feeling helpless	taking initiative, feeling confident on achieving something in life
7. Being suppressed by one's own fear	taking the courage to experiment and own the consequences of the same.
8. Being bulldozed	becoming assertive
9. Lack of involvement	getting committed and involved in whatever one is doing.
10. looking outside and blaming others	looking within and questioning oneself.
11. Being non-co-operative	helping one another
12. Being indisciplined	wanting to be more self regulated and disciplined.
13. Living in one's own world of fantasy.	being realistic and down to earth.

THE PROCESS INVOLVED IN FACILITATING CHANGE THROUGH VALUE CLARIFICATION

BACKGROUND

The plant at which we were to work was one of the divisions of a group of companies which was not doing very well. The company was taken over by another leading company and a number of measures were being taken to bring about a turn around. It was at this juncture that we were called to initiate a Culture building exercise.

PRE-INTERVENTION STUDY

As a first step of our getting involved in the process, a preliminary visit to the plant was planned to meet a few supervisor-executives so as to get a feel of the existing culture. Accordingly it was decided to go ahead with a pre-intervention study so as to assess the existing culture and the basic human issues which were detrimental to one's effectiveness on the job.

THE OUTCOME OF THE PRE-INTERVENTION STUDY:

The basic human issues that emerged during the pre-intervention study are given below:

1. Lack of initiative on the part of the staff
2. Not honoring one's commitment and a low sense of responsibility
3. Lack of discipline
4. Blaming others basically to save one's own skin
5. Resistance to change and unwillingness to adhere to systems
6. Lack of proper communication
7. Employees do not feel empowered
8. Poor supplier - customer relationship
9. Poor sense of responsibility/accountability
10. Problems are allowed to accumulate and finally everyone breaks their head when it gets out of control
11. The person who takes the initiative becomes the person who ends up doing all the jobs and soon gets frustrated
12. Weak executive-staff relationship
13. Low level of trust
14. Lack of cooperation and a poor sense of working together
15. Lack of openness
16. Shyness and fear to express one's own self.

After having summarized the pre-intervention study results the Personal Growth through Value Clarification workshops were designed keeping in mind some of the main areas of concern that emerged during the study. Accordingly the senior executives who formed the management committee of the division attended the first workshop and thereafter the rest of the executives were covered. All the executives were covered within a span of three months so as to enable every one to speak the same language and also make each other support one another in their own process of change as all of them were in the same boat. This also facilitated a great deal of empathy for each other in their own struggle to make a shift deep within.

BASIS FOR THE WORKSHOP DESIGN

Over the years, having realized that at the root of every human conflict within or outside was the individual's own values, I decided to focus my energies on understanding values. Apart from having authored 'DISCOVERY' a learning instrument in the field of value clarification, over 120 workshops on personal growth through value clarification were conducted in the last four years. Many of these workshops were ground for discovering new concepts and experimenting various instruments in enabling the individual to look into his/her own values. In the process a number of new instruments and games were developed so as to facilitate the process of value clarification in an individual. Based on these experiments and experiences the workshops modules were developed.

The underlying **OBJECTIVES** of the workshop were:

- * To bring in a self-awareness of what one's values are, its multiple facets and sources of conditioning and blocks that bring in a gulf between the cherished and lived values and the resulting conflicts. How one gets to widen one's values from one's own and others experiences. To understand the interdependencies of values and their relationship. Also see the consequences when these relationships get upset.



- * To help a person see how the process of valuing takes place and gain clarity on one's own skills in the valuing process.
- * To help identify the values of a true leader
- * To show how trust plays a role in growth and how trustworthy a person is; what "winning" and "risking" really means.
- * To help an individual to understand what is being 'sensitive' and how sensitive he/she is.
- * To help an individual to see that he can achieve if he really wants it
- * To show the importance of balancing human issues and the organizational issues.

METHODOLOGY

- * Semi-structured experiential learning supported by conceptual inputs.
- * Use of "DISCOVERY" a learning instrument in the field of value clarification.
- * Small group activities with structured exercises.
- * Feedback from instruments and questionnaires dealing with values and attitudes

POST INTERVENTION STUDY

After the participants of the workshop had spent 6 months in real life context a post intervention study was conducted to see the impact of the work shop on the individuals and the culture of the company.

28 of the 75 employees who had attended the workshop and who were available in the plant at the time of the post-intervention study were interviewed at length to understand the nature of changes the workshop had brought about in them and in the culture of the company. The data provided by the respondents was verified with their colleagues and superiors.

Apart from the changes in each individual's behaviour as presented earlier, the overall changes perceived by the respondents at the organizational level have been the following.

1. Increased level of openness. One is willing to listen and understand.
2. There is a kind of questioning within one's own actions and a greater level awareness of what is happening around.
3. Reduced fear, tension and shyness in oneself and this has led to being more free and expressive
4. Increased level of confidence and learning to be assertive
5. Motivated within to do something worthwhile in life (taking up higher studies, helping others etc)
6. Increased sense of responsibility and initiative in solving problems than fault finding and blaming others.
7. Increased sense of involvement
8. Improved relationships with respect for each other and a sense of belongingness and trust.
9. Better organized and greater sense of cleanliness



10. Reduced short temperedness and harshness in interactions. Less of ego clashes
11. Increased level of inter-department cooperation
12. Increased level of intra-department cooperation and a sense of togetherness.
13. Increased level of interactions with the suppliers and moving toward a healthier relationship.
14. Increased level of discipline

While looking at the responses above one can see the shift in the culture when compared to what it was before the beginning of the interventions. It is also interesting to note the various kinds of changes i.e. increased assertiveness, better team spirit, self motivation, and need to look within, better communication, trusting and helping each other, higher level of discipline etc. in the culture of the organization. As shared by the respondents, all these changes have occurred from the Value Clarification workshop, emphasizing the point that the values of an individual are the very core of his/her being and are the building blocks for any efforts in building a positive organization culture. Much can be achieved for one's own growth by enabling them to look at their own values and gain clarity on the same.

THE PROCESS OF CHANGE

The Value Clarification process attempts to help the individual look into his/her own self with regard to his/her beliefs/values etc. In the process what one experiences is the limitation of one's rigidity and limited world view with regard to one's own values and beliefs. The workshop process tries to break the conditioning and focuses on the need to expand one's world view and make learning a continuous process. In other words, the whole workshop facilitates the process of learning to learn. This is illustrated in the adjoining figure.

INDIVIDUAL

Learning to learn continuously
breaks conditioning

CONCLUSION

How long is this change sustainable is an obvious question. During the process of interview one of the executives shared that he didn't perceive any change in his subordinate, whereas the subordinate, had a number of things to share on the ways he had changed. When asked why his boss did not perceive the changes, he had a simple answer "I am not changing to impress my boss; I am changing because I have felt the need to change. Whether anybody recognizes it or not I will change".