

Your Growing Edge

A Reflection Process for Identifying and
Clarifying an Individual Challenge



Whole People, Whole Leaders
Seeing Things Whole

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A Reflection Process for Identifying and Clarifying an Individual Challenge

WORKSHEET TO DEVELOP A FOCUS DILEMMA

The purpose of this worksheet is to enable you to begin to clarify a personal growth challenge or dilemma facing you in the largest possible context. Describing the dilemma and the tensions within it serves as a starting place for seeing the possibilities for greater wholeness.

As you move through the pages of this workbook, the challenge or dilemma you identify may be amended, so don't feel that you must come up with a "carved in stone" statement of this dilemma at the outset. A good statement of the focus challenge does have certain attributes and later in the workbook you will be invited to check your statement against several criteria. At the outset, however, don't worry too much about "getting it right".



STEP ONE: Clarifying Your Current Situation

A. For starters, take a few minutes to describe a personal challenge or dilemma you are facing that is really important to you and that doesn't have any obvious solution. What values do you experience as being in tension around this conflict?

B. How does the challenge you have identified related to a sub-unit (department, store, office, task force, Board of Trustees, etc.) within your organization? What are some ways that this challenge is shaped by this larger world? How might this challenge be impacting this same world?

C. And finally, how does the challenge you're thinking about connect to your organization as a whole? Again, how might organization shape or impact you around this challenge you've identified? What might some impacts of this challenge be on your organization?

A. PERSONAL

B. TEAM OR DEPARTMENT

C. ORGANIZATION



STEP TWO: Developing the dilemma as a goal statement

Look back over your three reflections (your personal challenge, the ways in which it connects to your store or department, and the ways that it connects to your organization as a whole and see if there are any connections. Now restate your challenge, framing it this time as a "How to ... " goal statement similar to the illustration to the right.

As an example, Carl, the lead engineer in his company's advance technology unit, wanted to reduce the amount of time he was spending at work to enjoy more time with his family. His son, in particular, seemed to be needing more time with him, but Carl had become accustomed to 60-70 hour work weeks. Even with that, he never seemed to get his work done, and the company - a design engineering firm - was struggling hard to compete against lower cost competitors. His boss and coworkers were forever asking if his unit had achieved any promising breakthroughs that might translate to a competitive advantage and badly needed new business. This had become increasingly difficult, as his time was often drawn away to solving problems on the production floor. But his first loyalty was to his family, wasn't it? After reflecting, Carl stated the following as his challenge statement:

How to refocus his time at work on the development of relevant new technologies while protecting adequate time to enjoy with his family?

STEP TWO: Developing the dilemma as a goal statement

HOW TO



STEP THREE: Indicators and Worries

Next, as a way to further elaborate on the challenge facing you've identified, in the space to the right, take a moment to make note of couple of kinds of things.

1. **Indicators:** full-blown or emerging problems you are seeing that tell you that this is an important challenge. *What do you notice that tells you that this really is a problem you should address?*
2. **Possible Negative Consequences:** ways that you or others around you may be negatively impacted should you fail to successfully address the challenge you have identified. *What do you worry may happen if you're not success in your attempts to engage this challenge?*

Revisit your dilemma statement in light of these *indicators* and *potential negative consequences*. In light of these things, are there any changes you wish to make to sharpen or clarify your statement of the dilemma facing your organization? If so, enter it to the right.

INDICATORS AND POTENTIAL NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

HOW TO



STEP THREE: Identifying Desired Outcomes

Next, as a way to further reflect upon your challenge, imagine what things would look like if this challenge was satisfactorily addressed. What would a really good outcome look like? For example, if a friend was to ask you after the challenge had been addressed how things had worked out, what would you like to tell them? What would have changed, and how is your life different as a result of this change? Take a moment to identify and write down those desired outcomes.

STEP THREE: Identifying Desired Outcomes

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Revisit your challenge statement in light of the things you have identified in the previous steps—the stakeholders and their respective, your prouds and sorries, the characteristics of a desired outcome. In light of these things, are there any changes you wish to make to sharpen or clarify your statement of the challenge? If so, enter it here:

HOW TO



STEP FOUR: Force Field Analysis

In the previous step, you were invited to describe some elements of a desired outcome to the challenge you identified.

In this step, as a way of gathering additional information about the challenge, you will be invited to do a force field analysis in which you identify a variety of factors (forces) which may impact your ability to achieve the outcome you've described. The force field analysis is a nice way of beginning to identify and visually represent lots of information (both hard data and assumptions) that will help to clarify and shape your emerging thinking about the nature of the challenge and inform your thinking about possible strategies for addressing it.

In the diagram on the following page, begin this process, following the directions below.

Directions

1. In this space, rewrite your brief description of the desired outcome from page 9.
2. In this space, briefly write any trends or events in the world around you that are likely to improve your ability to reach your desired outcome.
3. In this space, briefly write any trends or events in the world around you that may make it more difficult to reach your desired outcome.
4. In this space, briefly write any trends or events within your organization that are likely to improve your ability to reach your desired outcome.
5. In this space, briefly write any factors or events in your life that may make it more difficult to reach your desired outcome.
6. In this space, identify any key stakeholders (individuals or groups) who are likely to improve your ability to reach your desired outcome.
7. In this space, identify any key stakeholders (individuals or groups) who may make it more difficult to reach your desired outcome.
8. In this space write any core values that appear to support the desired outcome you have identified.
9. In this space write any core values that may be in tension with the desired outcome you have identified.

STEP FOUR: Force Field Analysis

Desired Outcome

1.

Environmental Trends

+
+
+

2.

Environmental Trends

-
-
-

3.

Organizational Assumptions

+
+
+

4.

Organizational Assumptions

-
-
-

5.

Stakeholders

+
+
+

6.

Stakeholders

-
-
-

7.

Value

+
+
+

8.

Value

-
-
-

9.

STEP FOUR: Force Field Analysis

Desired Outcome

Environmental Trends

+

+

+

Personal Assumptions

+

+

+

Stakeholders

+

+

+

Value

+

+

+

Environmental Trends

-

-

-

Personal Assumptions

-

-

-

Stakeholders

-

-

-

Value

-

-

-



STEP FIVE: Identifying Environmental Trends

Part of seeing your challenge holistically is the discipline staying aware of the forces and momentums in the world around you and your organization which are likely to significantly impact both it and you. An example of such an "environmental trend" facing Carl's company was the commoditization of the products his company produced, leaving his firm unable to compete with the cost structure of overseas competitors. Similarly, Carl's kids were nearly college age and Carl was hoping to merit a raise to help with the tuition they would be facing.

In the space to the right, identify some of the environmental trends which are facing you and your organization at this moment and which have special relevance for the challenge which you have identified. Begin by noting the key *desired outcome(s)* in the space at the top of the page. Then, in the spaces below and similar to your earlier work with the Force Field Analysis on pages 10-11, identify now in greater detail the environmental trends which have significant positive or negative implications for your efforts to achieve the outcome you've identified.

STEP FIVE: Identifying Environmental Trends

Desired Outcome

Environmental Trends
That May Help

+

+

+

+

+

Environmental Trends
That May be a Problem

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—

—

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—



STEP SIX: Personal Assumptions

While there are external trends which significantly affect your movement into the future, there are also assumptions your own life which must be noted in order to see it whole. For example, for Carl, a couple of assumptions which might be noted include:

- Carl had recently been diagnosed with high blood pressure, and had been urged by his doctor to reduce stress and build some regular exercise into his week.
- Carl had recently received an employment offer offering more money from another firm.
- Carl's parents are aging and he hopes to spend more time with them in the upcoming years.

Utilizing the space to the right, note some of the assumptions which hold true for you.

STEP SIX: Personal Assumptions

Desired Outcome

Personal Assumptions
That May be a Problem

Personal Assumptions
That May be a Problem



STEP SEVEN: Identifying Stakeholders & Their Interests

No doubt in identifying your challenge you had to think about some of the people who somehow have a stake in how you will address this challenge. These *stakeholders* could include family, friends and significant others, your coworkers, your supervisor, clients or customers, suppliers, competitors, the wider community impacted by you and your organization, etc.

For some of these stakeholders, the effects are likely to be positive. Others will be stretched and challenged. In truth, the interests of some stakeholders will inevitably come into tension with the values and interests of others.

For example:

- ▶ Carl's family wants to see more of him and they want him to be healthy.
- ▶ While Carl's boss wants him to focus on new technology, he can't afford to not devote capable engineering expertise to solving the production problems.
- ▶ Members of Carl's engineering team function much more productively when he is able to devote time to supervising their efforts.
- ▶ Carl's parents want to remain in their home for the foreseeable future, but know they'll need his support in order to do this.

Using the space to the right, identify specific stakeholders (or stakeholder groups) that are connected to you who are likely to be somehow impacted by your efforts to address the issue you've identified and who, consequently, may support or oppose your efforts to achieve the desired outcome you've described. Locate those stakeholders who are more likely to support your efforts in the left-hand column and those more likely to oppose your efforts in the right-hand column.

In addition to naming the stakeholders, attempt also to state briefly the care-about or interests for each of the key stakeholders identified in which will be affected by the your attempt to address the challenge which you've identified.

STEP SEVEN: Identifying Stakeholders

Desired Outcome

Identifying Stakeholders
who are likely to support your
efforts to achieve your desired
outcome

+

+

+

+

+

Identifying Stakeholders
who are likely to oppose your
efforts to achieve your desired
outcome

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STEP EIGHT: Checking Your Moral Compass

Some of you have taken the time to identify your personal core values. If you have, you'll want to see what perspective these values - your moral compass - may offer.

Step 1.

To begin this process, use the diagram on page 19 to lay out your core values as a moral compass. If you identified your core values using STW's *Life Value Frames* workbook, you'll recognize this diagram. In the outer edge of each of the three dimensions - *Identity*, *Purpose* and *Stewardship* - there are spaces provided for recording your 3 or 4 core values. Write them into the spaces provided, with each of your core values appearing three times in the outer band of this diagram, once in each dimension.


Step 2.

Next, take a moment to reflect on the issue you've identified. Represent that challenge with a few words in the center circle of the diagram.

Step 3.

Are there any values that seem especially relevant to the issue you've identified? If so, circle them on your diagram.

Step 4.

The most difficult choices we make are ethical dilemmas, where legitimate values are in tension with one another. In thinking about the issue you are exploring, are there particular values that appear to be in tension around this issue? If so, draw a line  connecting those values.

Step 5.

Take one last pass, this time to identify any of your core values that, when you think about the issue you're exploring, seem to be potentially at risk of being compromised? Which... and how? Make note of that here.

Step 6.

In light of your exploration, do you have any initial insights about how to respond to this challenge in ways that feel right to you (consistent with your core values)? Note any insights you have in the space below.

STEP EIGHT: Checking Your Moral Compass





STEP NINE: Confessing Your “Prouds” and “Sorries”

Now that you have identified the various stakeholders and their legitimate interests, turn your attention in this final preparatory step by acknowledging those things which, as you think about your challenge, make you proud of how you approach things. Included among these might be ways in which you have successfully embodied your core values. Note these "prouds" in the space to the right.

STEP NINE: Confessing Your “Prouds” and “Sorries”

PROUDS

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Now turn your attention to what you regret—what you wish was not true or had not happened. List these "sorries" below. Included here might be ways that the organization has compromised important core values.

SORRIES

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.



STEP TEN: Applying Criteria to Your Dilemma Statement

Now, as a final step, examine your draft dilemma statement against the following criteria:

1. Does the challenge which I have identified reflect a "goal" in which I personally have a good deal of interest and investment? In other words, do I really care what happens?
2. Is this challenge important to both my own long term well-being and the well-being of my organization?
3. Am I willing to be accountable, at some level, for how this dilemma is resolved? (In other words, I am not content to simply be a bystander to its resolution.)
4. Does this challenge reflect certain legitimate values which appear to be in tension and not easily reconciled? Does your response to any of these criteria suggest some revision or modification in the dilemma statement? If so, record your revised statement below.

You now have the material to present to your colleagues to begin a reflection process of "Seeing Things Whole." May it bring new insight and illumination to your efforts to see yourself and your world holistically.

STEP TEN: Applying Criteria to Your Dilemma Statement

HOW TO

