

Introduction to Community Building

The Foundation for Community
Encouragement, Inc.

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FCE Mission

FCE encourages people, in a fragmented world, to discover new and better ways of being together. Living, learning and teaching the principles of community, we serve as a catalyst for individuals, groups and organizations to:

- Communicate with authenticity
- Deal with difficult issues
- Welcome and affirm diversity
- Bridge differences with integrity
- Relate with love and respect

FCE's approach encourages tolerance of ambiguity, the experience of discovery and the tension between holding on and letting go.

In our work to empower others, we remember our reliance upon a spirit within and beyond ourselves.

About Communication and Community

Situation #1:

Recall a time when you were with a person or a group when.....

You felt that you **REALLY WERE NOT**

- Heard or listened to
- Accepted
- Appreciated

Describe the experience and what it felt like

About Communication and Community

Situation #2:

Recall a time when you were with a person or a group when.....

You **REALLY** were unable to

- Hear or listen to
- Accept
- Appreciate another person.

Describe the experience and what it felt like

About Communication and Community

Situation #3:

Recall a time when you were with a person or a group when.....

You **REALLY** were

- Heard or listened to
- Accepted
- Appreciated

Describe the experience and what it felt like

About Communication and Community

Situation #4:

Recall a time when you were with a person or a group when.....

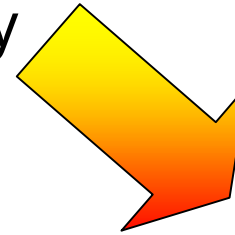
You **REALLY** were able to:

- Hear or listen
- Accept
- Appreciate another person

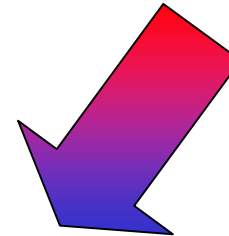
Describe the experience and what it felt like

Community Building Stages

1: Pseudo-community

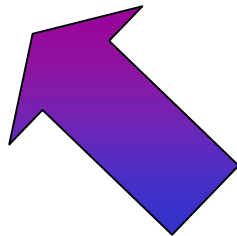


2: Chaos



3. Emptying/Emptiness

4: Community

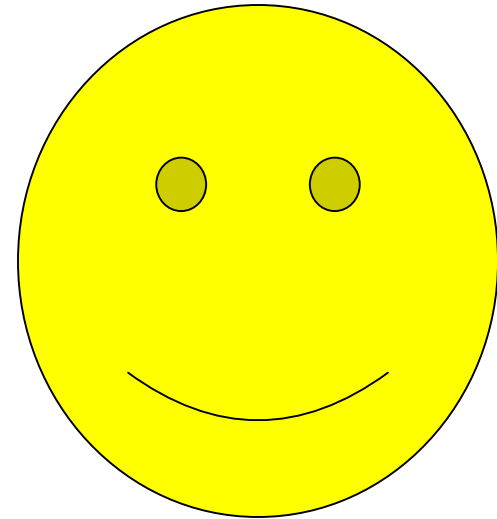


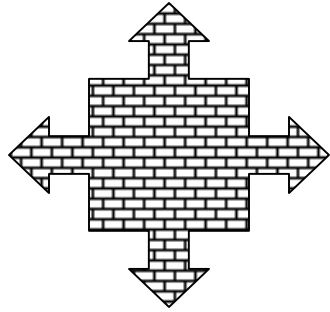
Community Building: An experiential process



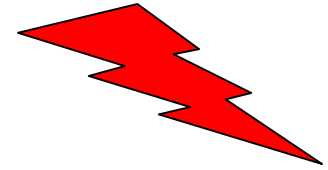
Stage 1: Pseudo-community

- Politeness
- Surface discussion
- Conflict avoidance
- Pretense
- Generalities
- Individual differences unacknowledged





Stage 2: Chaos



- Differences emerge—attempts to obliterate
- Well-intentioned, mis-guided efforts to fix, heal, convert
- Noisy, uncreative, unconstructive
- Sub-groups form
- “Do it my way....”—attempts to organize
- Leadership resisted
- Focus on “the other”—you/they statements

Stage 3: Emptying/Emptiness

- More reflective
- Vulnerability, openness
- Most feared, crucial stage
- Emptying of barriers to communication
- “I statements”
- More silence, risking, deep listening
- Many little “deaths” –letting go
- Without emptiness, no room for the spirit

Stage 3: Emptying/Emptiness

What to empty?

- Expectations & preconceptions
- Prejudices
- Ideology, theology, solutions
- Need to fix, heal, convert, solve, give advice
- Need to control
- Pain, grief
- Personal stories

Stage 4: Community

- Soft quietness
- Peace
- Acceptance
- Dynamic leadership, productivity
- Pain AND joy
- Palpable sense of spirit
- Playfulness
- Graceful “fighting”



Principles of Community

- Extraordinary respect
- Inclusiveness
- Power of vulnerability
- Authenticity
- Willingness to empty
- Use of silence
- Mystery
- Spirit

Guidelines for Community Building

- Task is to experience sense of community
- Experiential—adventure into the unknown
- Facilitators are guides
- Wear nametags
- Use your name when you speak
- Be on time for each session
- Speak personally—“I statements” avoid generalities
- Be inclusive—avoid exclusivity
- Be emotionally present
- Participation can be verbal or non verbal
- Express dislikes in the group
- Speak when moved, don’t speak when not
- Commitment to “hang in”
- Respect confidentiality