



Relationship in organisations

Dr Eddy Kloprogge, Peter Gleeson & Professor Petruska Clarkson

Introduction

When the psychotherapeutic “Five relationship” model is translated into modern business language it will equip you with a better understanding of people, processes and decision-making for your organisations in today's increasingly changing and unstable business conditions

Organisational learning

Developmental learning within an organisation falls in three categories:

- Strategic: The ability to adapt to changing circumstances
- Structural : The culture that allows experimentation, innovation, spreading of best practice and developing policies to support the above
- Cognitive: The sharing of mental models, accepting new ideas and sharing knowledge.

To develop, an organisation needs to be prepared for the uncertain and the unpredictable, find new solutions for new situations in and around the company, adapt to changing circumstances and do what contributes to organisational purpose effectively.

This can be done by changing to a culture that stimulates ideas, reflecting on what is important and harmonising the needs of stakeholders, employees and customers.

It is also to promote growth and development of individuals, allowing them to become fully expressive and contributing by building confidence in colleagues and developing training in line with business developments, while constantly upgrading the shared notions of what is currently important in the organisation.

This organisational learning can be supported by the creation of a greater wisdom in the company, by sharing languages between different organisational participants, by increasing an understanding of the things we do not know, by thinking and reflecting leaving space before action and by leaving every policy and strategy open to challenge.

The “5 relationship” model

The 5 elements of relationship in “learning” organisations are:

- The working alliance – The definition of the task
- The anticipated relationship – The interference with the task
- The developmental relationship – The improvement for the task
- The personal relationship – The pleasure in the task
- The transpersonal – The meaning of the task

“Organisation” implies a structured organism of mostly human relations, for which we define a framework of five relationships: the working alliance, the anticipated, the developmental, the personal and the transpersonal relationships.

1. The Working alliance – relationship

The basic contract by which people agree to work together within an organisation.

The definition of the task: What, Where, Who...

The working alliance is the most important relationship because it is essential for survival. If there is clarity in definitions of the purpose and objectives in the working alliance, the other relationships can flourish. On the other hand, if the basic working alliance is not solid, everything else will be undermined and there will be no business or organisation to speak of.

Coming together - forming the working alliance

In order for anyone to operate effectively and efficiently, they need to be clear about who they are, what their role is and what they are doing.

2. The Anticipated/ the Unfinished/ the Transference - relationship

Known in some psychological disciplines as 'transference', in an organisational context it is best understood as the human relationship equivalent of 'unfinished business'.

The interference with the task

Many unresolved past experiences which people take to psychoanalysis and therapy shouldn't be present at work. But they often are. These can become the 'grit in the oyster' which causes unproductive behaviour by interfering with the working alliance through positive or negative distortions based on unhelpful past experiences. The 'unfinished' dimension is sometimes referred to as the 'transferential' or 'projected' relationship because a person can transfer or project elements of their past relationships into current ones. For example, people can bring to their work environment their grieving for a previous job, or difficulties from their relationships at home.

Being aware of what is preventing and obstructing development and progress

We all might say that we want to work together, to build and develop who we are and what we are doing. We work hard, say that we all believe in what we are doing and how we are doing it and still somehow things do not work out as we might have hoped.

3. The Developmental/ the Reparative - relationship

This is where an organisation's human resources are built in an incremental, linear way using conventional training and developmental psychology approaches to learning.

The improvement for the task

In contrast to the unfinished relationship and its need to make up deficiencies in the past, the focus of the developmental relationship is on establishing the adult professional. The aim is to equip people to be empowered, more autonomous and better resourced for the future. This needs to be done while maintaining a sense of excitement by providing sufficient 'stretch' at work to avoid boredom but without leading to burn-out. This is done largely by providing the information, support and challenge which helps individuals to learn in an incremental, linear way through the conventional training and developmental psychology methods traditionally

employed by organisations.

How to move forward in a manner that benefits all concerned

Transferences can be seen as factors that distort what is happening between people. It can be described as trying to look at someone through a window that has misted up. In order to see the other person clearly, the mist or transferences need to be cleared away.

4. The (real) personal - relationship

The person-to-person dimensions of human interaction, which are the glue of social interaction in the working community and within an organisation.

The pleasure in the task

This can be fostered in management by the getting together and bonding of people from work. The difference between the developmental and the real personal relationship is that the first is partly conditional, in that it is trying to build better people, better management etc.; the personal relationship is more unconditional. It is being around with other people that you like to listen to, socialise with, whether something comes out from it or not. People are seen as unique individuals in this kind of relationship and would even result in people doing things that they would not originally have wanted, to do, just for the sake of the relationship.

Identifying an ideal way of operating and being together

When the 'transferences' have been cleared away and the possibility of moving forward has been identified, it is said that two people have established the basis of a "Real Relationship".

Such a relationship can be seen between state leaders, or between team members in sports, where there is warmth, a sense of human 'being-ness'. This relationship doesn't have to be peaceful and loving all the time. There is a significance difference between being friends with somebody and having someone as work colleague. You can have friends as well as friendly colleagues. It is a kind of oil that makes the relationships run more smoothly.

5. The transpersonal relationship

When considering the organisation's wider mission and purpose, unlearning is particularly important because relationships are likely to involve unpredictable 'step changes', rather than a gradual incremental evolution.

The meaning of the task

Human relationships that extend beyond the people that any one individual knows to encompass the organisation as a whole are what I classify as 'transpersonal'. The most tangible form in which this has become acceptable in organisations is the growing preoccupation with organisation cultures, mission statements and corporate visions and values. These are all ways in which connections between people create something more than the sum of their individual selves.

This concern with wholeness makes transpersonal relationships the place where the ideas from the new sciences are most likely to be fruitful. Until recently, dominant theories of organisation and management have concentrated on separation and the subsequent linking of roles, tasks and responsibilities. Our traditional science, philosophy and psychology have

emphasised separation. The new sciences are more relevant to key characteristics of transpersonal relationships, such as their focus on holistic approaches, the psychology of meaning, higher connections, unpredicted step changes, complex systems, quantum effects, archetypes, non-local interactions, paradox, and the coexistence of opposites.

Achieving and maintaining an “optimum” state

Once this process is fully understood, it becomes possible to create an “Optimum State” (A state where things are as close to an ideal as you could imagine or wish for) anywhere, anytime, with anyone.

Petruska Clarkson's Worksheet for overview of five relationships at work

RELATIONSHIP	Contribution to the Organisation	Human Motivation	Some Signs of Dysfunction
<p align="center">Working Alliance (Behavioural Psychology)</p>	Achieving organisational tasks	Practising learning - necessary for survival Doing Competence Productivity	Lack of clarity of goals, objectives, roles Task-dominated culture Sterile, driven work climate
<p align="center">Unfinished (Transference) (Freudian Psychology and other secondary process + paradigms)</p>	Grit in the oyster	Unlearning of dysfunctional outdated learning – to Completion Resolution	'Barriers to change' 'Resistance' Fixed, disruptive patterns of relationship
<p align="center">Development (Adult Learning and Development Models)</p>	Developing the organisation's human resources	Learning of identified knowledge, attitude and skills, growth and development	Loss of excitement, lack of 'stretch' Boredom Neediness Burn-out Over- or under-protection of staff
<p align="center">Personal (Humanistic Psychology)</p>	Developing the organisation as a working community with a healthy culture	Enjoying learning in community – Sharing organisational goals Intimacy Friendship Community	Loss of contact, lack of feeling of being personally appreciated Uncontactful conflict and competition Fake bonhomie Loss of task focus
<p align="center">Transpersonal (Heraclitus and other primary process + psychologies such as Jung, Rank, Complexity)</p>	Developing wider organisation as a whole mission and purpose	Unlearning in order to discover emergent order – Chaos & Complexity +Meaning & Archetype Holism – Implicate Order Connection & Connectivity Paradox & Contradiction Quantum Physics	Unwillingness to trust primary process – Life energy at work: Meaninglessness Anomie Ennui Disregard of ethics

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