



Please Check it at the Door

Recently, New York Times columnist and author David Brooks brought his “modesty manifesto” to the Aspen Ideas Festival. In his comments, Brooks contends most successful cultures are based on humility and trust. In contrast, Brooks makes the point that America has lost its humility. America has become a nation of overconfident people drowning in false “praise-everybody-thinking,” and unhelpful “all are above average” patronizing basis for relationship. That’s bad enough in and of itself, Brooks says, but this lack of humility has affected our ability to work together. He argues Americans need to embrace modesty as a virtue again so we can work together at solving some of the major problems our country is facing.

What's in this Different Worldview Grounding Integrated Decision-making (IDM)?

In the IDM article it states, "*Consider the information available, use your best judgment from your highest self, and take whatever action you believe is best for the circle's aims*". It seems to me we could solve most organizational problems if we shared this belief-to-action way of being and doing. #1

"They are holding a space and listening to reality, and allowing the creative force of evolution itself to make decisions--through them, not from them." I appreciate this intention. #2

I wonder how "reality" is commonly understood and clearly listened to and how the group discerns that the "creative force of evolution" is actually working through them? #3

IDM goes so much against experience, training and schooling that it seems almost insurmountable to do in most employment situations. Software development, places like Apple and Google, small innovative places can make it work. Changing a culture and changing what the individual has been trained to do is very hard. I will pick one core issue to raise -- feeling safe to be honest -- I learned from early school experiences, college and in every job that the secret to success was pleasing the one in charge. My grades, my raises, my promotions all related to that 'game'. So, I see a need to find a way to change not only the organizations culture/practices, but the internal learned behaviors and beliefs within each individual. Seems quite daunting.....#4

The other group has been willing to work in grounding each person's perspective in relation to the good of the organization. Although we have not always come to the table in agreement or with the same perspectives, through a non-threatening process we have been able to make decisions that are framed by our mission and strategic goals. No one is called on individually to respond, but by group discussion and the process of thoughtful listening the group moves in a direction of the shared/integrative decision-making process. When we walk away from the table we know that our work has been done in the spirit of what is best for the organization. #5

I think the process of being present is difficult today more than ever because as a company tries to stay competitive, they look to the future and how they can differentiate themselves. #6

I also find it difficult for companies to continually spend time learning from past mistakes and reflecting on decisions. I do not see companies taking the time to talk about a decision after it was made to see if it yielded the hoped for results. The pace of work is so fast that we do not take time to reflect. #7

Does integrative decision making make fundamental change in an organization more difficult? #8

It looks like a good way to take the emotion out of 'objections' as well as a way for those who present 'objections' to reflect back on themselves whether the 'objection' is a tangible present-tense reason. I think we quite often pass things off because they don't feel right - when it is that they really just don't feel comfortable. Not feeling comfortable and not feeling 'right' - I believe are two different emotions - but again - this process appears as if it is meant to take the emotion out of the process... #9

When I first read the documents about IDM it reminded me immediately of the LEAN process. State the problem (patients wait too long for x-ray). Search for the root cause by having everyone write down the ideas and then post them without comment. Group them with comments and determine which are dependent on others. Define the future state and then look for solutions again by having group write down solutions and then posting them for discussion and decision-making. #10

FOCUSING QUOTES

With IDM it often feels like the people involved in the process aren't actually making the decisions per se. They are holding a space and listening to reality, and allowing the creative force of evolution itself to make the decisions through them, not from them. There is no need for everyone present to understand all aspects of a decision or even why it makes sense. They just need to have confidence that the decision will not undermine any part of the organization's ability to function effectively to control itself.

There is rarely a need for anyone to be convinced of anything, since the goal is not to find the best decision.

Holacracy expressly pushes against attempts to fully integrate all perspectives at any given moment in time, and yet over time it ends up integrating more than any other process I've witnessed. Consider that it isn't actually possible to step back and integrate all perspectives: no matter how much you integrate, there is always something more still to integrate, and more reality still emerging around you. It's -turtles all the way up- never ending.

Integrating perspectives is a process-an evolutionary one that unfolds through time not something we step back and do at any one point. So what we can do is be integrating, we can become an agent for the natural evolutionary impulse at the heart of reality by riding the emerging moment here and now and integrating what actually arises into the present moment.

Asking someone if they're for or against something tends to push them into an egocentric or highly personal space. IDM asks them to speak from a more impersonal (or transpersonal) space about what is actually needed and workable for the collective aim. The process acknowledges and honors whatever emotions arise within us, and then helps us to move beyond them- to make them objects in our awareness, things we own but which don't own us. Once we're no longer stuck in their charge, we can use our personal emotions as clues to why a proposed decision may really be outside a key limit of tolerance for the system. Personal emotions become sources of valuable information, but not decision-making criteria in and of themselves.

What's the different worldview that grounds IDM?

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Integrative Decision Making Process(short-format)

There are several facilitation formats available for integrative decision making. Following is the short-format process, used when a circle member has both a tension to resolve and a specific proposal to offer as a starting point for integration.

Present Proposal: *The proposer states the tension to be resolved and a possible proposal for addressing it. Clarifying questions are allowed solely for the purpose of understanding what is proposed. Discussion and reactions are cut off immediately by the facilitator, especially reactions veiled in question format(e.g. Don't you think that would cause trouble?)*

Reaction Round: *the facilitator asks each person in turn to provide a quick gut reaction to the proposal(e.g. Sounds great, I really concerned about X, etc.) Discussion or cross-talk of any sort is ruthlessly cut off by the facilitator -this is sacred space for each person to notice, share, and detach from immediate reactions, without needing to worry about the potential effect of sharing them.*

Amend or Clarify: *The proposer has a chance to clarify any aspects of the proposal they feel may need clarifying after listening to the reactions, or to amend the proposal in very minor ways based on reactions(only trivial amendments should be attempted at this stage, even if there were clear shortcomings pointed out). Discussion is cut off by the facilitator.*

Objection Round: *The facilitator asks each person in turn if they see any objections to the proposal as stated. Objections are briefly stated without discussion or questions: the facilitator lists all objections on the board and cuts off discussion of any kind at this stage. If the objection round completes with no objections surfaced, the decision is made and the process ends.*

Integration: *If objections surface, once the objection round completes the group enters open dialog to integrate the core truth in each into an amended proposal. As soon as an amended proposal surfaces which might work, the facilitator cuts off dialog, states the amended proposal, and goes back to an objection round.*