CLOSED SYSTEM THINKING

Why, then, do we desire equilibrium so much, or use the same word to describe mental and emotional well-being? In my own life, I don't experience equilibrium as an always desirable state. And I don't believe it a desirable state for an organization. Quite the contrary. I've observed the search for organizational equilibrium as a sure path to institutional death, a road to zero trafficked by fearful people. Having noticed the negative effects of equilibrium so often, I've been puzzled why it has earned such high status. I now believe that it has to do with our outmoded view of thermodynamics... the tendency of closed systems to wear down, to give off energy that can never be retrieved... Equilibrium is the end state in the evolution in isolated systems, the point in which the system has exhausted all of its capacity for change, done its work, and dissipated its productive capacity into useless entropy. p. 76

CONTRASTED WITH OPEN SYSTEMS THINKING

The self-organizing dynamics (is)...evident in all open systems. These dynamics apply to such a broad spectrum of phenomena that they unify science across the domains of many disciplines. But more importantly, they give us a new picture of the world, they ''let us feel the quality of a world which gives birth to ever new variety and ever new manifestations of order again a background of constant change.'' p. 76

CREATES DIFFERENT CULTURES OF...

An organization can only exist is such a fluid fashion if it has access to new information, both about external factors and internal resources. In must constantly process this data with high levels of self-awareness, plentiful sensing devices, and a strong capacity for reflection. Combing through this constantly changing information, the organization can determine what choices are available, and what resources to rally in response. This is very different from more traditional organizational response to information, where priority is given to maintaining

existing operating forms and information is made to fit the structure so that little change is required. p. 91

Wheatley, M. (1992). Chapter , Change, Stability, and Renewal: The Paradoxes of Self-Organizing Systems, In *Leadership and the New Science*.

Food for Thought

My Connections with the Reading
What in the reading struck you? Where did you find specific points of agreement and disagreement? What "ahhas" occurred for you in reading the article?

Mining Riches Hidden Inside the Subject
1) In your experience, how does self-appreciation and self-compassion create a space of trust in the abundant presence of connections between self and others when exploring issues, questions, and building knowledge together?

2) In your experience, how does a non-judgmental view of others and self in the observation of actions facilitate framing data for constructive use?

3) In your experience, how does having a "no-fear in failing" self-created climate facilitate reflection on and gleaning insights from information examining the efficacy of actions?
   a. For you, how does "no-fear in failing" change the usefulness of the information and facilitate construction of "dynamic steering" strategies of change for future courses of action?
   b. Where have you seen information from failure embraced as valuable knowledge in restructuring strategies and changing future action?

4) In your experience, how does appreciative valuing of self and other as part of a whole organizational community working toward a common purpose unleash proactive turning to one another, creative thinking, and collaborative action?
   a. For you, what is needed in an organization to intentionally incorporate and celebrates the gifts of each person in ways that empower them to make substantive decisions in a sphere of expertise?
   b. Where have you seen such empowerment in a culture of creative collaboration create a "dynamic steering" effect along the path of the organization's mission?
   c. Where have you seen this in action in ways that build a culture of investment in and compassion for one another?