The Learning Journey –

Sharing Experiences on Leadership and Culture for Safety
The Call for Transformation

- Even the most effective organizations at times require major and often painful changes.
- At these times normal incremental change and improvement must be complemented by more transformative paradigmatic changes.
- The transformations are most often need at all levels—the individual, group, division and organizational level.
Learning Organizations

• An organization which embraces the need for these deep changes is usually referred to as a “learning organization.”

• These organizations share core processes.

• We can see similar principles for “learning individuals” and “learning groups.”
Systems thinking through focus on the interrelationships among parts

Individual capacity building through training, mindfulness and responsibility

Continuous transformation through revising assumptions and attending to events in new ways

Team learning through dialogue, collaborations and transparency

Vision sharing through a future perspective which integrates personal and organizational goals
Learning In Organizations

• Embracing these characteristic and the willingness to transform is often the most difficult for large strong organizations filled with talented people.

• Examining the “learning journey” can help should how learning sometimes occurs and sometimes does not.
The Learning Journey

• Learning (and non-learning) depends on three questions.

• Are we paying attention to the things that make a difference?

• Do we understand the system of relations that give sense to the observed differences?

• Do we share and institutionalize new understandings?
Paying Attention

- All levels of organizations have shared ways of attending to and talking about people and events.
- These are extended in instruments and ways of thinking and talking, and are institutionalize in policies, checklists, and routine responses, etc.
- The shared nature of these allow common understanding, ease and efficiency.
Transformative Learning & Changing Attention

• The shared common sense that makes the culture functional in normal situations makes it disastrous in abnormal ones.

• Transformative learning occurs when a “difference” or anomalous event is detected that puts into question the common understandings.

• Non-learning occurs when this difference remains overlooked, rationalized away, or trivialized.
Overcoming Attention Based Non-Learning

• Pay attention to “weak” indicators. Attending to a single non-report or faulty data can lead to the discovery of significant issues.

• Acquire insights from and foster transparency at all organizational levels involving diverse individuals.

• Develop alternative means of reporting not subject to normal constraints.
Understanding the System

• No event or indicator has meaning in itself. All meaning is systemic.

• The central questions are: How does this event function in the system? What does this event tell us about the system?

• Human systems are non-linear, relations are multi-directional, and time matters.
Transformative Learning and Systems

- When new things are entered into a system spiraling loops begin which may make either escalate problems or increase ROI.
- Changes in one part of the system will have consequences for others.
- Interventions which change the speed of a system are often as effective as those that change elements.
Overcoming System-Based Non-Learning

• System problems are usually greatly different than the “presenting” problem.
• Soft system methodologies enable the identification of the nature and force of specific system relations.
• Negative loops can be broken by intervention in specific functional relations.
Institutionalizing Change

- Knowledge capture processes are common in organizations, but system transformations are often not.
- Organizations have many culture redundancies such as fixed procedures and shared understandings that resist the institutionalization of transformation.
- Managerial resistance may come from identity threats.
Overcoming Institutional-Based Non-Learning

- Officers explicitly charged with seeing the institutionalization issues associated with transformations can aid in developing the necessary supportive changes.

- Sources of cultural resistance can be identified and overcome.
Designing Transformational Learning Conversations

• Shared space is a practice and needs practice, not a concept or teaching. If not trained it will not happen when most needed.

• Emotional readiness requires reduced states of physical and identity threat.

• “Difference” has to be included, prized, and utilized.
Cultural Change and Herding Cats

- Like cats, people are not sheep nor cows and resist when treated as such.
- Like string, people are better pulled to the future than pushed. Culture that pulls is a co-constructed enablement rather than a given constraint.
The Potential Learning Journey
Time for your personal learning journey

- Take a few minutes to reflect about what you learned and write some notes.
- Your learning journey journal is yours only.
- If you find someone else’s learning journey journal – be respectful and hand it over to the owner – don’t read it.
- This will be your tool that will help you to evolve and gain sustainable achievements.