Stepping

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| **Presentation:** If any of you have taken *Introduction to Relationship Building*, this next concept will not be new to you. We often experience our consciousness as a voice which speaks to us. Sometimes this voice is judgmental, telling us what we should do and how bad we are or what bad things will happen if we don't do it. We call this voice our inner critic. It is the voice of the value paradigm. Does anyone recognize this voice in themselves? Did anyone notice their critical voice during any of the one-on-ones? | Leave some time to discuss this concept. |
| There is a second voice we can cultivate which simply notices our thoughts, our feelings, our actions, or our mistakes without judging us. This voice is called our inner witness. and it is the voice of the worth paradigm. This voice doesn't praise us or tell us how good we are. Instead, it just observes. |  |
| Sometimes you can identify your inner witness by a particular word or phrase it uses. Don Montagna's inner witness says, "Far out!" Susan Bagot's says, "That's very interesting." Mine says.... | What does your own inner witness say? |
| Can anyone find an inner witness voice in themselves? What word or phrase might your inner witness use? |  |
| **Exercise:** For this next exercise, I want you to choose a partner. When everyone has a partner, I'll continue with the directions. |  |
| In this exercise I want you to begin by lining yourselves up down the middle of the room facing your partner at arm's length. Make sure that you also have about three feet of space behind you as well. You may need to move some chairs. | Take enough time to make sure that everyone is positioned at arm's length from their partner and with about three feet of space behind them. |
| In this exercise, I will be saying the word "step." When I say it, I want you to take one step, either forward, towards your partner, or backwards, away from your partner. These are the only two choices for this exercise. Stepping sideways is not a choice and not stepping is not a choice. I will be saying "step" seven times. Does everyone understand the directions? | Give directions clearly and slowly. Repeat directions if necessary to make sure that everyone understands. |
| As you do this exercise, make sure to notice your thoughts, feelings and sensations. Pay particular attention to noticing whether your inner critic emerges. |  |
| one... two... three... STEPone... two... three... STEP*(and so on)* | Repeat this seven times. Leave enough time between each step (about 10 seconds) for people to notice their thoughts, feelings, and sensations. |
| Okay, now return to your seats and take out your journals. I'd like you to take a few minutes to write down what this was like for you. Did you notice your inner critic making any judgments? If you did, were you able to bring in your inner witness? | Take a couple of minutes. |
| **Discussion:** Take a look at what you wrote in your journal about the one-on-ones and the stepping exercise we just did. Which ones were easy? Which ones were hard? Did you notice your inner critic? What kinds of judgments was it making? Who would like to share what these exercises were like for them? |  |
| **Summary:** The inner critic is the voice of the value paradigm, and the inner witness is the voice of the worth paradigm. We step into the worth paradigm whenever we can bring in our inner witness to replace the voice of our inner critic. We might start with, "Oh, I notice that I'm in the value paradigm." |  |

Vicious Circle

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| **Presentation:** So, what's so bad about the value paradigm? I mean, it has gotten us through life so far. Why would I want to change it?In this next section we'll see what the value paradigm looks like up close. |  |
| This "vicious circle" is really a figure-eight. In the value paradigm, our lives move inevitably through these cycles, going counter-clockwise around the top circle and clockwise around the bottom circle. We start moving up the right side of the top circle with the thrill and excitement of a success. | Hand out the *Vicious Circle* handout and draw vicious circle on blackboard.Find some of the vicious circles in your own life or in the lives of people that you know, and write them down in advance. As you describe the different places on the vicious circle, illustrate them with real-life examples. |
| As we accomplish and achieve, we feel better and better about ourselves. We begin to become addicted to the good feelings that our accomplishments bring. We get to the point where we can't say no to those activities where we do well. |  |
| As this happens, the people around us become objects whose usefulness is determined by how well they fit into our game. This attitude inevitably comes out in how we treat them. | Illustrate with examples from your own life. |
| Sooner or later, the value paradigm gets to the point where we start to use ourselves as objects to produce a desired result. We do this when we push ourselves at the expense of taking care of our own needs. We do this when we deny our needs. We do this when we play the martyr. We do this when we are afraid to take risks for fear of making mistakes. | Illustrate with examples from your own life. |
| At this point we're at the top of the vicious circle and we're as close to perfection as we're going to get. At its root the vicious circle is powered by the desire for perfection. If I could only... you fill in the blank... then my inner critic would shut up and I could be truly happy for the rest of my life. I would get the love, attention, or respect that I deserve. But, of course, human beings are inherently imperfect, and we never quite bridge the gap. | Illustrate with examples from your own life. |
| I think that the great attraction of the value paradigm is the comfort of believing that perfection is attainable. I may not have it yet, but at least I can get it if I just try harder. Giving up the value paradigm really means giving up the idea that happiness can ever be attained through accomplishments or achievements and accepting the idea that happiness, like self-esteem, is chosen and not earned. [Wow!] |  |
| At this point in the vicious circle, we have completely bought into the inner critic's demands. We have pushed ourselves as far as we can, and the critic still isn't satisfied. We get angry and frustrated. We are resentful for having to work so hard when others don't seem to have to. We finally see that the critic will never be satisfied. We respond not by turning the critic off, but by treating it like the internalized-parent that it came from. We rebel against it. | Illustrate with examples from your own life. |
| We decide that we've done enough. We resign, or we quit. We give up, or we get sick. Instead of *denying* ourselves, we *indulge* ourselves. Feeling that we've given up on the only possible path to getting our real needs met, we settle for immediate gratification. When we realize that we aren't going to heaven, we decide to go to hell. [I love this!] | Illustrate with examples from your own life. |
| Aligning ourselves now with our inner critic's negative judgments, we fall into self-condemnation. We see that the success that seems to come so easily to others is a constant struggle for us, and we conclude that it is not part of our own destiny. | Illustrate with examples from your own life. |
| We see ourselves as missing something that others have. We think that this selfish, undisciplined person that I seem to be must be who I really am. We feel bad about ourselves. We feel that the world is unfair, and we use this to justify irresponsible self-indulgence. | Illustrate with examples from your own life. |
| As a consequence of this behavior, we inevitably do fail. This reinforces our negative beliefs even more. But, alas, we don't just stay stuck here. Instead, we reach a point where we begin to get really scared. What if there really is no bottom at all? | Illustrate with examples from your own life. |
| We see others around us getting theirs and, driven by fear and boredom, we finally try again. And with our first success we start the whole cycle again. [Hope springs eternal.] |  |
| **Exercise:** I'm now going to hand out a series of statements that people might make from different places on a vicious circle and we'll see if we can decide where they go. Let's start with the first one. | You may choose to use some or all of the statements included, or you may come up with your own. Put a large vicious circle on the blackboard for recording the answers. Put numbers around it corresponding to the different statements as you discuss and decide for each. |
| **Discussion:** Does anyone have any questions about the value paradigm's vicious circle? Can anyone find any vicious circles in their own life that they would be willing to share? | Take time to answer any questions. You may invite the class to answer them as well. |
| **Summary:** Wherever we operate in the value paradigm, we will find vicious circles. We may have many vicious circles going on at once. We may be up in our love life but down in our work life. We may be up in our social action arena but down in our physical health and well-being arena. |  |
| But wherever we are, we can be sure of one thing: it's going to change. Our inner critic can never be satisfied. It doesn't even know how. As long as we choose the value paradigm, our self-esteem will be on a roller coaster. |  |

**Double Line**

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| **Presentation:** So how do we get out of the value paradigm? First, we have to recognize that, in the eyes of our inner critic, we'll never be perfect. No matter what we accomplish, the inner critic will still be telling us it's not enough. It is incapable of doing anything else. |  |
| Does this mean that we really are the self-indulgent narcissistic self that we see when we are in the bottom half of the vicious circle? We're not that, either. |  |
| I'm going to hand out a diagram now. The way out of the value paradigm is to recognize that we are neither the outer nor the middle layer in this diagram. Those circles are just masks that cover who we really are. | Hand out *Three Layers.* |
| Who we really are is the innermost circle. We are joyful, creative, loving beings. All of us. All the time. If we see anything less than this in any person, or in ourselves, that's just the mask. |  |
| Because we are intrinsically joyful, creative, and loving, we are intrinsically worthy. We escape from the value paradigm when we choose to recognize this. |  |
| **Exercise:** In this exercise we will have an opportunity to experience choosing the worth paradigm in a very direct way. You will spend a little time with each person in the class, and I want you to use that time to experience taking delight in that person you are with. Look at that person and see if you can see the joyful, creative, loving being that they are. | The gap between the value paradigm and the worth paradigm is bridged by nothing more profound than a choice. We can make this choice at any moment (though we may need to make it again a few seconds later).The teacher should think about their own definition of "delight" in case any student asks.A good definition for taking delight is holding the person in a state of unconditional positive regard. |
| Please arrange yourselves in two parallel lines facing each other at arm's length, with the odd person standing on the end facing the space down the middle. Don't worry about whom you are facing because you will have a chance in this exercise to be with everyone. | The teacher should either include or exclude themselves to make sure that there is an odd number of participants (with an even number of participants, the rotation will not get all possible pairs). |
| In this exercise you will have the opportunity to spend about forty seconds silently with each person in the class. During that time I want you to choose to be completely delighted with the person you are with. |  |
| As you make this choice, you may find thoughts or feelings coming up for you about the person you are with or about yourself. If this happens, let those thoughts and feelings pass through, and choose delight again. You may need to choose it over and over again in your forty seconds. |  |
| I will let you know when the time is up. At that time, please rotate so that you can spend some time with another person. The person on the end should spend the time choosing and re-choosing to recognize that he also is a wellspring of love, joy, and creativity. |  |
| **Discussion:** Would anyone like to share what that exercise was like for you? Did it feel different with different people? Did you like this exercise? What things came up for you as you were with different people? How did the act of choosing to take delight in another person make you feel about yourself and about your own choice muscle? |  |
| **Summary:** Taking delight is a very direct experience of the worth paradigm. Felix Adler, the founder of Ethical Culture, said, "When face to face I see the god enshrined within you, the god within me consents to appear." |  |
| For your homework I'd like you to experiment with taking delight. Between now and the next class, I'd like you to try taking delight with at least three different people. You don't have to do it silently, as in the exercise. You don't have to do it for long, but go for a minimum of thirty seconds. You don't even have to tell the person that you're deliberately taking delight in them. It would be interesting to see if they behave differently because of it. Are there any questions about the homework? | For some people, this homework assignment may not be easy. |
| For extra credit, choose one of those people to be someone that you don't particularly like or perhaps someone you don't even know. |  |

Closing

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| We have covered a lot of material today. We have talked about choosing and seeing ourselves as choosers. We have talked about the value paradigm and the worth paradigm and learned a little bit about how they work. We also had a few experiences of exercising our choice muscle to choose the worth paradigm. Are there any questions about any of the material we've covered?  | You may answer the questions yourself or put them to the class. You may also offer to write them down and see that they are answered next week. The goal of this closing is not to have everyone understand everything but to have people leave the class with the sense that they have some new ideas and some new things to try out. Don't try to have all the answers and don't worry if you have to say, "I don't know." |
| We don't expect you to agree with everything we've said here today. We are just offering you some new ideas and behaviors that have worked for us. We invite you to try them on and see if they work for you. | This is a very important attitude. It can help you stay unhooked if a student should get hooked into challenging your authority. |
| Some of what we are offering may feel strange or even uncomfortable at first. I can assure you that it won't stay that way. In fact, one of the things that we will be talking about in the next class is what happens after we make the choice to choose worth.  |  |
| We will see how the full force of our creativity can be turned from creating fear and anxiety in the the value paradigm to creating love and serenity in the the worth paradigm. It just takes a little while to turn it around. |  |
| Let's set our materials on the floor and get comfortable for a brief closing meditation | Wait for people to get ready before proceeding. Follow same guidelines as for opening meditation. |
| Become aware of your breathing....Breathe in relaxation.... Breathe out tension.Breathe in to the count of five... and breathe out to the count of five. | You may repeat these last two directions several times |
| Become aware of your body.If you notice any tensions in your body, take a moment to relax them. |  |
| Become aware of your feelings. Notice your feelings, and then let them drift away. |  |
| Now, notice your thoughts, and as you notice each thought, let it go. |  |
| In the space that remains, see and hear the words, "I am loving, and I am lovable," and let those words in. | Repeat this several times. |
| And now, when you feel ready, come back into the room. | After about 30 seconds. |
| Let's now say goodbye in a closing go-round. Let's stand in a circle for this. In this go-round I'd like you to tell us anything you need to say to say goodbye to this class today. Also, I'd like you to share one thing that you will take with you from this class. Anyone may start. | Wait for people to stand and get into a circle before proceeding with the directions. |
| Goodbye. I'll see you next class. |  |