

Building Community

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Why Community

What do all people want for themselves

All People Want:

- To have a job/participate in things
 - To live with people they want in their lives
 - To travel around the community
 - To be (and their families) healthy
 - To have friends to participate with
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YET

These basic wants/needs are not available to many people in our society!

Consider this: If you are poor, old, have a disability or are a minority you are more at risk to be:

- Unemployed
 - Homeless, or substandard settings
 - Limited in travel
 - Have more sick days
 - Socially isolated
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WHY

This is a complex issue, but one reason is that many people in society sees ones difference first and it is the difference, they think that prevents people from having life success.

CHANGE

We want this to change – we want to promote change. But to create change we must first understand it

Types of Change

- Micro – Where we look to change the person with the condition. How do we get individuals to change
 - Macro – Where we look for a broader community, cultural, or societal change. How do we get sweeping change
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Micro Change

This is when we see the person with the condition at fault and attempt to change them, or persuade them to change.

This often is clinical, or therapeutic and focuses the primary attention on the person

Macro Change

This is when we look at broader systems, or communities, and attempt to get them to re-think, or behave differently.

This is where policy comes into place. We want a system to change so we pass a law, or invoke a policy.

Yet – both approaches have been ineffective. We still have not moved the needle on our serious health related issues. Smoking, diet, exercise, preventative measures.

Macro Change and Social Policy

- Rules – What are the current rules, or do we need to develop some new rules.
 - Relationships – How do we get people to embrace new rules. How can social capital promote social policy
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“Unreality is the true source of powerlessness. What we do not understand we cannot control.”

Charles Riech

“Fundamental questions must be raised about what knowledge is produced, by whom, for whose interest and towards what ends. Such arguments begin to demand the creation of a new paradigm and organization of science – one that is not only for the people, but is created with them and by them as well.”

John Gaventa

The Secret of Social Capital – Similarities

We must promote a sense of similarity between people. This is the step stone to building Relationships

Social Capital

Refers to the relationships in your life and how these relationships promote positive by-products in your life.

Social Capital is associated with:

- Healthfulness
 - Happiness
 - Longevity
 - Pro-social behaviors
 - Tolerance
 - Achievement
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Health and Social Capital

- SC lessens stress
 - SC increases immunities
 - SC promotes support and encouragement
 - SC brings tangible resources
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“What we do with our lives individually is not what determines whether we are a success or not; what determines whether we are a success is how we affect the lives of others.”

Albert Schweitzer

Social Influence Theory

This is when people are influenced by those around them that they see as similar or as valuable.

Social Influence Theory can work toward positive or negative ends.

Building Social Capital

- Find or promote aspects of similarity
 - Find ways/means for people to engage
 - Understand how communities behave
 - Find or promote gatekeeping
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Similarities – What brings people together

- Interests
 - Hobbies
 - Passions
 - Skills
 - Hopes
 - Dreams
 - Shared perspectives
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SIMILARITIES through CONVERSATIONS

- Acknowledge others as equals
 - Stay curious – be interested
 - Work hard to listen – reduce distractions – attend to people
 - Slow down – be other centered
 - Think together – assist
 - Expect messiness
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Every person has things they are excited about or interested in. When we find these things we not only bring out the best in that person – but we now have some ideas in helping that person build more social capital.

Human beings are social animals – we love to engage, especially around the things that we have in common. All of us belong to communities where members have commonality.

How can we find these communities?

Finding Places that People can Engage

- Meetup.com
 - Newspapers
 - Magazines
 - Bulletin Boards
 - Web searches
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There is a place for each of us!

“Belonging, not escape, is the
imperative human value”

Robert Nisbit

How Communities Behave

- Regular meetings/gathering
 - Rituals
 - Patterns of engagement
 - Jargon/ways of communication
 - History and legacy
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“People do not come together, just to be together – they come together to do something in common”

Gassett

The Gatekeeper

A valued member of the community who other members find to be influential or powerful. When this person endorses or acknowledges a new person, their influence affects or motivates other members to do the same.

Image Juxtaposition

When the value or influence of one thing affects the value or acceptance of another.

Gatekeeper Attributes

- They are usually positive about things
 - They reach out
 - They take social risks
 - They smile and engage
 - They are open and supportive
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“All good things which exist are the fruits of originality.”

J. S. Mills

Building Community

Is not so much about fixing problems or changing vulnerability as it is about finding similarities and engaging each other toward a common goal or objective.

“Man is truly great when he acts from
the passions.”

Disraeli

“There must be a beginning to any great matter, but the continuing into the end, until it be thoroughly finished, yields the true glory.”

Sir Francis Drake

“The most important thing we face in the 21st century is a rediscovery of community.”

Willard Gaylin

An Aztec Story

A long time ago there was a great fire in the forests that covered the Earth. People and animals started to run trying to escape the fire. Our brother owl, Tecototl, was running away also when he noticed a small bird hurring back and forth between the nearest river and fire. He headed toward this small bird.

He noticed that it was our brother the Quetzal bird, running to the river, picking up small drops of water in his beak, then returning to the fire to throw that tiny bit of water on the flame. Owl approached Quetzal bird and yelled at him: "What are you doing brother? Are you stupid? You are not going to achieve anything by doing this. You must run for your life."

Quetzal bird stopped for a moment and then looked at the owl and answered: "I am doing the best I can with what I have."

It is remembered by our Grandparents
tha a long time ago the forests that
covered our Earth were saved from a
great fire by a small Quetzal bird, and
owl, and many other animals and
people who got together to put out
the flame.

Building Community

Community is out there – just waiting for us to engage.

Lets go now – and explore options!

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