

Notes from Collaborating to Build a Better Scotland

Friday 20 March, 2015

Summary of Key Points

Opening thoughts:

- Collaboration is the new competition
- Recommended book is Nancy Klein's *Time to Think*
- 4 things:
 1. Listen well
 2. Suspend judgment
 3. Respect the other point of view
 4. Say what you feel
- Creating environments for the parties to come together – needed to create a space for them
- When you lead change anywhere, you're creating an emotional disturbance in the system
- Question is: are you ready for that? The emotions, not just the business case
- Premium on authenticity, humanity and self-awareness
- Must attend to the relational aspects
- Be prepared to apologise, acknowledge embarrassment
- Identify what lies beneath
- Cede control and authority to allow the participants to take ownership of the process
- Get into the mode of acknowledging
- Collaboration is not just a technical process
- Our competence with emotional dimension just as important as the technical stuff
- Mindfulness is important because it supports you to be present in the moment
- The work is in looking inward to reach outwards

Politics, Economy and Government:

- There are great challenges facing Scotland, UK, Wales and England
- We are facing at least a decade of public debt reduction and the process is highly contested
- Steering between the two tensions
- Polarised politics continues
- Scottish and UK governments have to work together
- Collaboration is very natural, allows you to specialise, share learning, build skills
- Seeing more inter-firm collaboration in supply chain
- Whole culture develops in a particular area
- Humanity is returning to building a co-culture
- Not trying to avoid the conflict, but making the differences as constructive as possible
- What drives economic development and growth – strong social capital, on which to build trust
- What undermines it? Inequality and self-interest
- Not just a social justice problem, but an economic problem as well
- Wellbeing is important and collaboration is essential to economic development
- Research showing we are collaborative by nature
- What helps – operating on a personal level, being open to each other's point of view

Industry example:

- Key solution to challenge of entrenched sides is identifying a single point of contact
- Collaboration is often “working with the enemy”
- Conflict resolution important, identifying real issues, jointly discussing decisions
- The outcome of collaborative working is a better working environment, including relationships and dialogue
- Both sides had false assumptions about the others
- Need internal analysis, to question themselves (and yourself)
- Involves taking some risks
- Doesn't mean you have to become soft
- Collaboration has to be at different levels, tactical, operational, etc
- Needs the will, even if sceptical you need to be prepared to give it a go
- The right personalities are important
- Remember that human beings are more important than things
- Works best when each department/sector involved has something to gain from it

Community example:

- Suspend your views and judgments about other side
- Honesty is important
- Have to go in not just thinking what you can get out of it – has to cut both ways
- Question of how to collaborate with a community
- Recognise we are not going to thrive as a business if communities aren't thriving
- Needed to share vision in an open and honest way with those in the area
- The vision may not be very different from most of those in the community
- Recognise they had a vested interest in collaboration
- Timescales had a longer perspective
- Evidence led and structured relationships
- Identifying what was important to the community
- Had the dialogue not been started, could not have addressed the needs
- What can we do better together?
- Some early/easy win-wins
- Flexible scale, geometry, find optimum mass

General thoughts:

- How to re-establish trust?
- Three things for quality of life: exercise, diet and environment
- Not just the length of your life, but the quality
- Global lens – take on international dimensions
- Longer term view of what to aspire to/strategize
- Invest smartly in living longer
- In order to distribute wealth, how do you create it? Give people ownership

Discussion Notes**Impediments:**

- Tribal rivalry

- Is the media unhelpful? Drawn to the drama of conflict—is this a human condition?
- Single issue causes, polarising of views
- How to collaborate with those who don't have a voice?
- Lack of knowledge
- Time
- Rules/laws/structures
- Expectations and perceptions
- Existing viewpoints
- Selfishness – what's in it for me?
- Competing interests
- High expectations
- Is collaboration sustainable?

Tipping Points:

- Moving from I want to what we need
- Helping us all to move away from issues to underlying shared interests
- Acceptance that there are (and respect for) apparently different positions
- Agreement to differ
- Moving away from duality
- Public opinion
- Win-win – what is the end goal?
- Networking opportunities
- Technology
- Empowerment/supportive leadership
- Clear sense of purpose – and of communications
- Focussing on prevention rather than cure
- “Compromising” – win/win or maximising gain on all sides
- Keeping the change moving: momentum
- Enabling environment
- Sharing learning, training and development
- Understanding the journey of change
- A conflict management process
- Taking calculated risks - bending the rules (based on shared interests and strong relationships)

What Matters:

- Honesty with yourself
- Leadership and authenticity
- Using your heart as well as your head
- Removing/reducing fear, threat and barriers

In Summary – what do we think of this collaboration event?

- Emotional connection
- Openness and trust
- Hopeful for the future
- Trust and safe environment

- Welcoming and humour
- Creative and challenging
- Warm and inspiring
- Insightful and honest
- Constructive, enriching conversation
- Let's go forth and multiply!

Some ideas for a collaboration protocol (Charlie Woods)

- Grow pie (positive sum game) before dividing it (zero sum) - look for synergies
- Fair shares and a stake in the output creates incentive to add value
- Focus on achievement of shared outcomes and interests
- Recognise different people/groups find value in different things (need for different measurement systems and discount rates)
- Be transparent about interests and valuation
- Bring in a third-sider to help

Closing Thoughts

“Collaboration is a habit of mind, solidified by routine and predicated on openness, generosity, rigour and patience. It requires precise and fearless communication, without status awe or intimidation.”

Margaret Heffernan - A Bigger Prize