

HAKOMI AND METANOIA

by Cedar Barstow

Cedar Barstow, M.Ed. is a Certified Therapist and Trainer of the Hakomi Institute as well as the administrative director of its central office in Boulder. She has a wide range of interests which have resulted in publishing three books: *Seeds: A Collection of Art by Women Friends*, *Winging It: A Woman's Guide to Independence*, and *Tending Body and Spirit: Massage and Counselling with Elders*. In her article here, Cedar offers a ten year overview of where the Hakomi Institute has come from and where it might be going.

Human beings have been held in and propelled by the idea that more is better...more money, more land, more power, more possessions, more control. We've built cars and airplanes, subdued cultures, gone to the moon, developed computers, ravaged the land, created mountains of waste products, produced billionaires, extincted species, dominated minorities, achieved medical miracles, networked for instant worldwide communication... some good, some bad.... Now the feedback loop of these actions forces us to make a shift—a dramatic shift. A shift of mind and heart that impacts every area of our lives. The land tells us there is an end to more. The people tell us there is an end to domination. The oceans and air tell us that we are inextricably interdependent.

I've been noting various ways in which this shift has been expressed: Willis Harman "The main purpose of business must change from material gain to a richer life. Laurence Shames, "It's time to work toward an idea of the well-lived life that has less to do with more and more to do with better. Amory and Hunter Lovins speak of living lightly on the earth, of using renewable resources, of creating a sustainable society. Native Americans say there are only three things you need to know to make good decisions: 1) everything is alive 2) we're all related, and 3) what's good for the children 5 generations away. Kiefer and Senge: "it's a fundamental shift of mind in which individuals come to see themselves as capable of creating the world they truly want rather than merely reacting to circumstances beyond their control."

The essence of these expressions seem to come together in two basic beliefs: creative empowerment, and sustainable society. Creative empowerment encompasses the convictions that there is great power in visioning, that there are many choices, that domination reduces creative potential, and that it is possible to create what you want rather than just

react. Sustainable society carries beliefs that we are all related and alive, that there are countless renewable resources available, that better is not just more, that integrity increases stability and trust.

Beliefs and actions seem to work like a spiders web weaving in and out and becoming stronger with each loop. Beliefs express themselves in actions. The actions feed information back in to support, challenge or alter the belief. Belief then spawns another action which brings more feedback.

I experience the paradigm shift being expressed in an extraordinary variety of ways: the new forms of psychotherapy like the Hakomi Method which develop mindfulness, compassion, self-knowledge, and trust in organicity; the richer inner world and group entrainment and visioning that comes through ritual and spiritual work; research in the technologies of renewable resources; recycling; land trusts for the preserving of the wilderness; socially conscious shopping through buying brands made by companies whose policies reflect a regard for the public good; political changes in Eastern Europe to mention a very few. The results of these actions bring back information in terms of satisfaction, aliveness, trust, empowerment, love, creativity which support, alter, challenge, encourage, nurture this shifting of mind and heart in the direction of creative empowerment and sustainability. Without concrete actions, or "walking your talk" as ritualist Elizabeth Coghurn calls it, beliefs become stale; without beliefs from which to make assessments and adjustments actions become empty.

I have been involved with the Hakomi Institute since 1982, first as a Hakomi Student, and then in 1983 as Administrative Director, as Hakomi Therapist, and in 1989 as Hakomi Trainer. I have conceived of my role as Administrative Director as primarily "keeping it all together" and experienced my work with transfor-

mation primarily in my roles as therapist and teacher. In August, at our annual Hakomi conference, Ron Kurtz handed me an article entitled "Metanoic Organizations" by Charles Kiefer and Peter Senge published in the book, *Transforming Work*, edited by John Adams. I found myself very excited and inspired by the article which talks about the translation of the paradigm shift described above into the organizational level. Suddenly I saw that the same way of being which the Hakomi Method itself teaches and embodies could be and must be applied to the Hakomi organization. As I read about the organizations that had been chosen and studied for the article and the identified dimensions of a metanoic organization, I became very curious. We, as an organization, have developed in a very organic and periodically very mindful way which has been at least rooted in the principles out of which the Hakomi Method is derived. How closely aligned with metanoic characteristics have we become through our own natural process? What else could we be doing?

In 1990, we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Hakomi Method and it seems very appropriate at this time to take a look at what kind of organization it is that supports the Hakomi Method and the people who are this work in the world. Here is a brief history and profile from my perspective.

In 1980, the Hakomi Institute was a group of 10-12 therapists in their 20s and 30s living in Putnam Connecticut and clustered around Ron Kurtz who was developing the Hakomi Method (or the Ron Kurtz Method as it was then referred to). These followers were devoted to Ron and to the learning and then organizing into systematic and teachable form, this exciting and very different psychotherapeutic work. They were inspired by and motivated a deep sense of being a group with a big purpose.

In 1983, the cluster around Ron had stabilized at the current 7 Senior Staff members: Devi Records, Dyrian Benz, Jon Eisman, Phil Del Prince, Pat Ogden, Greg Johanson, and Halko Weiss. Having put a tremendous amount of effort into establishing the foundation and form of the organization, they were "burned out". They had incorporated; written and published Ron's book about the method; taught many workshops and 2 trainings; developed what might loosely be called a business plan. They hired me to run the business as an administrator. On my first day, however, I was handed the business plan, an empty cashbox, a list of past Hakomi organizers around the country — a few with just last names and/or cities, some paper clips and rubber bands, the corporate papers and some letterhead, and a guarantee from Ron of 3 months pay.

Today in the spring of 1990, the Hakomi Institute has a substantial worldwide organization, with a Central Co-Ordinating Office, over 800 graduates, 10 current Trainings, a Hakomi Therapist Organization, 17 Trainers, 15 Teachers, 20 centers in the United States, Canada, England, Germany and Switzerland, a professional annual journal: *The Hakomi Forum*, Governing Boards, an Annual Conference, 53 Certified Therapists, 3 published books including a very extensive training manual by Ron Kurtz.

The structure of the Hakomi organization is such that the groups that are most involved have the most power, although decisionmaking is made by consensus when possible with equal representation by all groups regardless of involvement. The organization centers around the Senior Training Staff who are the most involved and have the most power. Policy decisions are made by two groups: the Governing Committee which has representatives of the Senior Staff, the Teachers, the Hakomi Therapist Association, the Organizers, the European Branch, and the Central Administrative Office and makes business related decisions; and the Teacher/Trainer Committee which includes all Teachers and Trainers in attendance and makes decisions related to teaching. Teams of Teachers and/or Trainers and Organizers act autonomously within guidelines in producing workshops and trainings on the local level. Involvement decreases considerably as the organizational circles widen out from the center (Teachers/Trainers, Organizers, Administration), to Certified Hakomi Therapists, students in the process of becoming certified and active members of the HTA out to graduates and workshop participants who study or experience Hakomi and integrate it into their lives and work and are no longer in contact with the organization.

Brief Organizational Profile:

- highly decentralized
- low profile administrative services
- stable and committed core of Trainers
- loosely knit, fairly inactive association of practitioners
- horizontal decision making with some hierarchy
- as few rules as possible
- entry into the system primarily by personal initiative and personal relationships
- intense feedback and communication when in personal contact
- very little communication by mail or phone
- strong current and distant future vision; weak medium range vision
- advertising primarily by word of mouth
- more chaos than order
- more trust that rules will be followed than consequences for failure

- great deal of autonomy
- consensus decision making
- individual and personal trust much higher than organizational trust
- new members often find entry into the system difficult

Now what is a metanoic organization? Kiefer and Senge put it this way: "the essence of the metanoic shift is the realization within each individual of the extraordinary power of a group committed to a common vision. In metanoic organizations, people do not assume they are powerless. They believe deeply in the power of visioning, the power of the individual to determine his or her own destiny. They know that through responsible participation, they can empower each other and ultimately their institutions and society, thereby creating a life that is meaningful and satisfying for everyone." (p. 82)

On the intrapsychic level which is where the primary focus is in Hakomi Therapy, the seemingly simple idea that each person has the power to determine his or her own destiny, i.e. has access to their own creative empowerment is very dramatic in its results. Hakomi Therapists use this belief and the special techniques developed to support it to help clients study the habitual ways in which they have organized their responses to life issues. The results include compassion, mindfulness, and the empowerment of expanded choices where there was once simply habitual reaction.

Kiefer and Senge assert that this kind of change can, and in fact is, happening at the level of society too. "The dominant belief in society at present is that the individual is at the mercy of huge, hopelessly complex, and unresponsive systems. Yet such beliefs can change, and when they do, everything else changes with them, even one's physical environment and perception of reality." Kiefer and Senge did an in-depth study of 3 highly successful technical companies which incorporate the metanoic shift in their policies, philosophy, and structure. These companies support the belief that groups of individuals "aligned around an appropriate vision can have an extraordinary influence in the world."

Metanoic comes from a Greek word meaning "fundamental shift of mind". In Kiefer and Senge's study, they found that the organizations that they selected shared a philosophy with 5 primary dimensions:

- deep sense of vision or purposefulness
- alignment around that vision
- empowering people
- structural integrity
- balance of reason and intuition

As I consider these five dimensions, I find an interesting correlation of them with the 5 Hakomi principles:

- vision (mindfulness)
- alignment (unity)
- empowerment (non-violence)
- integrity (mind/body wholism)
- balance (organicity)

Not by any means a perfect correlation, but enough to be thought-provoking.

Now, what kinds of policies tend to replace the policies which reflect the old paradigm? Kiefer and Senge summarize their findings in the following way:

Metanoic organizations replace top down with decentralized control.

Rules and regulations made out of alignment around a common vision foster conviction that everyone can win each individual has a unique part of play and demonstrate that leaders who catalyze vision, alignment, and personal responsibility and who can be effective teachers can be far more effective than traditional authority figures.

In the remainder of this article, I'd like to consider each of these dimensions (combining vision and alignment into one) in relationship to some of the policy decisions into which they've been translated in Kiefer and Senge's research, and in relation to some of the policies of the Hakomi Institute.

VISION AND ALIGNMENT

The shared vision of the Hakomi Institute is to help people heal and to shape and support a worldwide paradigm shift through the teaching and sharing of the principles and techniques of the Hakomi Method of Psychotherapy. My sense is that there is a high degree of agreement about that vision. This vision has held an extraordinary amount of power, dedication, creativity, and cohesion among the core staff for 10 years. This vision of healing and change has further inspired and drawn over 500 people to learn the work with great devotion and integrity.

However at the level of policy (rules and regulations, procedure, monetary support) there seems to be a curious lack of alignment. Alignment goes beyond agreement to include a dimension of creative partnership—of wholes aligning with other wholes as compared to assembling parts. There seems to be a way in which highly involved members of the organization don't experience these policies to be connected with the vision. Dues are often paid late, if at all. Records are often either not kept or are late or incomplete. Procedure is frequently forgotten. There is little if any response to requested feedback. On the other hand, A great deal of concern, interest, ac-

countability are expressed during times when members of the organization gather in person and encounter each other. This suggests that there is more personal alignment than organizational alignment, or a lack of awareness of the essential connection, or poor communication on the management level, or a lack of belief in the value and expanded influence available at the organizational level.

During the 1990 governing committee meeting, it became clear through feedback from all constituencies within the Hakomi Organization that a new level of long term visioning is needed as the central core of the Institute continues to expand beyond the core Training Staff. An international re-visioning process has been set in motion through the medium of the 1990 HTA conference and by personal visits to local centers by Ron Kurtz. Keeping current and aligned with the "vision is the vehicle for bringing purpose into the domain of acts and commitments".¹

In considering this issue, I quote Ray Stata of Analog Devices, who says, "Alignment of personal and organizational purpose is a pre-requisite for productivity. I cannot commit large part of myself without a 'rationalization' —that is, seeing the relationship between what I care deeply about and what the organization stands for, ie an organization's vision must reach from concrete business plans to a sense of cosmic purpose aligned with people's deepest values. I have a deep belief that personal satisfaction lies not in material rewards alone, but in the opportunity to pursue a lofty objective."

It's clear to me that a metanoic vision is central to the functioning of the Hakomi Institute in an intrapsychic way and within the relationships of small groups of people, but that at the organizational level there is a curious lack of alignment which hampers productivity and influence on a larger scale.

EMPOWERMENT

This dimension encompasses policies supporting individual empowerment. "The simplest and perhaps most fundamental definition of personal power is one's capacity to realize one's personal purpose"² and by extension then, to manifesting one's personal purpose in part through alignment with a larger vision which can be creatively empowered by an organization.

Metanoic organizations tend to be de-centralized. Decentralization spreads out the decision-making power and puts problem-solving in the hands of small groups who are closer to the problem at hand. As Rollwagen says, "we need to rely on individuals and small groups to identify and correct their mistakes. By the time a mistake gets to top management,

it's often too late for effective correction." Hakomi came quite organically to de-centralization as the best response to several issues. By 1986, the Central Administrative Office was running the Training Center, and producing all the Trainings. Contact with individual students was becoming less personal, expenses stayed the same regardless of number of Trainings bringing in income, the staff, creative, self-reliant, and highly motivated were feeling too contained, and the Institute was in serious debt. By reducing the functions of the Central Office to coordinating various parts and aspects of the organization and facilitating effective communication, costs were cut dramatically and local teams of organizers and teaching/training staff were much more effective and satisfied in promoting and producing trainings and workshops.

Along with other metanoic organizations, the Hakomi Institute is now more nonhierarchical. The hierarchical structure began to change in 1987 when the Senior Staff, who until that time held all the power and made all the decisions both business and teaching, realized how exhausted and overburdened they felt, and how selflimiting and inappropriate it was to hold all the power. Feedback from graduates conveyed as a frustrated sense of not being trusted and not being included. So a very significant decision was made: to set up two decision-making groups which would include representatives from the basic functional and involved groups in the organization, and to establish a separate organization (the Hakomi Therapist Association) to support and be run by Hakomi graduates.

The response to this change has been interesting. It has not been instant empowerment and inclusion for a large number of people. The system is still experienced as closed by many members of the organization. The change has been gradual and the process continues in a curious interplay of factors. The Senior Staff, being both self-reliant and dedicated to the work, naturally are cautious in their trust of new members of the organization. New members wait for trust to feel empowered. In addition, spreading out the power is a radical departure from the common societal experience of disempowerment. "Things don't work. There is nothing I can do about it. I'm dissatisfied, but I'm stuck in a system too big, too unresponsive, and too complex to influence. This point of view is so pervasive, it easily becomes an absolute truth and self-fulfilling prophecy. It not only permeates most organizations and institutions, but is the root cause of our sense of powerlessness in tackling the problem of creating a sustainable society." (Kiefer and Senge) In Hakomi, enculturated powerlessness seems to be compounded by the fact that Hakomi is primarily an intrapsychic form of

work and is taught in Trainings in such an accepting way that a level of adult responsibility and empowerment can be missed. (Please see article on Child Consciousness by Jon Eisman in this issue of Forum.) Organizationally we feel this lack of empowerment, involvement and productivity in the small and fairly inactive HTA; in the low percentage of graduates who seek certification; in the relative non-existence of an organizer's association.

The challenge for "leaders in metanoic organizations is to recognize that they must continually work to overcome the authoritarian mentality, because it is inimical to the spirit of equality and responsibility". And, of course, to work to overcome their own lack of trust and faith in being supported, by doing their best to promote a "spirit of freedom, equality, mutual trust, respect, and even love."

I find another statement by Ray Stata to be wise and good advice: "Human judgment is above procedure and on an equal footing with policy. We wish to break the procedural syndrome whereby people seek to impose themselves on each other through establishment of rules. We are not trying to eliminate all hierarchy, but to undercut the value system that is linked to the hierarchy. The greatest limitation in traditional organizations is that people further down the hierarchy somehow consider themselves lesser beings than those above them."

The following points the approach of the management teams in the metanoic organizations studied by Kiefer and Senge.

- management team provides direction, awareness, and a sense of how the game is played, but needs to respect the greater ability of small groups to solve their own problems.
- leaders catalyze vision, alignment, and personal responsibility
- management team must maintain the conviction that everyone can win
- each individual has a unique part to play
- encourage individuals to be responsible for results, not following rules

Through recognizing more about the issues related to trust and empowerment, perhaps the teams which make up the Hakomi organization can support each other in being more creative, involved, enthusiastic, and trusting.

INTEGRITY

Structural integrity, for me, includes communication (truthful, accurate, complete) and the awareness of being part of and responsible for larger systems (task group, organization, environment, society).

For Analog Devices, good communication begins with the credo that: 1) We believe people are honest and trustworthy and that they want to be treated with dignity and respect. 2) They want to achieve their full potential and they'll work hard to do so. 3) They want to understand the purpose of their work and the goals of the organization they serve. 4) They want a strong hand in determining what to do and how to do it. 5) They want to be accountable for results and to be recognized and rewarded for their achievements.

For Hakomi, effective and efficient communication has been a constant challenge. In such a decentralized and independent system, it's easy for details to get lost and confused and to be unclear about who's responsible. On the whole, the organization has had a strong record for integrity, being truthful, non-secretive, and fair in interactions both personally and organizationally. Recognizing the need for and creating implementing an ethical code is an example of this structural integrity.

Communicating the information, more than the truth, has been the problem. In order to maintain consistency, high quality, and integrity in workshops and trainings which are constantly being upgraded by the staff, a large amount of design and theoretical material must be passed on. Simply keeping it all together administratively requires pages of detailed information. I'm afraid entire forests have given their lives to provide this information. All too often there's so much of it that it's quite overwhelming and therefore lost. Organizing the material, sending it in smaller batches, using large headings, and using a modem so that more people in the system can be aware of ongoing work help a lot, but over and over again it's patently clear that the best and most satisfying communication happens in person, which because of our geographical distances can only be arranged on a large group level once or twice a year. Thus we must rely on local functional groups for inspiration and creative work.

Metanoic organizations interact with the environment in ways which address the long term well-being of the community/region/country/world/environment. Administratively we have paid very little attention to this dimension. Increasing our awareness and commitment (organizationally and personally) could lead to things like: using re-cycled paper, establishing a scholarship program for minority or foreign students, contributing 2% of profits to a chosen charity (as one of the companies studied does), presenting Hakomi at national conferences, providing a sliding scale for therapy when needed, and a host of other possibilities as yet undiscovered.

Systems thinking is being applied by metanoic organizations in some interesting ways. Three systems principles are mentioned by Kiefer and Senge. All are thought-provoking to me:

1) Avoid better before worse behavior (i.e., beware of short-term solutions). It is important to keep this concept in mind when assessing major decisions. For several years, we were operating from one crisis to another with small solutions making things a little better but the larger picture worse. For example, making minor budget and income adjustments rather than reassessing the whole centralized financial system.

2) Work with the forces in a system rather than against them. It seems to me we were working against forces in the system when it took us several years to realize that only 84% of graduates were even attempting to get certified when our Trainings were designed for most people to be ready within a year or two of graduating.

3) Shifting the burden to the intervenor. (Beware of overdependence on the helper). Administratively, I long considered it my job to take responsibility for "fixing" whatever wasn't working. This was often disempowering and moved the solution too far away from the problem.

Hakomi as a therapy uses systems thinking extensively. Hakomi as an organization could benefit by using it just as extensively.

BALANCE

Balance between intuition and reason; balance between chaos and order; centralization and decentralization.

The place of friction between intuition and reason within the Institute is at the interface between the creator and the translator. The creator(s) write books, create new workshops and trainings, give talks, make videos, have big ideas. The translators decide which ones are practical, prioritize them, make the money work, do the scheduling and advertising. These two don't always agree. They're not supposed to agree. But they need to respect each other, because both are necessary for satisfaction, productivity, and impact. There's still friction, but higher and higher quality teamwork between the creator(s): teachers and trainers and founder/director and the translators: administrative staff and organizers seems to be emerging.

Balance between chaos and order. Understanding the fulcrum point which balances chaos and order within the Hakomi system has been a fascinating process for me. For years, in my primary role as translator, I found myself responding to frustrations about entering or getting involved in the system by trying to

create new rules and procedures which would provide more structure, consistency, and safety especially for new members. This was a big burden AND didn't work. It finally became clear to me that the Hakomi system works best by having as few rules as possible to allow for responding to individual needs, creativity, flexibility. The best way to help people enter the system is not to make more procedures for their comfort, but to empower them to connect with individuals of their choice and to learn to feel more comfortable in chaos. The Hakomi system responds to personal initiative and personal connections make things happen.

We are just beginning to appreciate and respect the value of both identifying and maintaining the balance between centralization and decentralization. These two have quite different functions. Centralization functions within the Institute to provide cohesion, unity, inspiration core, information flow, overview, necessary rules and forms. Decentralization functions to create and support personal relationships, small group creativity, productivity, applications of the Method, and involvement. Critical to the effectiveness and satisfaction of members the Hakomi organization is clear understanding of these functions and their balance. Without such understanding it has been all too easy, for example, to expect the Central Office to make more rules to satisfy inclusion needs much more satisfactorily handled by networking to establish strong personal connections.

Every organization undoubtedly has a different balance, but balance it must have, coupled with an understanding of what this unique balance is.

SUMMARY

The Hakomi Institute has organically evolved both therapeutically and organizationally in a metanoic direction in dimensions of vision and alignment, power, integrity and balance. However, it could use more metanoic attention on the organizational level to truly join the growing group of organizations committed to creating the world they want rather than reacting habitually to it as it is.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Rachel Gaffney, "Systems Thinking in Business: An Interview with Peter Senge," *Revision*, 1984, Vol. 7, p. 59.

² *Ibid.*

All other quotes are from the article "Metanoic Organizations by Charles Kiefer and Peter Senge published in the book, *Transforming Work*, edited by John Adams.