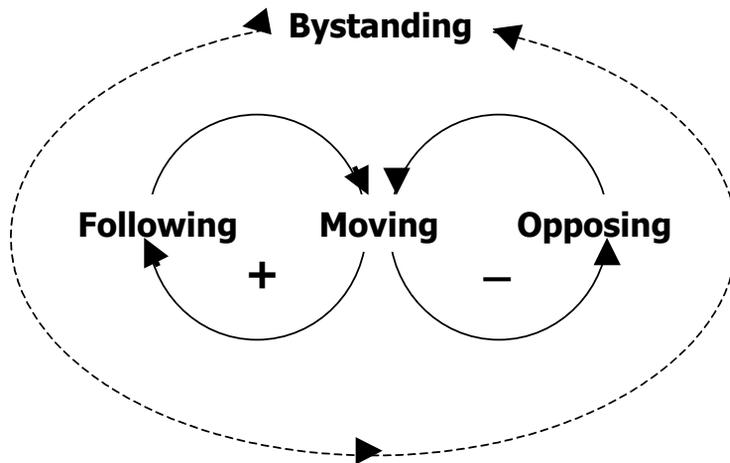


MODELS

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The 4 Player Model

Seeing Human Systems in Action



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*Seeing, Testing, & Improving
our Model for Action*

*A Product of Strategic Model Building
BC Huselton # 843 342 5471*

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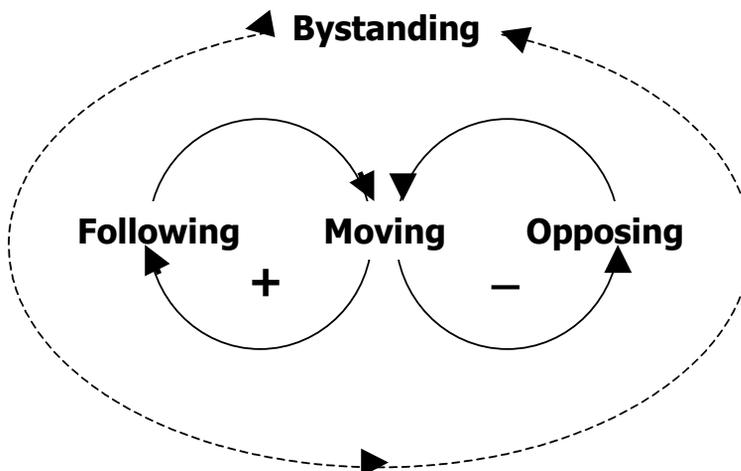
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A Note on This Document

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The 4 Player Model : A System Illustration



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our Model for Action*

The 4 Player Model is a David Kantor product.

With David Kantor's permission, the application of a "Limits to Success" System Archetypes to the 4 Player Model is a Model Building design by BC Huselton

There are many kinds of systems in our world with different kinds of parts and ingredients. But no matter how different these systems may appear, they are all assembled according to the same general rules of organization. Those general rules are called General Systems Theory.

Understanding General System Theory and using it to help conceptualize Teams and Organizations as Human Systems provides a way to see and to effectively to improve their performance.

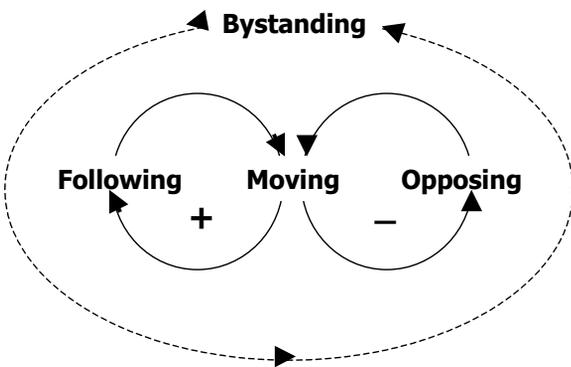
Human Systems

Human Systems

There are many kinds of systems in our world with different kinds of parts and ingredients. But no matter how different these systems may appear, they are all assembled according to the same general rules of organization. Those general rules are called General Systems Theory. All the common system attributes like: feedback, interaction, interdependency, circular causality, boundaries, delay, complexity, stability, goal-seeking, environment and adapting are present in Human Systems. The one system attribute that distinguishes a Human System from all other systems is that its parts are human beings.

Understanding General Systems Theory and using it to help conceptualize Teams and Organizations as Human Systems provides a way to see and to effectively to improve performance.

The Kantor 4 Player Model as a System



Understanding the 4 Player Model and utilizing it as a primary method to name, display and code the actions and interactions of the people (parts) in a Human System provides access to the structures that control the Human System's performance.

1. The 4 Player Model sees people in teams and organizations as parts / players in a human system.

Note: How a system is conceptualized will control how one interacts with it. Example: If an organization is viewed as if it were a machine, its parts will most like be treated as machine parts and overtime become disposable.

2. The 4 Player Model helps make more visible the actions and interactions people take to produce desired goals and outcomes for themselves and the whole.

Note: Understanding how a system works starts with a definition of what a system is. Example: A system is made up of parts which interact to function as a whole. A system is a whole that cannot be divided into independent parts and carry out its defining function.

3. The 4 Player Model's focus of attention is on the "face to face" interaction of the people in the system.

Note: How the performance of a system is evaluated will determine what gets observed. Example: If the performance of a system is not the sum of the parts taken separately, but the product of their interaction, the "interaction" is what needs to be observed.

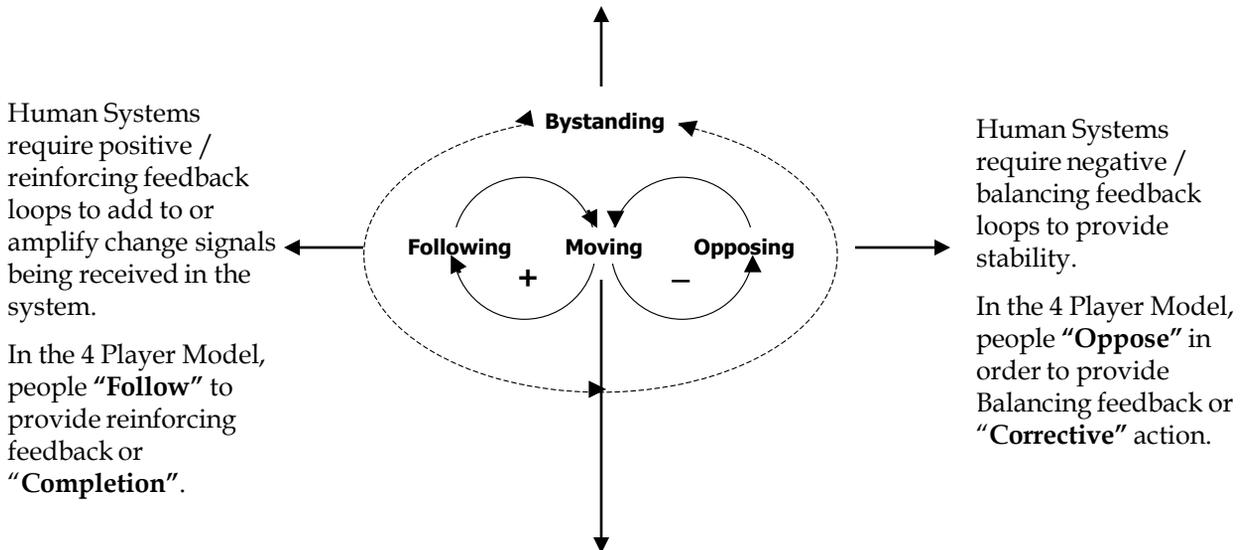
4. The 4 Player Model targets the action structures produced by the people as the locus for change.

Note: How some one believe change works in a particular system will control how they go about producing change in it and what they target for change. Example: How a systems behaves is controlled by its structure. If one rearranges the structure of the parts to alter the parts interactions, the system will change.

4 Player Model in a Human System

Human Systems have regulating sensors that control structural oscillation and/or advancement to permit the system to effectively live on.

In the 4 Player Mode, people **"Bystand"** to provide whole system regulating **"Perspective"**.



Human Systems require positive / reinforcing feedback loops to add to or amplify change signals being received in the system.

In the 4 Player Model, people **"Follow"** to provide reinforcing feedback or **"Completion"**.

Human Systems require negative / balancing feedback loops to provide stability.

In the 4 Player Model, people **"Oppose"** in order to provide Balancing feedback or **"Corrective"** action.

Human Systems are Goal Seeking. They actively and passively adapt to internal and external pressures and constraints in the pursuit of desires and sustainability.

In the 4 Player Model, people make **"Moves"** to initiate action and to set **"Direction"** to achieve goals.

General Systemic Implications and Conclusions

1. Systems are goal-seeking and the parts interact to produce a system output. The parts are essential to the whole system, if any one of them is missing the system cannot operate as designed to produce the goal.
2. Each part and it's arrangement (structure) in the system can affect the behavior of the whole system.
3. How the systems regulates feedback determines if it lives or dies. Too much negative feedback can negate any changes in the system and too much positive feedback can produce disturbances that eventually brake the system.
4. Systems have sensor, comparator and regulator functions that pay attention to boundaries, and internal / external pressures.
5. System are complex because they have many feedback loops and circular causal variables.
6. Systems display patterns of behavior over time that can be predicted.
7. Human Systems as Social Systems are open because they interact with their environment and other larger systems in which they are embedded. They are adaptive and grow / develop by making changes and responding actively to internal and external constraints.

Implication for Teams and Organizations (1)

From Conclusion #1.

Systems are goal-seeking and the parts interact to produce a system output. The parts are essential to the whole system, if any one of them is missing the system cannot operate as designed to produce the goal.

Enabled Teams:

- *See themselves as a system and embedded in a larger system*
- *Have a shared purpose and vision for overall missions and goals*
- *Individuals have the capability and demonstrate competency to engage in all four actions (Move, Follow, Oppose, Bystand) in observable balanced sequences*
- *They are consistently able to reach closure and produce desired results*
- *Demonstrate balance so that no person is consistently and systematically denied access to the team processes*
- *Spreads out action demands so that no one player is singled out for repeated sacrifice to the whole*

Disabled Teams:

- *See themselves as independent players*
- *The team is the wrong team for the project or there has been a poor choice of goal*
- *They lack the capability or flexibility to engage in all four action behaviors*
- *Team is unable to reach closure and produce results and does not know why*

Implication for Teams and Organizations (2)

From Conclusion #2.

Each part and it's arrangement (structure) in the system can affect the behavior of the whole system.

Enabled Teams:

- *Individual have flexibility to engage in more than one of the action behaviors and understand how content and stakes impact their actions and sequences.*
- *The team individually and collectively understands the structural stories behind the Action Archetypes and has the capability of telling and illustrating other structural stories that are impacting performance.*
- *How the team members conceptualize the organization is operationally similar*
- *People in the team are able to make clear, rather than mixed or ambiguous moves.*
- *Team members realize they are a holographic slice of the rest of their organization.*

Disabled Teams:

- *See themselves as independent players*
- *Lack the capability or flexibility to engage in all four action behaviors.*
- *Team is unable to reach closure and produce results and does not know why*
- *Individuals get locked into a single action and often time attach double messages to their moves*
- *There are conflicting theories of change*

Implication for Teams and Organizations (3)

From Conclusion #3.

How the systems regulates feedback determines if it lives or dies. Too much negative feedback can negate any changes in the system and too much positive feedback can produce disturbances that eventually brake the system.

Enabled Teams:

- *The team can generate successful sequences and strategies. In general, the key difference between successful and unsuccessful sequences is the way in which opposition is regulated. To produce a successful sequence, the players must appropriately recognize its opposition and then handle it by either resolving or dissolving competing interests and goals*
- *Team members know disabling strategies are institutionalized patterns encompassing many different individual sequences. Although there may be no correspondence between a single unsuccessful sequence and a disabling strategy (or, indeed, between one successful sequence and an enabled strategy,) there is usually a great degree of overlap between an unsuccessful sequence and a disabling strategy. This is particularly true of disabling strategies in which players get "stuck" into reenacting the same basic action mode over and over again regardless of context or sequence*
- *Team members know their strong and stuck actions and are able to "read the room" to unstick themselves and others.*
- *The team has an active, engaged bystander function which helps it inquire and stay unstuck*
- *Individual have flexibility to engage in more than one of the action behaviors and understand how content and stakes impact their actions and sequences.*

Disabled Teams:

- *The Bystander is disabled*
- *The team fails to notice disabling conditions or if they do notice these conditions they have no idea of the choices for corrective action*

Implication for Teams and Organizations (4)

From Conclusion #4.

Systems have sensor, comparator and regulator functions that pay attention to boundaries, and internal/ external pressures

Enabled Teams:

- The group has an active, enabled bystander function which helps it inquire and stay unstuck

- When disablement occurs, teams / organizations are faced with the necessity of having to take corrective action. System enablement is directly related to the effectiveness of a player's corrective action. When organizational systems and sub-system fail to recognize, misidentify or nonidentify disabling conditions, and fail to take effective corrective action, they in effect acquiesce to such disablement. There are several preconditions in relation to disablement that players need to pay close attention to: a poor choice of goals, poor communication about what the goals of any particular sequence are, the poor choice of a strategic pathway for gaining access to target goals, a poor cuing of members to what the organization, expects of each member in different behavioral contexts, and covert metacommunications among players. In enabled teams, team members notice and accurately identify the issue and then take corrective actions.

Disabled Teams:

- The Bystander is disabled

- The team fails to notice disabling conditions or if they do notice these conditions they have no idea of the choices for corrective action

Implication for Teams and Organizations (5)

Conclusion #5.

System are complex because they have many feedback loops and circular causal variables.

Enabled Teams:

- The Team knows there are other less visible structural levels that impact their performance and they can access those levels to improve their own performance

--The Team understands the influence of behavioral and dynamic complexity. (See Page 7 for Larger View)

Dynamic complexity refers to relationships between variables. Situations of low complexity are stable over time, and the relationships between the variables remain constant. High dynamic complexity occurs in situations where there is a time delay in cause and effect relationship, and where an action in one place has consequences in another, distant place.

		Behavioral Complexity	
		LOW	HIGH
Dynamic Complexity	LOW	Tame Problems	Wicked Problems
	HIGH	Messes	Wild Messes

Behavioral complexity refers to the mental models, values or basic underlying assumptions of the people in a group or organization. In situations of low behavioral complexity these are basically consistent and congruent. High behavioral complexity is characterized by wide variation and conflict between different assumptions, beliefs, and perspectives.

Tame Problems	Messes	Wicked Problems	Wild Messes
When problems of low dynamic complexity combine with problems of low behavioral complexity, the result is a "Tame Problem". Tame problems can be solved in isolation. Traditionally, tame problems are broken down into parts which can be solved independently, and then integrated into an overall solution. They are relatively stable in terms of behavioral and dynamic complexity.	Problems associated with messes cannot be solved in isolation from one another; they are systems of problems. "Messes" typically require systems thinking in order to clarify and map the inter-relationships among variables. In the behavioral dimension, messes are described in patterns of behavior, such as vicious and virtuous cycles, shifting the burden, and addictions. Characteristics of messes in the dynamic dimension include feedback loops, delays, complex and multiple cause and effect relationships, and so on.	"Wicked Problems" are those in which complex underlying social problems are inherent. These problems have high behavioral complexity. When the overriding social theory and ethic are divergent people see the situation from different perspectives and plan strategies for what could and should be done based on different mental models. Often these factions become hostile, embittered, wed to their positions, and entrenched to the point where there is little possibility for wider understanding and compromise solution.	"Wild Messes" have no single solution. The conditions of behavioral complexity-groups of people holding different assumptions, values, and beliefs which are in opposition to one another - are heightened and complicated even further by the dynamic complexity. When the element of time is factored in - conditions are continually changing, cause and effect relationships are unclear, and feedback is distant - you have a wild mess!

Adapted from "The Work of the Center for Organizational Learning" Draft 2/17/98 Liaison Officers

Disabled Teams:

- These teams recommit to working harder and believe that's their only choice.

Implication for Teams and Organizations (6)

From Conclusion #6.

Systems display patterns of behavior over time that can be predicted.

Enabled Teams:

- *The team and individuals do not get caught up in repetitive or ritualized patterns of behavior or sequences*
- *The bystander function is fully activated*

Disabled Teams:

- *People don't or misunderstand their underlying stories and their impact on actions and interactions*
- *Ritualistic and unproductive patterns of behavior prevail*
- *Individuals gravitate to favorite behaviors and are typecast in roles by others*
- *The Bystander is disabled*

-

Implication for Teams and Organizations (7)

From Conclusion #7.

Human Systems as Social Systems are open because they interact with their environment and other larger systems in which they are embedded. They are adaptive and grow / develop by making changes and responding actively to internal and external constraints.

Enabled Teams:

- *The Individuals and Team are Whole. Each player has the competency and repertoire to engage in each of the action modes when needed. The team legitimizes the need for all the player to be actively present to produce the desired result*
- *The team knows they are a Holographic slice of the rest of the organization*

Disabled Teams:

- *The Individuals, teams, and organization fragmented*
- *There are no strong Movers, or no one ever Follows a Move*

Dynamic and Behavioral Complexity and their Messes

Dynamic complexity refers to relationships between variables. Situations of low complexity are stable over time, and the relationships between the variables remain constant. High dynamic complexity occurs in situations where there is a time delay in cause and effect relationship, and where an action in one place has consequences in another, distant place.

	Behavioral Complexity	
	LOW	HIGH
LOW	Tame Problems	Wicked Problems
HIGH	Messes	Wild Messes

Behavioral complexity refers to the mental models, values or basic underlying assumptions of the people in a group or organization. In situations of low behavioral complexity these are basically consistent and congruent. High behavioral complexity is characterized by wide variation and conflict between different assumptions, beliefs, and perspectives.

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Adapted from "The Work of the Center for Organizational Learning" Draft 2/17/95 Liaison Officers

4 Player Model Building - Thinking behind my Thinking

Theory of the Thing:

The 4 Player Model conceptualized as a system provides a pattern language to name, code and make more visible the actions / interactions people in Human Systems take to control their performance and as a consequence the performance of the system. It is a dynamic process vs. Static. Players are not Movers, Opposers, Bystanders, or Followers, unless they get stuck. They are constantly in action Moving, Opposing, Bystanding or Following.

Theory of Change:

Change in this model occurs by re-arranging, regulating and or balancing the interactions the system players make. To change the System's performance, use the 4 Player Model to help the players alter the product of their interactions, not just the performance of the players taken separately. How the players interact and arrange themselves in space is their "Structure." So, the 4 Player Model targets the Human System's structure to change it.

Theory of Practice:

Develop in stages, the capacity and competencies of the players in the Human System to see, name, shift and generate the action level structures to enhance their individual and collective interactions.

Stage I:

- a. See and name Self and Team Structures in low stakes contexts,
- b. Then, in high stakes contexts

Stage II:

- a. Conserve Enabled Structures and rearrange or evacuate Disabled Self, Team, and Larger System Structures
- b. Name and intervene in systems behavioral and policy structures that keep the system stuck or oscillating

Stage III:

- a. Generate new sustaining structures and manage retrenchment at the Self, Team and Larger System Levels
- b. Create transfer structures to develop others' competencies in the 4 Player Model

Tools and Methods:

Action Level Board Game

O Deck

BP Assessments

BP Analyzer and Balance Meter

Intervention Tips

Enabled and Disabled team indicators

Structural Story Tips

Action Archetypes ZiP Cards

Mapping the System Worksheets

Individual and System Structure Worksheets

Guide for Building your Model