

## Open Space Facilitation – The Practice of Peace OS NUTS AND BOLTS by Harrison Owen in Taiwan on 10 MAR 03

(English followed by Chinese)

Q: What do you do in a closing circle if people keep talking and talking?

A: We call these space invaders. Usually they will stop after while. People around them will usually take care of that. If you're using a talking stick, you may be just stuck with it. Rules are that if you hold the stick, you talk. Think about it before using the stick. Helpful to tell people how long there is, time yourself with respect; typically the group will respond to that. With a very large group, doing a talking stick is probably not a good idea. A useful alternative is to say we have half an hour, and if anyone wants to talk, please do, and the leader take the microphone to them. You might turn the microphone off if necessary. If a very large group (750-1000), you typically need to have several people holding microphones so you don't have to do a marathon.

Q: Would the circle be too big if there were 1000 participants?

A: That is a middle sized open space. When a really large group, think carefully about the space available. Typically a hotel would move the space in so there is not enough space in the middle, if 150 people come to the center of the circle and there is no room, then awkward. Same thing applies to the wall. If wall is too small, people will be crowded. Need about 3 inches of wall space per person. That works out to be not more than 2 or 3 people deep when they're looking at the wall. No limit to the number of people you can have.

Q: What about internal facilitators?

A: First time do OS for a group, better to use an outside facilitator (outside the group). If that facilitator was part of the group, nobody could believe the facilitator had no agenda. A facilitator should not force the agenda. The second time around can use anyone; everyone will know that the facilitator can't force the agenda.

Q: In a culture described as politeness, people play under the table, have friends there that do not want to hurt that relationship, so reluctant to say what I really think.

A: I would do nothing, couldn't think of anything to do that would make it any better. Given enough time (and time in OS is important), the circle itself begins to do its own work. Way people relate changes over a couple of days. Most people are just astounded at how quickly people relate directly and with respect in an OS environment regardless of the culture. It may sound hard-hearted. At the end of the day, it's each person's responsibility to fully relate so they can learn and contribute. If they do decide to hold back and be miserable, there's nothing the facilitator can do about it. I feel responsible to create the conditions so they can if they choose to engage themselves. If they choose not to and choose to be miserable, there's nothing I can do about it. May sound hard, but I don't care.

Q: What about OS during coffee breaks as different from the regular OS?

A: My experience is that's it's all open space. From the moment we start, it's all OS. There is a maturation factor in a group. By the second day, nobody cares, no clear distinction between being in a session or not in a session. Coffee break sessions may have no notes, but the information gets woven into the other work. The first time you work with a group when boundaries between coffee breaks and the sessions disappear, feel like I'm in a great bonfire where I just stand there and warm my hands and say "Yes!"

Q: How often do you use the bells and how loud?

A: Temple bells are good because they are a holding sound and an entraining sound. In a very large group, they can bring a group to quiet in 5-10 minutes. Not a question of how

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loud, but how you pace them. Use in a pace like a normal breathing sound. Then match the pace of the bells as I pace around the circle. People start to breathe in the same rhythm as the bells. When that happens find it entraining. Different than using a bell in a school. This is really about using those sonic waves to bring consciousness together. Would only use the bells at the beginning and at the end, 2X per day and maybe just a single bell at the end. Session start or lunch start, I don't do a thing. It tends to be annoying. The group knows when they're hungry and they'll know when they want to go to work. And they'll know when they're ready to end the day.

Q: How much time should be allowed for finishing off the day?

A: I always end an OS when we say we're going to end it. If we say 9 - 5, end at 5. Bare minimum is 15 minutes. Can notice people who are here, sit in silence and let the group go. If using a talking stick probably need at least an hour. If 150 people and a talking stick, 2-3 hours.

Q: Observers? Think everyone should participate with no observers.

A: Almost impossible to demonstrate OS. OS runs on passion and responsibility. Demonstration when there is neither passion or responsibility and no one cares. When HO tried to demonstrate it, people watching it asked if that was all there is. Nothing to watch if they're just watching the process.

Q: TV and camera OK.

A: I will work carefully with a camera crew, don't want them in the center of the circle. Help them choose their shots so they can get the information they need, but can't take pictures if people don't want it. Make it clear at the beginning. Might tell people to let the camera people know if you don't want your pictures taken.

Q: What to do if there is serious anger or arguments?

A: Nothing! Have never seen any group that could not handle any level of conflict, handle it well and learn from it. This is the hardest part of learning to facilitate OS. We'll all been taught that it's our job to fix them when things like that happen. The group can always figure it out by themselves. Get OS started and find a good strong chair and sit on it. Put one hand on one side and one hand on the other. Hold tight. It will keep you from intervening. The first time you are sure they are going to kill each other, they won't. The secret is the law of two feet. There are very few people who want to get so angry they lose their cool. We lose our cool almost always because our space is closed and we can't get out of the way. A person himself knows when they are angry, and they will go out, cool down and come back. If you force them to stay there, it could be a greater problem.

Q: Do you ever do self introductions around the circle?

A: The only time I do it is if someone tells me I have to. Problem is after 2 or 3, can't remember names. After 50 people say, already bored and wasted a lot of time. I know they will get to know each other as they connect with passion. When people connect at the level of passion and experience, they will remember.

Q: Is OS an inborn quality everyone has?

A: Yes. We get it schooled out of us. School is often the primary culprit. The good news is that we never completely forget. With just a little bit of help, everyone can remember.

Q: What if a group doesn't want to do it?

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A: Ask if they really want to do it. If they just want a feel good experience, don't do OS. What do you really want to do? Is the space really open? If they're clear about where they want to go and the space is really open, the rest is easy.

Q: What do you mean about the space really being open?

A: E.g. If someone wants to introduce a new financial system, I wouldn't do OS. If they wanted to get everyone involved in creating a new financial system, OS would make sense. If want to intro a new fin system, show people the manuals, take them through the manual and tell them to get to work. Doing OS is a team building program.

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空間的侵略者，有人一直講個不停。如果你給他一些空間，身旁的人會處理這樣的事情。如果他有說話權杖，就真的有可能卡住。當開始前要確定自己要這麼做。先告訴大家時間有多長，說的要專心說，聽的要專心聽，大概有多少時間，這樣會很有幫助。如果有一兩百人，傳權杖不是很好的方式。這樣的情境之下，我們有半個小時，想講的人可以講，這是一個開放空間，沒有人可以控制你，但記得麥克風是你在拿的，你可以關掉麥克風。如果有超大的團體，拿麥克風的人大概要有兩三個人。

一千個人算中型的。如果你的團體真的非常大，你要小心考量空間的因素。旅館的人可能把同心圓的中間排得非常的小。牆面的問題，大家都到牆上去看，會絆倒在一起。每一個人至少給他三英吋的看牆空間。人潮兩三層差不多，再多層就看不到了。人數基本上是沒有限制的。

很多人做組織內的引導。我們的建議是很多公司都有內部的引導者，最好引導者是其他部門的。要避免部門內的引導者，尤其是有權威的職位者，因為沒有人會相信他不會對議題持特定的意見。大家知道沒有人可以強迫誰討論什麼，但第一次參與時大家可能不知道，所以至少第一次要用外部的引導者。

簡短來講，我什麼都不會做，因為我想不出什麼做法在處理「檯面下不講出來」的問題。不管在什麼文化，...破除這樣的隔閡。一天結束之後，一個人要決定學習或貢獻或決定悲慘過一生，是他自己的決定，我也沒有辦法。身為一個引導者，是幫這個團體創造一個環境，幫助他們學習與貢獻。聽起來好像很冷酷，但我真的不在乎。

我的看法是沒有開放空間中的開放空間，它們都是開放空間。開放空間對我來說是一體的，從開始的那一秒到結束的那一秒。或許剛開始時，大家會有會議內外之分，但是到了第二天，沒有人在乎內外。就算談話沒有被當場紀錄下來，它們也會在稍後被編織進談話來。到後來你會驚訝沒有討論內外，大家能量非常地高。就像升起營火，大家在旁烤火，感覺非常地好。

我喜歡用西藏鈴是因為它是內蘊的聲音，人再多也容易收斂能量。不是在敲多大聲，而是步調。基本上我是配合呼吸。我也會用在圈圈走路的速度，帶領團隊同步呼吸的感覺。當呼吸一致，團體的感覺就開始。大概我只會用兩次，大概在開始的時候，與傍晚的時候。最後只會用一次。在開始與吃飯時我都是不用的。一部分原因是因為吵，一部分原因是讓這個團體負起責任，肚子餓自然想吃飯，想開始討論自然會開始。

要看你的情境，但基本上我不會準時，但結束時會讓大家準時走。結束的對話可長可短，可短到讓大家看看彼此就結束，人數多甚至可到數個小時用說話權杖。

我同意大家都應該參與，而不只是在旁邊看。這也是為什麼不可能用示範的做開放空間。要有開放空間的話一定要有熱情跟責任，用假的示範沒有熱情沒有責任，當然不可能示範得出來。有一次我想示範，結束後有人問：「就這樣嗎？」「就這樣。」觀察者在旁看沒有意思，太多觀察者會降低能量。攝影機與照相機是可以的，但會先溝通會怎麼進行，如何會照得好，特別是不要到圈圈來。如果有人不願意被攝影，可以在邀請函上寫明，書面同意。如果來不及書面同意，可以在開始時告知如果被攝影可以被拒絕。

如果有嚴重的爭執，不做任何事。我從來沒有看過有人不能處理憤怒與爭執。那有不同程度，看他們要如何處理而已。這也是在學習引導開放空間時最困難的一關，因為我們被教育有爭執時要介入處理。我從不介入，因為他們會自行處理。當團體剛開始學習時，我會教他們一個椅

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子的把戲。當大家開始在動時，就找一張堅固的椅子，雙手抓住椅墊，不能放開。這樣他們就算吵到站起來，也會想再坐下。不管他們如何吵，也不會殺死對方，秘訣是在雙腳法則。我們會失去鎮靜通常是因為空間被封閉而不能走開。在這種會議中，他們會知道站起來出去走一走。

我不會在圈圈中叫參與者介紹自己。在我的經驗中自我介紹到一半就沒有人願意聽下去了。就我的經驗過不了多久他們就會因為相同的熱情而彼此認識，不會忘記彼此。

開放空間是一種天生的特質，而大家因為教育而忘記了嗎？是的。好消息是我們沒有真正忘記，只需要一點幫助，大家都會再想起來。

還沒有開始開放空間時，你會與客戶端做什麼準備工作？我自己會問客戶真的要做開放空間嗎？如果只是要大家高興、玩一玩，就不要做。在開始做之前我會確定兩件事，第一件事是他們想要什麼，第二件事是空間是否是開放的。如果目的很清楚，空間也是開放的，其他的事就好解決。如果有人跑來說要用開放空間介紹一個已完成的系統，這個議題是封閉的，我會建議他根本不要做。如果要做，他們就會創造出一個新的來。如果目的是要做一個新的系統，開放空間是很適合的。一切就看他們想要什麼目標，如果是要一起創造的就適合，如果是已經決定的，就不適合。