

“ROADBLOCKS TO GROWTH”

Shelia Murphy, Ph.D.

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Anytime structures are questioned or change is introduced, conflict emerges. Most conflict is rooted in fear, so identifying conflicts and the fears they represent allow us to transform those conflicts from roadblocks into building blocks to growth.

DENIAL: persons reflecting this block to growth simply long for a return to the way things were in the past where they see no problems existing and nothing that needed to be “fixed.” They dismiss current... practices as fads or whims.

Denial creates difficulties especially when exhibited by those with either power or resources because they can so effectively block others’ efforts to change.

Dealing with denial is frustrating for those seeking change, and the initial response is to try to “convince” the deniers of the merits of bonding or collaborating. The deniers, however, have their blindness to protect them, so those desiring greater... participation must learn to pick their battles; they need to learn to ask deniers, “Why not?” instead of continually responding to their reluctant “Why?”

NAYSAYING: ...or the “storm cloud” approach...with their storm clouds of doom and depression, ready to rain on the parade of growth and change...will give a litany of reasons why such efforts can not and will not work. This roadblock is even more insidious than denial, because although naysayers appear to support change, at the same time they point to others’ frailties and burdens as reasons for not moving forward.

Naysayers successfully sabotage collaborative and bonding efforts through their concern for others, which is really a smoke screen for their own denial.

DISTRACTION WITH PROCEDURE: Another way of blocking change is through appeals for correct legal procedures....thus making structure an end in itself rather than a means to an end.

Those unable to grapple with the larger issues of bonding too frequently get stuck in the mire of correct legal proceedings, thus short circuiting change before it occurs.

CONGRUENCE QUESTIONS: A fourth way to curtail growth is used by traditionalists who build roadblocks to change by questioning whether contemporary practices are congruent with official...teachings and legislation.

TURF PROTECTION: Primarily a power issue. Three points must be stressed here: 1) those with power are loathe to relinquish it, 2) those who are oppressed will be aggressive toward other oppressed people rather than against the oppressor, and 3) once liberated from oppression, many formerly oppressed individuals themselves become oppressive. Many insist that power issues (turf protection) are at the root of collaboration and bonding disagreements.

UNHEALED HURTS: Some people are unaware of another source of conflict, the power of unhealed hurts to block new movements...in society.

When people come together...they have a natural tendency to want to say where they have been and to explain what the experiences have meant to them. Not understanding the legitimacy of this need can lead to further competition (who can tell the most horrendous story, or who can boast of the greatest number of injustices) or nonacceptance....

DESIRE FOR OFFICIAL APPROVAL: All of us learned as children to seek the support and approval of our elders and superiors, so we naturally want recognition from officials in authority....This an unrealistic expectation. Because...institutions, by definition, are static and conservative; people, by definition, are dynamic and in progress.