Board Basics Webinar – Part 2

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Board Basics Webinar Outline – Session 2
July 28th, 2020 at 8pm Eastern / 7pm Central

Technical and Adaptive Skills for Board Service

- Adaptive challenges vs. Technical Problems
- Balcony vs. Dance Floor
- Differentiation as a Leader
- Confidentiality and Transparency
- Healthy Disclosure (4 part process)
- Linkage
- Board Covenant – Speak with One Voice
- Voting and Consensus Process
- Healthy Conflict for Boards

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Board Basics Webinar Outline – Session 3
August 25th, 2020 at 8pm Eastern / 7pm Central

Tools and Techniques for Effective Boards

- How to read a Congregational Budget and Profit/Loss Statement
- Process Observation
- Consent Agenda
- Board Meeting / Board Workshop
- Powerful Questions
- Cottage Meetings and Townhalls
- Board Culture Assessment
- Board Roles and Positions
- Open/Executive Sessions

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Reminders for this Workshop

- Use the chat box to ask questions during the presentation
- The slide deck is designed with both graphics and notes
- The slide deck will be sent out as a PDF file after the webinar
- When sharing stories or questions, remember your commitments to confidentiality (this is not a confidential space)
- This webinar is being recorded and will be available on the web
- Presenters are available outside of webinar

Just a reminder…

WARNING

ASSUMPTIONS AHEAD

Underlying Assumptions of this Webinar

- The purpose of Church is not Governance – the Purpose of Church is the congregation's mission. Governance is good when it is serving the mission.

- Culture is stronger than Structure. Unless you change the congregational culture, structural changes will not shift a congregational system.

- The most effective way to make changes in a congregational system is for individuals to change their own functioning. The congregation will adapt around these intentional changes.

- There is no single "right" way for a Congregational Governing Board to function!

- There is no such thing as Best Practices. There are ideas that may or may not work in your system, and you don't know till you really try them.

WARNING
ASSUMPTIONS
A H E A D

Adaptive Challenges vs. Technical Problems

Adaptive Challenge vs. Technical Problems
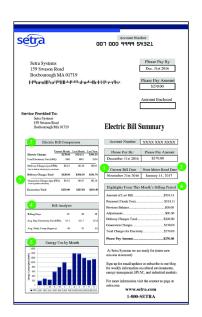
Technical Problem

- Has a known solution that can be accessed and resolved with knowledge and expertise

- The necessary expertise may be present in the group, or may need to come from outside

- When the necessary knowledge or expertise is applied, it solves the problem

Adaptive Challenge

- A dissonance or problem that will require a change in relationships and/or human functioning to affect

- Sometimes seen when technical fixes do not work on a technical problem

- May have technical problems that are symptoms of the adaptive challenge

- Persists in spite of technical fixes

Technical Problems vs. Adaptive Challenges

- Natural human tendency to first view Adaptive Challenges as Technical Problems

- It takes intentionality to look for the ways that relationship and human functioning need to change in order to engage an Adaptive Challenge

- Adaptive Challenges may never be "solved", rather the system and/or individuals may be able to intentionally adapt relationships and functioning

- Adaptive Challenges often point Governing Boards towards the congregation's Identity, Culture, Mission, and Vision

- Sometimes the way to work with an Adaptive Challenge involves not solving a Technical Problem

- Sometimes a communications disconnect occurs between those who see the Adaptive Challenge and those who only see the Technical Problems

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Getting on the Balcony vs Dancing on the Dance Floor

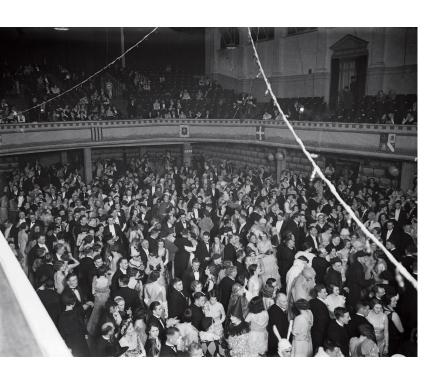# Getting on the Balcony vs Dancing on the Dance Floor

Dance Floor View

- Seeing mostly those you are "dancing" with and those closest

- Engaging primarily with the particular "dance" that and those around you are doing, and assuming others are doing the same "dance"

- Seeing your "dance" out of proportion to the rest of the "dance floor"

Balcony View

- Able to see the entirety of the dance floor, and all of the "dancers"

- See the interactions between different groups of "dancers"

- See the ways that changes in the "music" affects all of the "dancing system"

- Make changes to the dance hall environment to make the "dance" better for everyone

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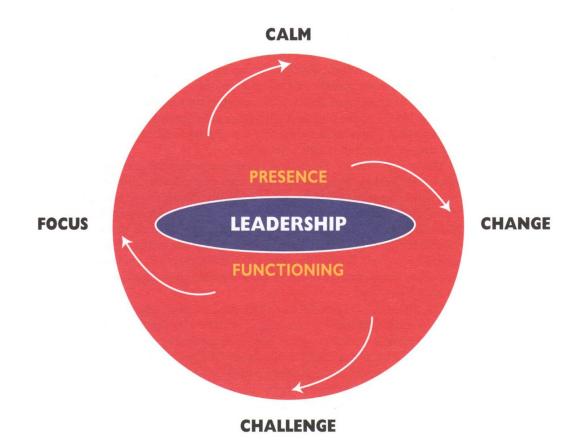# Getting on the Balcony vs Dancing on the Dance Floor

- Most Board members are also "dancers" in the congregation (RE Teachers, Choir Members, Building and Grounds Volunteers, etc)

- It takes intentional effort to "climb" up to the Balcony to see the whole system as a Board member

- Board Members who are still functioning as "dancers" often have a limited view related to their personal experience as a "dancer"

- Board Members also need to be able to "climb back down" from the Balcony and resume their roles as "dancers", while remembering the view from the Balcony

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Differentiation as a Leader

Differentiation as a Leader

- Every congregation (or any group of human beings) create an emotional system of interlocking relationships (Family Systems Theory)

- Each person in the system is affected by this "emotional field" at both a conscious and an unconscious level

- Awareness of the self as separate from the emotional field while still remaining aware and connected to the emotional field is an essential element of leadership

- This takes intentional self-awareness as a leader, and it also takes intentionality in maintaining relationships

- A Governing Board must be able to view the congregational emotional system from the "Balcony" perspective, and should be aware of how actions affect the congregation as an emotional system

Differentiation as a Leader

The Leader is the Person who can most influence the congregation's Emotional Field by responding to:

Crisis with Calmness
Inertia with Challenge
Bewilderment with Focus
New Conditions with Change and Adaptation

Differentiation as a Leader

Undifferentiated Leaders

- Reactive, instinctive
- Covert
- Demanding, stubborn
- Think in binary
- Impatient
- Put Responsibility on Others
- Uptight and defensive
- Competitive
- Vague, non-specific
- Create one sided solutions

Differentiated Leaders

- Responsive, Intentional
- Overt
- Flexible
- Open to range of ideas
- Allow for Process
- Take responsibility for self
- Relaxed, at ease
- Collaborative
- Clear, objective
- Create common goals

Confidentiality and Secrecy

Confidentiality and Secrecy

Confidential Information

- Is withheld from disclosure to create space for necessary work and transformation

- Is information where there benefits of disclosure to the system are outweighed by the negative personal impacts upon an individual or individuals within the system

- Is often a temporary restriction, though not always

Secret Information

- Is information that is withheld for the purpose of creating or altering power dynamics within a system

- Is often used as a way to bind individuals together through shared access to the secret information

- Creates division within the system that leads to distrust

- Advantages one person or group over others within the system

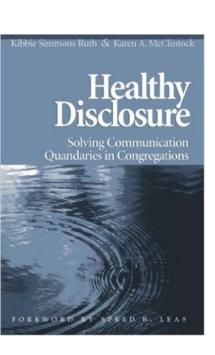**uua.org**

Confidentiality and Secrecy

- Appropriate Confidentiality by a Governing Board can feel like inappropriate Secret Keeping based in the congregation's trust in the Board
- Congregations that manage information well are more likely to be trusted with exercising appropriate Confidentiality
- Individuals own history related to power can affect perception about appropriate confidentiality versus secret keeping
- There are also cultural differences that relate to how individuals and systems react to the line between confidentiality and Secrecy

Top Secret   Transparent
Confidential   Honest
Private   Open

Healthy Disclosure – What to Share and When?

- As a Board member, you are included in the Information Trustees of the Congregation

- Healthy Disclosure does not mean all things must be disclosed to all people at all times

- The Board collectively makes decisions about healthy disclosure
  - Must be conscious of what information the Board has
  - Must be intentional about what the Board does with the information it has
  - Must analyze its own motivations, both as individuals and collectively, for disclosing he information or withholding it
  - Must clearly articulate to the congregation the information which the Board has and does not have access to, and the reasons for those differences
  - Must consider all of the aspects of privacy, confidentiality, and efficacy while seeking to be as open and transparent as possible in varying circumstances
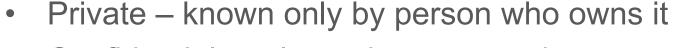
Kibbie Simmons Ruth & Karen A. McClintock

Healthy Disclosure

Solving Communication Quandaries in Congregations

FOREWORD BY SPEED B. LEAS

Problematic Types of Revealed Information

- Rumors – misinformation
- Gossip – may be accurate but spread outside of established communication channels
- Exposure – revealing too much information that would be considered socially appropriate
- Leaking – information is released intentionally, without regard to covenants or established boundaries

"AND NOW, CONCERNING THE SPECIAL COLLECTION…"

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5 Levels of Information Disclosure

- Private – known only by person who owns it
- Confidential – released to a second person with assurance that it won't be shared without expressed permission
- Limited access – known by 3 or more but protected from distribution by agreement
- Open – share openly with the congregation but not easily accessible to public
- Public – information that is easily accessible

A Decision Making Process for Disclosure

Step 1: Assess the specific situation:

1. State the situation and/or dilemma as succinctly as possible.

2. Determine who knows what.

3. Identify all the relevant facts.

   What is the source of the information?
   Who "owns" the information?
   Who has a right to the information?
   Who has a need to know?

   What history and background is pertinent to the situation?

   What information is missing?

4. Determine whether anyone is at risk of foreseeable harm.

5. Investigate applicable rights and rules (policies, laws, and so forth).

A Decision Making Process for Disclosure

Step 2: Consider the Options, Determine the Plan

1. Why conceal or reveal the information?
2. Who is the most appropriate person to disclose the information?
3. To whom should the information be disclosed?
4. What details or information will be shared or withheld?
5. When should the information be released?
6. How and where is the information disclosed?

Step 3: Act

Step 4: Evaluate

1. Was decision made carefully, in consideration of all people involved and the whole congregation?
2. Maximize good and minimize harm.
3. Authentic decision, based on truth and trust.

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A Note on "Transparency"

- Transparency is an attempt to address Disclosure without Discernment
- Transparency sets as the ideal that all information should be disclosed unless legally prevented from doing so
- Transparency creates a standard of access to information rather than a standard of good communication from the Governing Board
- Transparency, when really practiced, lessens the congregation's ability to understand what is most important about congregational governance and decision making
- Transparency places the onus of discernment upon each individual congregation member to determine what is important and what is not
- ***Transparency is often a necessary step in rebuilding trust in a governing board – but it is not Healthy Disclosure as a Board***

Linkage
Connection to the Congregation and Community

- Corporate and Non-Profit Governance systems talk a lot about something called "Linkage"
  - Linkage is essential open communications lines with stakeholders
- Corporate and Non-Profit Governance systems assume a Governing Board that is separated from the operations of the institution, both formally and informally, and therefore need formal lines of communication
- Congregational Boards are not separate from the operations of the church, they are inherently imbedded in it
- What is needed in congregations is not "linkage" but "role clarity"
- *Board members should be active, full participants in the life of the congregation, and should listen to the congregation through their participation! And they must strive for Role Clarity*

Board Covenant

- Serving on a Congregational Board is a form of spiritual leadership
  - Keepers of the mission of the congregation
  - Represent the movement of Unitarian Universalism in your community
  - Practice the ideal of the 5th Principle
- Serving as Religious Leaders means covenantal relationship
  - In relationship not just with each other, but with the religious mission of the congregation
  - Accountable to the congregation, and to the future of our faith movement
- A Board covenant should be about more than behavior
  - Point the Board to the purpose for the congregation's existence
  - Remind Board members they are not representative delegates, but religious leaders
  - Create agreed upon boundaries for the Board's work

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Speaking as a Board

- Serving on a Congregational Board is more complex than serving on any other form of Governing Board
  - Unique relationship between membership and leadership
  - Many overlapping roles and responsibilities
- Governing Boards need to agree on how they will communicate with the congregation about Board Decisions / Business
  - Formal Communication – Agenda, Minutes, Linkage, Availability
  - Informal Communication – Among friends and fellow congregants
- Two primary healthy styles of informal Board communication
  - Speak as one Board
  - Speak to the Process
- Boards need an agreement on how they will conduct informal communications

Voting Process and Consensus Process

Voting Process

- Motion – Discussion – Amending – Voting – Decision

- Sets as the ideal making a decision on an issue

- Has some specific cultural attachments

- Most useful in very large group settings

- Privileges majority opinions

Consensus Process

- Question – Discussion – Blocking – Adaptation – Decision

- Stay in Discussion and Adaptation till Decision

- Ideal of maintaining the community

- Seeks more collaborative decisions

- Most useful in smaller settings that are focused on community

- Protects minority opinions

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Voting Process And Consensus Process

- Most congregations function somewhere between these two systems
- Congregations tend to go more fully to one or the other during stress and conflict
- Different Board members may have different expectations about which process the Board is using
  - This disconnect often creates significant distrust, emotional hurt, and congregational harm when left unstated and unclear
- A Governing Board should be clear about the practices of its decision making process, and as explicit about the expectations of the group
- Board members should ask about the Decision Making Process being used when they are unclear
- ***Each Process shifts power between Minority and Majority opinion***

Healthy Conflict For Boards

- All Congregations and Congregational Boards experience Conflict
- Conflict is normal, and you can engage it in healthy or unhealthy ways
- Conflict is vital and beneficial to a congregation when engaged well
- Conflict is divisive and damaging to a congregation when engaged poorly
- Systems that seek to ignore or suppress conflict are often "stuck" feeling
- Creating conflict can be a way that some exercise unhealthy power in the system

Healthy Conflict for Boards

Healthy Conflict

- Having an attitude that conflict is healthy and it is a chance to grow

- Disputants are clearly able to see the difference between the people and the problems (Differentiated)

- Communication is open, and people speak directly to one another, and everyone has access to necessary information (Healthy Disclosure)

Unhealthy Conflict

- Having an attitude the conflict is wrong or dangerous

- Disputants quickly mix people and problems together and assume changing or removing people solves the problem

- Communication is diminished and indirect, and information is used as a tool of power in the conflict

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Healthy Conflict for Boards

Healthy Conflict

- The Balance Sheet is short, in that disputants address the issues at hand, not issues from the past

- There is a give and take of ideas among disputants, and a spirit of cooperation to find a solution. There is careful listening and speaking.

- Resolution will take whatever time is needed to engage the community

Unhealthy Conflict

- The Balance Sheet is long, with issues of the past being brought into the conflict

- People speak mostly to those with whom they already agree

- The congregation feels "reactive", and disputants cannot agree on what the problem actually is

- There is a strong desire to resolve the issue quickly

Keys to Healthy Conflict as Congregational Boards

- Awareness of the difference between the "Adaptive Challenge" and the Technical Problems, and how to address each

- Maintaining a "Balcony View" while recognizing the "Dance Floor Views" of disputants

- Seeing yourself as "Differentiated" from the conflict and the emotional system, while still remaining engaged with the congregation
  - Actively working to not personalize the conflict, or react when others do personalize it

- Healthy Disclosure of information available in the conflict, and not using necessary confidential information as a source of power

- Actively working to maintain open dialogue within the conflict

- Being clear on Process and Expectations as a Board

UUA Leader Lab – 12 Part Board Training Program

www.uua.org/leadership/programs/board-training

- Call of Duty: Governance Basics
- In the Room Where it Happens: Why we have Meetings
- Finding Your Center: Spiritual Grounding As Leaders
- Knowing your Purpose: Leading in Alignment with Your Mission
- The Myth of Rationality: Understanding Human Nature
- In the Wilderness: Change is Hard, Even if it's the Promised Land

- Good Boundaries: Balancing Transparency and Confidentiality
- From "Me" to "We": Healthy Communications
- Who's the Boss? Board as Employer
- Guarding the Institution: Balancing Stability and Vision
- A Strategic Partnership: Governance and Ministry
- Staying in my Lane: Governance Roles and Responsibilities

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Resources

- "Governance and Ministry: Rethinking Board Leadership" by Dan Hotchkiss

- "Boards the Make a Difference" by John Carver

- "Healthy Disclosure: Solving Communications Quandaries in Congregations" by Kibbie Simmons Ruth and Karen A. McClintock

- "High-Impact Church Boards: How to Develop Healthy, Intentional, and Empowered Church Leaders" by TJ Addington

- "The Effective Church Board" by Michael Anthony

- UUA On-Demand Learning Center – https://www.uua.org/leadership

- MidAmerica Region Webinars – www.uua.org/midamerica/events/webinars

- UU Leadership Institute – www.uuinstitute.org

- Your Primary Contact!