

The Dolphin Effect in Teams and Communities

or

How can consciousness serve communities to make them the way we want?

By Hans-Peter Kraus Germany

I have tried to carve a mainframe from my experience over the last fifteen years, working as a consultant in community and business life with the Dolphin Strategy. To actually have it implanted in an individual situation requires project work, coaching, respect and honesty. To fully cover the Dolphin Strategy would require more than this one chapter. But perhaps what follows could help us become more aware of how we can work consciously within the team-process, building communities and taking responsibility for ourselves when we have difficult times.

To get into the "down to earth" community process I would suggest reading "Strategy of the Dolphin-Scoring a Win in a Chaotic World" (ISBN 0-688-08481-8), by Dudley Lynch. Dudley became a good friend of mine and in many discussions and experiences in my work as a change manager and trainer, I have found the Dolphin Strategy a realistic, practical and effective daily tool and model for groups to work with.

The Dolphin Strategy uses different metaphors to give business organisations and communities a picture of how they run on a group level, as well as on an individual level.

The Carp: They sing "I can't win", and they repeat this message in many different ways. They even neglect the real consequences of their actions, thinking that "All important wins contain an element of sacrifice. Losing is a part of life." They don't see opportunities which are right in front of them.

The Shark: They croon "I have to win", and they believe that "This world is a shark-eat-shark world." They walk over dead bodies without recognising that they are killing their own resources.

Pseudo-Enlightened Carp: "Everybody is a winner! All we have to do is love and care for each other." They believe that "It isn't the goal which counts, it is how we get there." They don't see the dangers which clearly warn them of possible mistakes, and they step into the same traps over and over again. They ignore the reality of the shark's behaviour in this world.

The Dolphin: They say: "I want us both to win--and win elegantly and resoundingly--no matter what the odds or the difficulties or the time it takes." They believe that "We must lean to create and act on compelling visions. We have to focus on doing more with less. We have to become masters at breaking even. And, we have to be responsible and purposeful." They act on principles which create a better quality of life for all. They choose to win, and so can others.

When a team or individual sees themselves in relation to these metaphors, they gain a clearer picture of their beliefs and values. And this begins to bring forth the truth about blockages or flows in the interaction.

To have this knowledge is valuable in a team-process. It is as important for projects in communities as it is in business life. It gives the team tools for self-control and self-assessment, and the possibility to be able to change before conflicts arise.

I've discovered that careful consideration of a project's time frame is an effective and dynamic tool overlooked by many teams and organisations. To create a common vision you need to be able to reach your goals. A competent way of creating visions has to depend on the ability of the mind to bring the most realistic results out of the future in to the present. If you are on course, you will see that the largest part depends on your abilities to co-create with your mind and nature. The British sociologist Elliot Jacques discovered that: "If you can evaluate how a man thinks about time, you can determine how he deals with complex situations." When you begin to plan ten years into the future, your linear and circular thinking begin to integrate naturally.

We reach out in time and space, which finally draws us to our destiny and we even expand with it on the way. The team vision resonates with a factor X, or to put it differently, a synergetic energy of other forces comes into the project. (Magic?....)

It is extremely powerful for teams, groups, and communities to be aligned with a joint vision that spans ten years, or more. Native American Indians say, "If you make a decision, make sure it will continue into the next five generations." This is an interesting point of view, which could ease the decision making process in businesses and communities, if it is understood and used.

If we want to have the future we imagine for ourselves, as a community and individually, we have to create a dynamic, self-empowering force, which comes out of an inner and outer integration of your real self. It is based on a foundation of communication, first with yourself, and then with others. A process of self-discovery and self-realisation is based upon the powers of transformation, transmutation and transcendence. It will involve the integration and development of the whole brain by healing issues, limitations and blockages that keep us separated from knowing ourselves and realising our potential.

But how much time is still available for us to heal our relationship to others and Mother Earth?

My background is in business, management and trainings, and I have observed over the years, that there is a strong belief that you/we have to change, but that this will be a long and difficult journey.

Why do we think that the hard way is the only worthy way? Why do we believe in the hard and long way?

Perhaps you have many answers to these questions--and probably most of them are true. But could it be that we are more afraid to have the realness of success and abundance in our lives? How would it feel to have everything you've always wanted? Be honest--we are often more comfortable and familiar with not getting what we want, with failure, than the other way around.

My study and personal experiences with the mind have given me an interesting view on this. I found out that the mind works on the level of nano-seconds. It works in the here and now. We can know more about the future, our personal future and the future of our organisations, by knowing less about the past. Both the future and the past hold an infinite number of possibilities. The possibilities of the future beg us to make them "real" or manifest. The possibilities of the past beg us to give them agreement. The only reason that the past seems more real than the future is because we have "memories"--neural tracings in our brains that are constantly bombarded by the uncertainties of the quantum world. We create the past, not the other way around. To allow our memories to define our past is to surrender to an illusion.

Could it be that we are able to change views, even beliefs and values, in nano-seconds? And if so, how could we use that dynamic to create a better world, with all the different cultural backgrounds? I will not answer these questions, instead I will share a personal experience.

Working with the topic of dolphins in the last few years, I am always astonished by how much effort we put into re-naturing captive dolphins, (Flipper, military dolphins, Free Willy), instead of having these creatures in their natural realm in the first place. It is strange that we put free animals in captivity to enjoy them. Isn't it an ill mind that works in this way?

A deep, moving experience can tell us more than all the theories and models. There is so much love for us here, and it is so easy. When we admit who we are and go back to nature we discover that we don't need to fight and prove ourselves--we are already there.

We have been asked to be the caretakers for the future of this planet, in co-creation with all the realities. We need to be in balance with our personal experiences and form a model based on them that allows communities, groups, and teams to work with synergies and move dynamically into the present future of this planet.

I call this the "Dolphin Effect in You" or "The ReNature Process." (According to Webster's dictionary, 'renature' means to restore to an original or normal condition.)

It is worth it to be honest and unlearn our old "stuff". Dolphins are masters in un-learning behaviours which limit them and stand in their way. They even create stress for themselves (eustress), in order to have breakthroughs. They are eager for newness and it seems that they understand the permanent state of change in this world. We could be inspired by that approach if we are humble enough to see it as a part of this planet.

It is time for us to begin to serve each other, for teams and groups to create and maintain a resonance which supports us in our co-creation with nature.

Hans-Peter Kraus is a freelance future consultant, change manager, speaker and trainer. He was trained in the Strategy of the Dolphin by its originator, Dr. Lynch. Results of this research and his own experimental work can be found in "The Dolphin Effect in You" and "The ReNature Process for Organisations, Teams and Companies". He often works with large companies and banks. He is also involved in the German dolphin movement, especially in the subject of inner and outer ecology and interspecies communication. He has studied "alternative living and urban development" as part of his sociology study in Berlin. He gives trainings and coaching support for organisations, teams and communities, contributing his experiences and understanding in manifesting visions.