

Group consciousness in business

It may seem strange to reflect on professional, organisational or business groups when thinking about group consciousness, but as we know, the overall progress of humanity is bound in the kaleidoscope of diversity and the progress made by each particle or subset. For this reason, it seems helpful to consider where these professional groups are headed in their consciousness and also what if anything spiritual groups can learn from them.

In the workplace, we are of course, called upon to develop our ability work well with others – in teams and projects groups for example and the science of group and team effectiveness has taken on a much more significant focus in the last couple of decades. In some part fuelled by a desire for greater efficiency and productivity. In some part prompted by a sense that high performing teams and groups have access to something more ‘invisible’, more energetic, more relational, more creative and that this energetic quality or dynamic brings cohesion and impact on another level.

Many studies by occupational psychologists over the past four decades or more have looked at the ways in which groups of people can work together more effectively in the workplace. These studies have taken a production, efficiency mentality as well as more humanistic perspectives. In some of the best performing organisations, leaders and groups have become expert at organising people into efficient ‘production lines’ through slick processes. On this point organisations can teach us a lot about the 3rd and 7th Ray in action – how to get a lot done in an efficient manner. For sure, this has relied in some part on a more autocratic or parental leadership style. Put simplistically, the leader holds the authority, decides the way forward and how it will be achieved, and the workers follow the instructions. So we see a dynamic between a 1st Ray leadership style and 3rd and 7th Ray implementation.

However, in the past 10 years or more this more autocratic approach has really started to change in progressive professional organisations. There is increasing emphasis on moving toward what is called ‘empowerment’ and ‘engagement’ – a recognition that workers and team members aren’t cogs or mechanical parts, they are self-determining human beings with qualities and energies that are both vital and useful to achieving the vision and goals.

There is more shift toward self-managing teams where the role of the leader is that of enabler and facilitator supporting the team to achieve its goals. In most contemporary professional teams, there is also a growing focus on self-awareness of the members (using psychometrics and other tools), along with a deeper exploration of group dynamics and mechanisms. This shift can be challenging for team members as they have to grow psychologically, as well as in their consciousness (even if they don’t use that term). In psychosynthesis terms, these groups are learning how to stabilise and integrate the collective group personality.

Interestingly for some leaders, this shift toward a more empowered team can be challenging for them personally as they have to work out a new role for themselves. As the individuals and the group collectively recognise and work with their inner power and see the true value they can bring when they work toward unity in diversity, the traditional role of the leader has to change.

Apart from learning how to become facilitators of the group, these more progressive leaders are also recognising that their function is to explore and hold a higher purpose. For many, this is being expressed in terms of the greater good in areas such as sustainability, human rights, social change and so on. So what we are seeing, albeit slowly and in small numbers, is a growth in consciousness amongst some leaders. This in turn brings a higher orientation to the overall team and group focus.

The pace of change is accelerating for both groups and leaders in the workplace – some are clinging on tightly to a very parental or autocratic culture. Others though are exploring how to balance an action-oriented and profit focus with a more deep rooted philosophy and awareness of their place in humanity and their responsibility to shift their consciousness and their behaviours.