



**Facilitative Leadership:
Maximizing Individuals' Contributions & Organizational Results**

Presented by: Jeffrey Cufaude, Idea Architects

A former association executive and university student affairs staff member, Jeffrey Cufaude is an architect of ideas. His work includes strategy think tanks that bring fresh eyes and new thinking to compelling questions; volunteer and staff workshops and retreats; and major conference keynotes and workshops. He specializes in the design/facilitation of multiple-day leadership conferences and learning experiences, as well as teaching presentation design and facilitation skills to subject matter experts.

Very active professionally, Cufaude twice served on the Indiana Society of Association Executives Board of Directors (ISAE), and was honored as the ISAE Meeting Planner of the Year. He has volunteered in a variety of capacities with ASAE-the Center for Association Leadership, most recently as a member of its Innovation Task Force for which he created the global InnovationTalks initiative. From 1998-2007 he designed and facilitated ASAE's Future Leaders Conference, one of its flagship conferences.

He regularly contributes feature articles on leadership and organizational development to ASAE's *Associations Now* magazine, and he was a monthly columnist for *Convene*, the magazine of the Professional Convention Management Association, from 2004-2012. PCMA named him one of its Thought Leaders in 2006. In 2012, he was a featured speaker at the inaugural TEDxIndianapolis.

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What would make it easier for a meeting, planning session, or workshop to ...

- engage ALL participants' knowledge, talents, perspectives, and skills?
- focus on strategic conversations that were timely and important to the participants, the organization, and its members?
- involve participants in thoughtful deliberations of issues resulting in sound decisions?
- create a momentum and spirit that would foster post-meeting (virtual or face-to-face) commitment and contributions?

Challenge and support
 (Nevitt Sanford)

**“To create learning organizations,
we must understand the underlying agreements
we have made about how we will be together.”**

Margaret Wheatley

EVERYONE PARTICIPATES, NOT JUST THE VOCAL FEW.

People give each other room to think and
get their thoughts all the way out.

OPPOSING VIEWPOINTS ARE ALLOWED TO COEXIST IN THE ROOM.

People draw each other out with supportive questions,
“Is *this* what you mean?”

Each member makes the effort to pay attention to the person speaking.

PEOPLE ARE ABLE TO LISTEN TO EACH OTHER'S IDEAS BECAUSE
THEY KNOW *THEIR OWN IDEAS WILL ALSO BE HEARD*.

Each member speaks up on matters of controversy.
Everyone knows where everyone stands.

MEMBERS CAN ACCURATELY REPRESENT EACH OTHER'S POINTS OF VIEW—
EVEN WHEN THEY DON'T AGREE WITH THEM.

People refrain from talking behind each other's backs.

EVEN IN THE FACE OF OPPOSITION FROM THE PERSON-IN-CHARGE,
PEOPLE ARE ENCOURAGED TO STAND UP FOR THEIR BELIEFS.

A problem is not considered solved until everyone
who will be affected by the solution understands the reasoning.

WHEN PEOPLE MAKE AN AGREEMENT, IT IS ASSUMED THAT
THE DECISION STILL REFLECTS A WIDE RANGE OF PERSPECTIVES.

PARTICIPATORY GROUPS

Team/Group Development Stages: *Facilitative Leader Role/Focus*

Stage One - Forming

Forming occurs when people join together to achieve a specific goal. People tend to be optimistic and have high expectations, but there also is some anxiety about fitting in and the work that the group will be doing. Members of forming teams tend to hold back and are more reserved initially.

Stage Two - Storming

In this stage the rhetoric vs. the reality of the group surfaces and tension arises as individuals speak more freely about the group and its members. Interpersonal conflicts and conflict about the group's goals and the way it is being led come to the surface.



Stage Three - Norming

Norming transitions a group from storming to performing. It "resets" commitments to the group, its work, and to its members. Here, a group confronts its challenges and works through them until they are effectively resolved. These resolutions become the new norms for the group and are used to influence and evaluate behavior.

Stage Four - Performing

If norming is successful, the group enters the performing stage. Here the group can accomplish its goals and objectives while maintaining its shared norms and values. Conflicts are fewer and resolved more quickly, and there is an "esprit de corps" among the members. Productivity is high and leadership is shared as needed.



Five Dysfunctions of Teams

- Absence of _____
- Fear of _____
- Lack of _____
- Avoidance of _____
- Inattention to _____

Source:
The Five Dysfunctions of Teams by Patrick Lencioni



“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeing new landscapes but in having new eyes.”
—Marcel Proust, French author

10 Lenses for Making Meaning

Each of us brings our own unique mix of perspectives on how we see and make sense of the world around us and the work we do. List below up to 10 of the “lenses” through which you see things and/or the roles or filters that influence your perspectives.

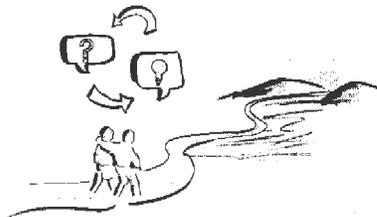
“We don’t have to let go of what we believe, but we do need to be curious about what someone else believes.”

Margaret Wheatley,
Turning To One Another

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

With What People and In What Situations Will You Be Facilitating

Possible Implications for How You Approach Your Efforts



What are the unique considerations of being a staff liaison (but not the designated facilitator) to a volunteer-led group?



an insight about culture and relationships

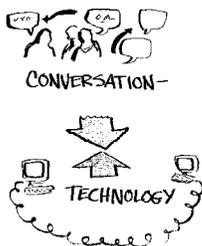
$$b = f(p, e)$$

behavior is a function/result of
people interacting with their environment

Source: Kurt Lewin

People Questions

Environment Questions



Tips for managing the conference call environment:

- (1) shorter calls when possible;
- (2) detailed agenda with specific focus;
- (3) leverage pre-work and group's commitment to it;
- (4) call on people with a heads-up;
- (5) track verbal contributions;
- (6) more regular recaps;
- (7) ask people to articulate emotions when appropriate; i.e., "I've got a big smile on my face right now";
- (8) use visuals and collaborative white spaces when possible.

Effective facilitation is about ...

1. Making _____ and helping make _____.
2. Providing _____ without taking the reins while generally operating from a position of _____.
3. _____ content and process and _____ and _____.
4. Building the _____ of individuals and groups to _____ on their own, now and in the future.
5. _____ the unacknowledged or invisible beliefs, thoughts, patterns, etc.
6. Helping create a _____ so individuals speak the truth freely and offer constructive feedback that advances the group's goals.

1. carefully assess the needs of the members
2. probe sensitively into people's feelings
3. create an open and trusting atmosphere
4. help people understand why they're there
5. speak in simple and direct language
6. display energy and appropriate levels of assertiveness
7. champion ideas not personally favored
8. treat all participants as equals
9. stay flexible and ready to change direction if necessary
10. listen intently to understand totally what is being said
11. periodically summarize a complex array of ideas so that they form a coherent summary
12. make sure every session ends with clear steps for the next meeting
13. ensure that participants feel ownership for what has been achieved

Best Practices

1. remain oblivious to what the group needs
2. never check group concerns
3. not listen carefully to what's being said
4. lose track of key ideas
5. try to be the center of attention
6. get defensive
7. get into personality battles
8. put down people
9. unassertively manage conflict
10. let a few people or the leader dominate
11. never check how the meeting is going
12. be overly passive on process
13. push ahead on an irrelevant agenda
14. have no alternative approaches
15. let discussions get badly side-tracked
16. let discussion ramble without proper closure
17. not know when to stop
18. be insensitive to cultural diversity issues
19. use inappropriate humor

Worst Practices

Dynamic	Possible Interventions
<p>1 The "real conversations" seem to happen during breaks, offline, or outside the actual meetings/calls</p>	
<p>2 A few individuals "dig their heels in" and seem unwilling to adapt or compromise to meet the needs of the group</p>	
<p>3 Some individuals are very aggressive about pursuing personal agendas that are off-topic.</p>	
<p>4 The topic needing discussion is unpopular or contentious and the group is reluctant and/or hostile to addressing it</p>	
<p>5 Different "clusters" of individuals (staff, volunteers, members, etc.) seem to see issues quite differently</p>	

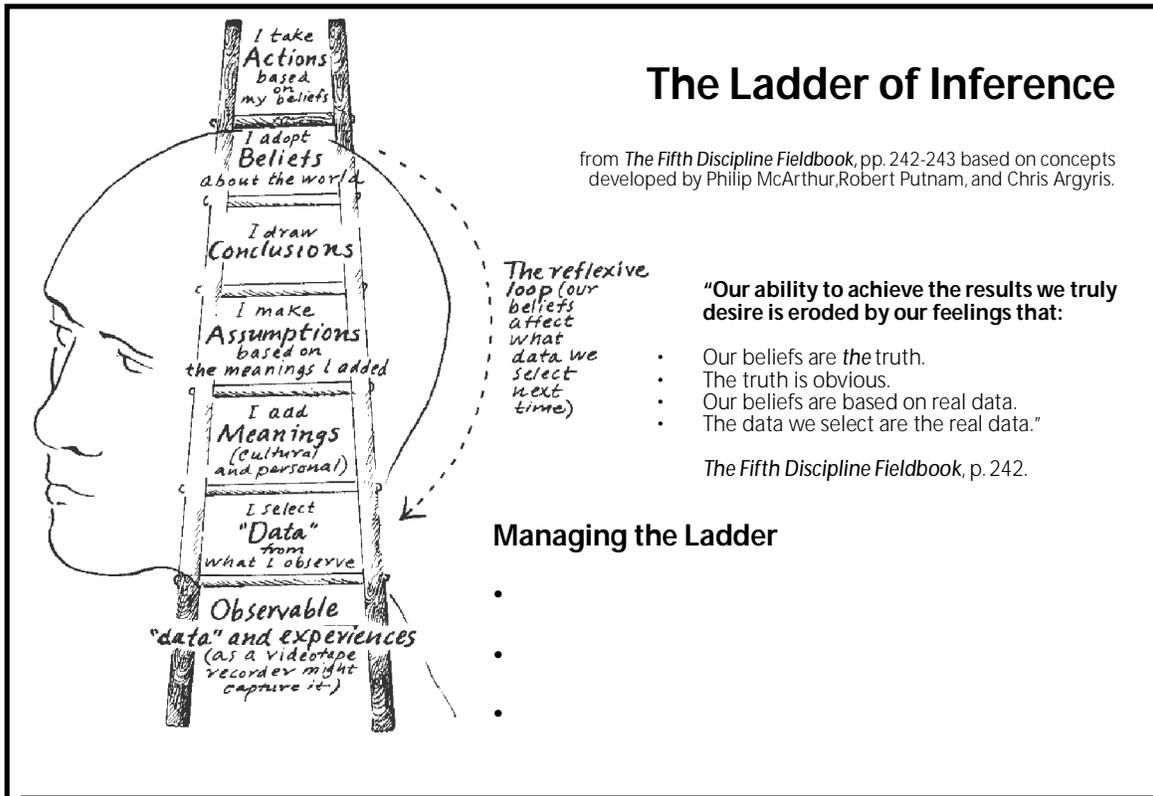
Deciding Whether to Intervene

The Skilled Facilitator, by Roger Schwarz, p. 167

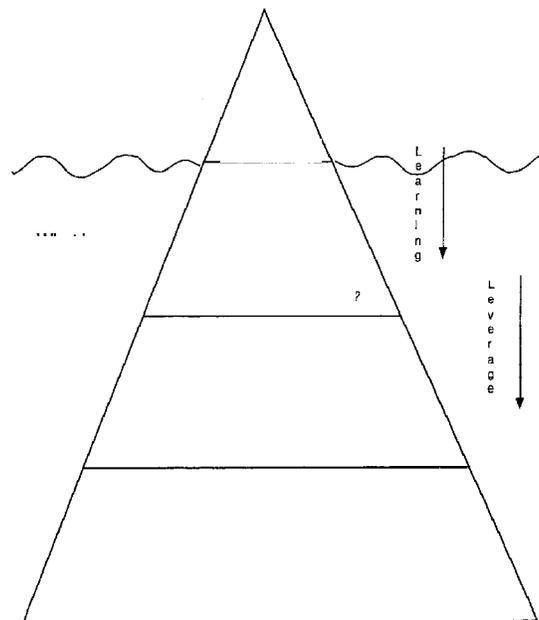
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- 2.
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- 5.

The Ladder of Inference

from *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*, pp. 242-243 based on concepts developed by Philip McArthur, Robert Putnam, and Chris Argyris.



Understanding How Meaning is Created: The Ladder of Inference



Iceberg Model

from *The Systems Thinking Fieldbook*

Digging Beneath the Surface



Core Facilitator Interventions

Note: Interventions are drawn from the *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making*. The descriptions of each one are based on, but not taken verbatim from the guide.

Listening for Common Ground

Why? Helps groups focus on areas of agreement and advance that agreement. Can instill hope that progress can be made as some agreement does exist.

How? Four-step process: (1) indicate you are going to summarize the group's similarities and differences; (2) summarize the differences; (3) summarize areas of common ground; (4) check for accuracy. In some cases you might check for a likely area of agreement: "Some of you have expressed a belief that _____. Is that an position others share?" If feedback confirms this, validate the apparent agreement.

Intentional Silence

Why? Provides enough quiet time for individuals to collect their thoughts and/or speak more fully. Honors introverts' need for time to process internally before speaking.

How? Hold the space silent for a short time while focusing on the speaker. Hold off others who may try to break the silence. If the majority of a group has become distracted suggest the entire group take a brief period of silence to reflect on what has been said.

Making Space

Why? Encourages individuals with alternative viewpoints or who have not participated much to use the opportunity to contribute.

How? Watch nonverbals for signs of interest to speak. Offer verbal encouragement without pressuring an individual. Don't let quiet individuals get cut off. If discussion is very imbalanced, do a structured go-around: "Let's go around and hear from everyone."

Balancing

Why? Helps a group explore more points of view other than the one getting the most attention or initially introduced by the first participants. Encourage minority opinions.

How? Sample phrases include: Are there other perspectives on this topic? We've heard how a few people stand on this, what are others thinking?

Encouraging

Why? Creates space for people to participate without pressuring them to do so. It can be particularly useful early in a meeting or session.

How? Sample phrases include: Who else has an idea? Are there any other perspectives on this issue? Let's hear from someone who hasn't spoken recently?

Tracking

Why? Keeps track of the various lines of thought and discussion being addressed. Helps individuals see the interest of others.

How? Three-step process: (1) announce you are going to step back from facilitating and summarize the conversation; (2) state the various lines of thought that have been discussed; (3) check validity of summary with the group.

Gathering Ideas

Why? Helps a group build a list of ideas at a fast pace without discussing any of them. To keep a fast pace, mirror more than paraphrase. Model making statements using very few words.

How? Describe the task and process you'll use for gathering ideas. Teach the group how to suspend judgment. Honor all points of view. Using physical gestures can help impart energy to the group and engage them more.

Mirroring

Why? Captures the speaker's exact words so it is seen as more neutral than paraphrasing. Is faster than paraphrasing since it does not require reconfirmation of meaning from the speaker. Builds trust between participants and facilitator.

How? Use speaker's words not yours. If the comments were lengthy mirror back key phrases only. Mirror the speaker's language, not the tone. Speak in a neutral tone.

Drawing People Out

Why? To encourage individuals' to elaborate further, to build on what they have previously said, to tell more. Tells the speaker to get his/her idea "all the way out."

How? Often in tandem with paraphrasing: "So, it sounds like you think ... Can you tell us a little more about that?" Paraphrase coupled with open-ended questions.

Paraphrasing

Why? Confirms for the speaker that s/he is being heard and clarifies the content of what is being said. It is "the tool of choice for helping people think out loud."

How? Restate what an individual has said using language that captures the speaker's meaning, but does not use the exact same words. For short statements use roughly the same number of words as the speaker; for longer statements try to summarize.

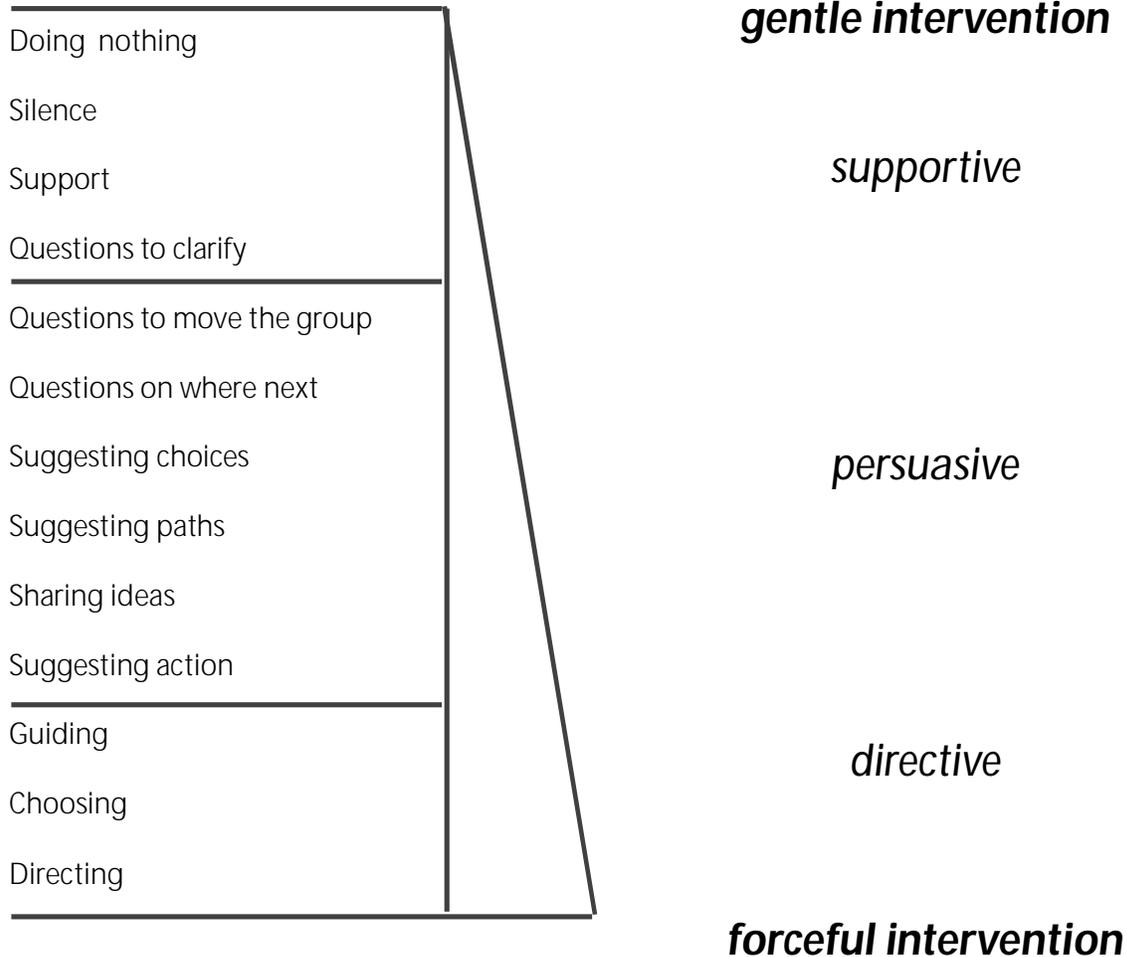
Stacking

Why? Helps organize speaker order when many people want to participate. Lets everyone know they will get to comment and in what order.

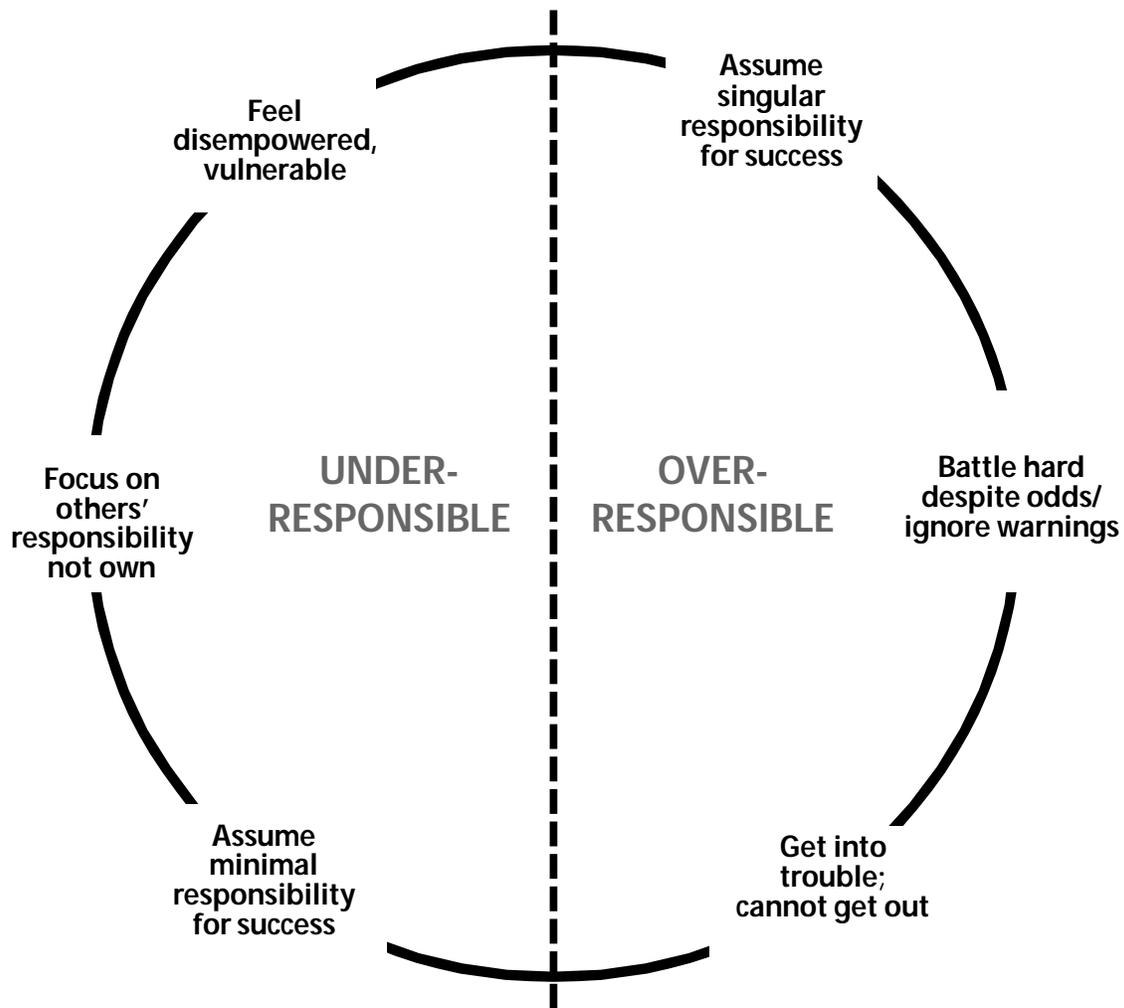
How? Four-step process: (1) ask who wants to speak; (2) record names in order; (3) call on people as their turn arrives; (4) start another round of stacking after the last person speaks.

The Facilitation Spectrum

from *Facilitation* by Trevor Bentley



Intervention Matrix from <i>Facilitation</i> by Trevor Bentley		Supportive	Persuasive	Directive
Ahead				
Alongside				
Following				



The Cycle of Over-/Under-Responsibility

in *The Responsibility Virus* by Roger L. Martin

Your Personal Situation Analysis

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

"When leaders assume 'heroic' responsibility for making the critical choices facing their organizations, when their reaction to problems is to go it alone, work harder, do more, to be more heroic still, with no collaboration and sharing of the leadership burden, their 'heroism' is often their undoing."

Roger Martin, *The Responsibility Virus*, p. 3

Leading Even If You're Not the Leader

BY JEFFREY CUFAUDE

If leadership is about doing the right thing and management is about doing things right, then facilitation is about helping individuals and groups do the right thing right. Indications are everywhere that we need people at all levels of an organization who possess facilitation skills. More work is done in cross-functional teams, more decisions are made collaboratively, and there's a yearning for greater community in organizations at a time when an increasing diversity of perspectives, talents, and cultures is present.

Though "facilitator" often suggests an outsider (or a designated committee or board chair) managing the process, facilitation actually is a skill anybody can and should master. Here are a few best practices for advancing your volunteer efforts, whether you are the chair or a participant in a meeting or planning session.

Facilitation provides leadership without taking the reins. When group members do not share ownership of the group and its outcomes, commitments are likely to be unsustainable. Too often, people abdicate their leadership responsibility to the facilitator (e.g., "Since Jeffrey is facilitating, I don't need to be concerned with group process and making connections"). But for groups to realize their full potential, every individual must be concerned with the good of the whole. So effective facilitation involves asking rather than telling groups exactly what they need to be doing. It involves more questions than declarations: "I wonder if this is an issue we really need to decide right now?" rather than "Let's move on."

Facilitation makes connections and helps make meaning. There's a great need for people who can foster connections between individuals, between ideas and concepts, and between individual efforts and organizational

strategy. Effective facilitation involves periodically asking the question, "So how does this discussion relate to others we have been having?"

Facilitators always seek to weave together individual comments: "How does Bill's observation relate to what we discussed earlier this morning?" You can pose questions and use techniques that help group members make these connections, as well as identify the meaning behind what is occurring: "What stands out most for you about the conversations today? What are the implications we need to consider?"

Facilitation balances managing content and process. Individuals using a facilitative approach are concerned not just with what the group is discussing or deciding, but how it's actually doing it. They notice decisions made without consideration of their impact, the diversity of perspectives possible on the decision, and available alternatives if a decision may not be right. They raise relevant questions in response: "We seem to have reached a decision very quickly. I wonder if we need to spend some more time examining our options?" Or, "I can see how this idea would be beneficial for some members. Are there any stakeholders who might react to it differently?"

Some dismiss group process as "soft stuff." In command-and-control hierarchical organizations, less attention to group process might be acceptable. But in the more collegial environment of most associations, individuals want their perspectives solicited and appreciated. As the old adage suggests, people are more likely to support what they help create.

Facilitation focuses on building individual and group capacity to get things done. Facilitation is not just about the immediate task; it's also about learning together to be more productive in the future. This long-term

definition of success also helps keep facilitators from assuming too much leadership of a group, which could leave group members unable to manage future conversations without the facilitator's involvement. Effective facilitation requires having individuals and groups debrief their meetings, workshops, and planning sessions to reflect on how they did what they did and what lessons can be learned. You can invite such conversation simply by asking, "How about spending a few minutes to reflect on today's meeting and identify what worked and what we might want to improve next time?"

Rigid lines between leadership and management are often drawn in the professional literature, as if one is right and one is wrong. In reality, organizations need individuals who both do the right thing and are capable of doing things right. Organizations also need facilitators—people who can help individuals and groups do the right things right. Each of us has the ability to make the contributions we might associate with a designated facilitator standing outside the group. If more board members added facilitation to their skillset, we'd likely see more sustainable commitments and successes in our organizations.

Jeffrey Cufaude is an association leader in Indianapolis, Indiana, known for designing and facilitating engaging conference keynotes and workshops, as well as leading strategy and innovation think tanks. Twitter: @jcufaude; Email: info@ideaarchitects.org