

PREMISES OF COLLABORATION VS. COMPETITION¹

- The basic premise is that each of us has intrinsic value; collaboration requires examining our beliefs about power and espousing mutuality as a philosophy of life (openness to influence, emotional availability, building relationships with respect for each other vs. rules-based, competitive, and shame-based relating).
- The objective of communication is more than content; it is also the search for understanding of each other, embracing and empowering each others' authentic self (provides validation, intrinsic pleasure, opportunities for mutual growth and development/creative ideas and problem-solving, flexible organizational systems that are more adaptive to changing environments).
- To truly engage in collaboration there has to be a developing sense of self-awareness vs. acting out of personality defenses; we have a basic need to feel heard, understood, and supported for who we are; to feel intellectually, physically, and emotionally stimulated; and to enhance our selves and our self-esteem.
- Typically the *character* of our interactions is defined by unexamined norms, roles, and boundaries which provide either a gateway to collaboration or a protection against it; collaboration requires explicitly exploring norms, roles, and boundaries.
- Collaborative competencies are cognitive, affective, and behavioral; but essentially we seek confirming vs. disconfirming responses (the latter include ignoring or withholding):
 - Build trust – self disclose appropriately/openly accept and support others' self-disclosure, hold unconditional positive regard, respond with acceptance (vs. agreement), and reciprocate.
 - Increase perceptual awareness and sensitivity – get to know your own filters, perceptual blocks, ways of assigning meaning to observations, ways of knowing; become self-monitoring, develop multiple perspectives.

¹ Sources include Senge's *The Fifth Discipline*, Wheatley's *Leadership and the New Science*, Eisler and Lowe's *The Partnership Way*.