

Fatal Splits- How To Identify & First Steps To Intervene

A split is an unhealthy relationship between individuals, departments, plant locations, or organizations which wittingly OR UNWITTINGLY sabotages the successful implementation of a project or goal. It can also take place INSIDE of an individual who is "split" or ambivalent or upset about a course of action---or caught in a "no-win" conflict-of-opinion between two or more people.

How can splits be fatal? They can be fatal because splits can slowly evolve and end up killing professional relationships, sabotage expensive project outcomes, take big losses on business expansion, kill life & job satisfaction, lose star staff, lose jobs, severely disrupt or disable careers, ---not to mention lose massive income in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, and sometimes take whole companies down to bankruptcy. First & foremost, look for the split inside yourself and identify where you feel caught in a bind or in a "lose-lose" situation. What are you feeling ambivalent about? Upset about? "Caught" about? Allow yourself to view your emotions and the emotional side of the workplace as simply another source of information to access clues about what might be important, where to begin to look (not blame---just look!).

If you are one of those who doesn't believe "touchy feely" stuff belongs in the workplace, you've probably split yourself off from your own information---and that of others. As an example of how closely feelings and intuition function alongside rational decision-making, the founder of the Sony Corporation used to routinely "swallow" deals or decisions. If he got a bad gut-level feeling about it, he rejected that course of action. People who are passionate about their work allow their emotions to inform them on intuitive & creative levels to know what kinds of questions to ask and to know HOW to collaborate with others. They will tell you they attribute much of their success to this aspect of their "professional" skills.

Splits are complex. Splits almost always happen more than one at a time. They are virtually never just about one person---and virtually never just about one situation either. And although we've been talking about individuals, splits are often ultimately not even about individuals per se. Individuals may see themselves or others in intense conflict in the workplace, but that is not what

Transition By Design sees. Transition By Design sees multiple dilemmas at multiple levels of the organization fighting with each other. It is easy to understand now how people very quickly over-personalize and lock horns with each other over various issues. (This is where emotional reactivity in the organization is NOT supporting the professional interactions you want in your organization.)

Business owners, CEO's, and others responsible for the success of their organizations are both relieved and thrilled about Transition By Design's positive and effective approach to their organizational dilemmas and stress in the workplace BECAUSE: 1) Various needs---most of which ARE legitimate---are vying to get attention via such dilemmas, and 2) When these dilemmas cause serious splits, it often happens at the personal, professional, and organizational expense of too many people and at too high a "cost."

Therefore cost savings at both the human and financial levels make the necessity of an intervention a "no-brainer." What's needed is an intervention that is sophisticated enough to help identify, sort out, and resolve these complex dilemmas. Here's where Transition By Design Inc. can help. Transition By Design has designed a methodology for these kinds of complex organizational dynamics that plague the internal affairs of your organization. Career & Business Strategy Sessions Available for Individuals: If you are not sure about how to proceed, not sure about how to gain support from your executive management team, not sure what approach would work to help you get unstuck, and not sure about what goals or options you have given your particular situation, give Transition By Design a call.

BUSINESS TRANSITION TIP FOR YOU AS AN ORGANIZATION regarding how to identify a fatal split and what the first steps are to intervene: The first step is to talk about these splits in a non-blaming way and help team members to acknowledge the split(s) as being a problem. Once everyone is agreed that there is a problem, the team is freshly empowered to take action to help themselves. The classic error that many leaders make is to over-focus on one person or a couple of people. It is simply human to overlook the fact that this is largely a systems issue and that the leaders are an unwitting part of the dynamics in the system as well as

anyone else might be. A second step then, is to accept that everyone plays a role in the situation. A third step is to support all players in the system to "buy in" to the notion that, when everyone takes responsibility, no one has to take the blame. (Remember, even the quiet one is a player.)

When the intensity is up and anxiety is high in the system, even the initial few steps above may not be a piece of cake. Transition By Design Inc. offers strategies to get past one barrier after another to help organizations be calmly informed, not "tyrannized" by the emotional side of the workplace.

ALL organizations experience splits. In organizations where there is not outward conflict, working teams are moving toward excellence, still greater profitability, and often expansion efforts. Here, the conflict will express itself as "growing pains" and "frustrations" as team members are challenged to expand themselves from the inside out to accommodate higher expectations. As the number of staff are also expanded to include new members, the organizational dynamics require that the group dynamics start all over again---which make team members vulnerable to the stress of moving through the conflict stage all over again. Therefore, even very successful organizations are susceptible to an "internal affairs virus." ALL GROUPS (even church groups!) move through these developmental stages---and the conflict stage breeds these splits. The good news is that most of this is normal. The more trained and practiced the organization becomes, the faster everyone moves through these predictable stages of organizational development back into "working" stages again. However, you'll want to continue to monitor and intervene on smaller splits that can grow

out of control. IMPORTANT NOTE: The training aspect of the intervention process is rarely effective by itself, i.e. learning about the work is a far cry from DOING the work. That's where Transition By Design Inc. helps you make sure the process is held accountable for the results you want. Accountability and a TOTALLY non-blaming process is the key. TBD also urges you to call to consult since this process has "invisible" dynamics which only a highly-trained professional service such as TRANSITION BY DESIGN INC. can help you navigate. Trying this out on your own by "winging it" in your organization is NOT advised and may cause more harm than help.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGY SESSIONS FOR YOUR BUSINESS: Do you feel you already have a pretty good communications process going? Is it really materializing the kind of working relationships you want? What's the next level you wish to upgrade to? Are you anticipating an expansion project? Undergoing a transition of leadership--- or restructuring your organization? How would you evaluate your internal affairs? Do you know what is sabotaging your personal best?---or your staff's personal best? This is not a blame game, but rather, a more sophisticated understanding of complex organizational dynamics. It's well worth your time to invest in both understanding AND implementing a sound process of managing the dynamics in your workplace. Using a non-blaming approach to grow your relationships AND implementing a system for accountability is the key!

Call Transition By Design Inc. for an assessment to clarify where your organization is at and what your options might be.

Lori Keegan of Transition By Design, Inc., offers professional and personal strategies to individuals and organizations. Contact her for more information.

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