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Organizational Work Groups Experiencing a Sudden and Unexpected Loss of a Member

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Organizational Work-Groups Experiencing a Sudden and Unexpected Loss of a Member

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We certify that we have read this dissertation and approved it as adequate in scope and quality. We have found that it is complete and satisfactory in all respects, and that any and all revisions required by the final examining committee have been made.

Dissertation Committee

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David W. Jamieson, Ph.D., chair

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Rama Hart, Ph.D., committee member

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Kurt M. Gehlert, Ph.D., committee member

_____
Date

Dedications

Uncle Paul – Your sudden and unexpected loss to our family truly began this quest for me way back in 1975. I witnessed and observed in person just how trying and tumultuous this type of loss can be. Your presence is still very much felt and greatly appreciated.

Cousin Brendan Gerard Blasius – Your sudden and unexpected loss to our family was very tumultuous, to say the least. In contemplating your sudden death, I think about the folly that society actively participates in by assuming that a shorter life is not as "fully lived" as a longer life. You are truly missed.

Terry Kath – Terry was regarded as the rock band Chicago's bandleader and best soloist; and his vocal, jazz, and hard rock influences are regarded as integral to the band's early sound. He has been praised for his guitar skills and described by rock author Corbin Reiff as "one of the most criminally underrated guitarists to have ever set finger to fretboard." Your group is still affected deeply by your loss.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to generate a deeper understanding of the inner workings

of a work-group that has experienced a sudden and unexpected loss of one of its group

members. Using a grounded theory research design, the researcher conducted semi-

structured interviews with six work-groups that have experienced a sudden and

unexpected loss of one of their group members.

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<center>**Chapter 1**</center>

<center>**Introduction**</center>

Work-groups and organizational teams often experience turbulence, also known as churning, or white water (Vaill, 1996). Work-group members can arrive and leave work-groups at various times and in various stages of the work-group's progress through its goals. It can be argued, however, that once a single work-group member changes, there is an entirely different work-group present. An altering of the work-group takes place.

The sudden and unexpected loss of a work-group member can be especially trying toward the remaining members of the work-group. If the missing member's position needs to be replaced, this replacement provides a special challenge toward the work-group and the work-group's mission.

The method of the missing work-group member's absence also weighs in on the recovering work-group's group psyche and how the work-group absorbs and responds to the work-group's sudden and unexpected loss.

Topic and Research Problem

Work-groups can often experience a sudden and unexpected loss of a member. The major research question is as follows: How do work-groups manage the sudden and unexpected loss of a member?

Research Concern and Purpose of the Study

Normal reactions to a sudden and unexpected loss within a group include mental lapses, decreased energy, difficulty in making decisions, anxiety, helplessness, inability to concentrate and preoccupation (Eyetsemitan, 1998). The potentially paralyzing effects

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over a loss and its impact on the workplace have not received adequate attention (Eyetsemitan, 1998). It is important to individuals and society, as well as to industry, that we expand our understanding of how a loss of a work-group member impacts work performance and that we develop more effective and comprehensive responses.

From a humanist and organizational behavior standpoint, there exists a need to establish and expand best practices for addressing a work-group's recovery over a sudden loss in the workplace and to incorporate those practices into all manner of work settings. Human resource professionals, workplace trainers and educators, social workers, counselors and others may be expected to develop competency and experience with workplace recovery over a sudden loss of a work-group member. Addressing this issue will help create a healthier, more holistic and ultimately more satisfying and productive work experience for both employee and employer.

This study, conceptualized within the social theory of symbolic interaction, aims to utilize grounded theory qualitative research methods to develop substantive theory about how organizational work-groups which have experienced a sudden and unexpected loss to their work-group and about how that work-group reinvents itself and subsequently returns to functioning.

The term *manage* is consistent with symbolic interaction, a social theory which is appropriate for underpinning projects aimed at generating rich data of the type sought here (Woods, 1992, p. 38). It refers to how people interpret, define, see, and consequently respond to a situation. This theory is related to the school of philosophy known as phenomenology, which focuses on the meaning of significant events to people in their everyday or natural settings (Chenitz & Swanson, 1986). Symbolic interaction is both a

theory and an approach to the study of human behavior. It examines the symbolic and the interactive together, as they are experienced and organized in the worlds of everyday lives. Herbert Blumer (1969) described symbolic interaction as follows:

> It is a down-to-earth approach to the study of human group life and human conduct. Its empirical world is the natural world of such group life and conduct. It lodges its problems in this natural world, conducts its studies in it, and derives its interpretations from such naturalistic studies … Its methodological stance, accordingly, is that of direct examination of the empirical world. (Blumer, 1969, p. 2)

Blumer then proposes three central principles of symbolic interaction: human beings act towards things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them; this attribution of meaning to objects through symbols is a continuous process. The symbols are language, signs, gestures and anything else that may convey meanings; the meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things she or he happens to encounter (Blumer, 1969, p. 2).

Within the meta-theory of symbolic interaction, Blumer's (1969) three principles outlined above are an attempt to unravel strands in the symbolic interactionist central notion of the interdependency between society and the individual; one cannot be understood without an understanding of the other. This is a view of the individual as somebody who is manager of his or her own environment. The task of the researcher using this approach is to uncover the "patterns of action and interaction" between and among the "actors" (Strauss & Corbin, 1994) in relation to the particular phenomenon which is the focus of the study. As the next sub-section demonstrates, these principles

have been used to generate research questions and research sub-questions for the project outlined in this research proposal.

The overall goal of this study is to use grounded theory and qualitative research methods to develop theory about how work-groups manage sudden and unexpected loss. Case studies provide solid feedback in questions such as this.

The database for addressing the major research question will be subsequently developed as a series of case studies on individual work-groups. These case studies will attempt to resolve the following specific research sub-questions:

1. Which actions were initially taken, and who was the main instigator of the actions?

2. Which impediments, if any, did the work-group experience? How did they overcome them?

3. Which changes have taken place? How are these changes accounted for by the work-group?

4. What has been the impact of all this on the 'general' life of the work-group?

5. What were the experiences of the members?

6. Which issues surfaced?

7. How, if applicable, has the work-group reinvented itself? How has the work-group rebuilt itself?

While the subsequent empirical research will focus on work-groups within the sudden and unexpected loss context, it will also complement the research of those who are examining other contexts and make a contribution to studies aimed at illuminating similarities and differences on the wider international stage.

The research will make several substantial and original contributions to knowledge through the expected practical and theoretical outcomes of the study:

1. The research will provide a substantial theory in an area where no such theory currently exists. As with all substantial theories developed within a microsociology framework, it will not be possible to claim any generalizability in the sense understood by quantitative researchers. However, it will be generalizable in the sense that users will be able to relate to it and gain some understanding of their own and others' unique situations from the typologies, categories, dimensions, properties, and concepts developed;

2. The resultant theory will act as stimuli to others to explore other studies of this nature with different types of group members and in different settings. In this way, the study will lay the foundation for the later development of formal theory. Formal theory is developed from an analysis of a series of major studies of the type being proposed here, each study being at PhD level in terms of its scope and the level of rigor in analysis;

3. The formal theory which this researcher will generate can also be used to generate further research questions for future researchers, which can be investigated using both qualitative and quantitative research approaches.

4. From a practical standpoint, theory generated from the interviews potentially will assist in smoothing the inevitable transitions that will occur for a work-group that has experienced a sudden and unexpected loss. Theories derived potentially will lead to economic enhancements, or at least provide a triage environment, where damages are limited and controlled. Knowledge gained

could return a damaged work-group to a highly functional level again in a

moderate amount of time, and with a reasonable allocation of both money

resources and energy resources.

Delimitations

This study utilizes an exploratory and grounded theory research methodology. It

was chosen to gain familiarity with and understanding of the topic, and to help formulate

better questions for further research. The exploratory model is commonly used when

there is little available research on a particular subject. Since the research on work-group

recovery services in the workplace is limited, exploratory research is an appropriate

approach. It should also be noted that exploratory research is seldom generalizable, and

should not be used as the sole source of information for decision-making. The

information presented in this study will therefore be limited in its usefulness. However, it

is hoped that this initial research will aid in formulating a hypothesis that can be tested by

more reliable and generalizable research designs.

Group Definitions

For purposes of clarity in distinguishing subject groups throughout this

dissertation, the ghost group will be defined as the group that has yet to experience the

sudden and unexpected loss. The go group will be defined as the group that has already

experienced the sudden and unexpected loss, and is now attempting to reconstruct itself.

Once the ghost group experiences the sudden and unexpected loss, task behaviors may

easily be assumed by a replacement group member; however, will the go group have any

ease, or lack of difficulties, with the interpersonal relationships that would be vital to the

future success of the group? Once the go group assembles, will the brand new group need

to, by definition, return to the initial phase of forming, or will the long-standing members become impatient with returning to that initial phase, with the prevailing question perhaps being, "Haven't we have already gone through this?"

Depending upon which stage the new group member finds himself entering into, will he / she almost automatically be marginalized due to the fact that the group may be unwilling to return to the beginning stages? The new group member perhaps would be relegated to merely task-related issues.

Certainly, whether the research indicates that a reconfigured group would need to begin again from the beginning or whether a reconfigured group could take over exactly where it left off remains to be seen at this point.

Dissertation Organization

Chapter 1 introduces the topic and research problem as well as the background information that is relevant to the study. The purpose of the study and the research concern are discussed. Research questions and research sub-questions are introduced, and delimitations are defined, and group definitions are subsequently defined.

Chapter 2 is a review of the current literature on work-group formation as well as discussing symbolic interactionism, sudden loss, and resilience. A challenge to the notion of stage theories will also be discussed.

Chapter 3 discusses why grounded theory was chosen as the methodology for this study. Examples of possible sudden and unexpected losses that will be studied are defined. The timing of the event data collection will be discussed. The sample will be defined and the data collection methods will be discussed.

Chapter 4 will record the results of the study, as they directly relate to the research question. Emergent themes will also be presented in Chapter 4.

Chapter 5 will discuss and summarize the study's results. Also, suggestions for studies in the future and the study's limitations will be discussed.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The overall aim of the study is to use grounded theory qualitative research methods to develop theory about how work-groups manage sudden and unexpected loss. Before exploring work-groups which have experienced a sudden and unexpected loss, an understanding of various group models should be understood.

Tuckman's Stages

The forming, storming, norming, and performing model of group development was first proffered in 1965 by Bruce Tuckman. He maintained that all of these phases were inevitable and necessary for a group to deliver results, plan work, find solutions, tackle all problems, face challenges, and to grow.

There needs to be some perspective given to the work-groups existing in a variety of different positions (existing in varied phases or stages). If the sudden and unexpected loss occurs to a work-group just beginning to take its initial steps as a group, that fact definitively needs to be indicated versus a work-group that has been a highly performing group for a number of years.

Bruce Tuckman reviewed roughly 50 studies of group development in the mid-1960s and synthesized their commonalities in one of the most frequently cited models of group development (Tuckman, 1965). The model describes four linear stages (forming, storming, norming, and performing) that a group will go through in its unitary sequence of decision making. A fifth stage (adjourning) was added in 1977, when a new set of studies were reviewed (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977).

According to Tuckman (1965), the initial stage of forming is when group members learn about each other and the task at hand. Indicators of this stage may include poor listening, hidden feelings, low morale, confusion, uncommitted members, uninvolvement, and unclear objectives. The second stage is storming. As group members continue to work, they will engage each other in arguments about the structure of the group, which often are significantly emotional and illustrate a struggle for status within the group. These activities mark the storming phase: failure, inconsistency, anger, resentment, volatility, confrontation, conflicts, hidden agendas, subjectivity, and lack of cohesion. The third stage is norming. Group members establish implicit or explicit rules about how they will achieve their goal. Groups address the types of communication that will or will not help with the task. Indicators include: identifying weaknesses and strengths, testing new ground, listening, assertiveness, opening risky issues, changing and/or confirming roles, reviewing and/or clarifying objectives, and questioning performance. The fourth stage is performing. Groups reach a conclusion and implement the solution to their issue. Indicators include: success, high morale, confidence, learning, concern for people, pride, open relationships, flexibility, initiative, and creativity. The fifth stage is adjourning. As the group project ends, the group disbands in the adjournment phase. This phase was added when Tuckman and Jensen updated their original review of the literature in 1977.

Each of the five stages in the forming – storming – norming – performing – adjourning model proposed by Tuckman involves two aspects: task behaviors and interpersonal relationships. Such a distinction is similar to R. F. Bales' (1950)

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equilibrium model, which states that a group continuously divides its attention between instrumental (task-related) and expressive (socio-emotional) needs.

William Bridges' Theories on Organizations in Transition

William Bridges (2009) emphasized the importance of understanding transitions as a key for organizations to succeed in making changes. Bridges states that transition is the psychological process of adapting to change. According to Bridges, transition consists of three phases: letting go of the past, the "neutral zone", where the past is gone, but the new isn't fully present, and making the new beginning (Bridges, 2009, pp. 4–5).

One of this researcher's favorite quotes from William Bridges (2009) states, "Chaos is the primal state of pure energy for every true new beginning." This quote from www.wmbridges.com proved telling to most of the work-groups that were studied in these cases.

William Bridge's impact on the consulting world, especially those consultants that are working with leadership and change was very far-reaching.

The author of *The Leadership Challenge*, Jim Kouzes, noted:

"Bill's major contribution was to give us permission to talk about the pain and difficulty of change and acknowledge that it can be very confusing. Americans have shame around pain – success is somehow supposed to be easy. If you're struggling, it's as if you've failed. Bill moved past that relentless optimism and said, yes, you can find real meaning in change, but only if you are willing to experience the pain." (from William Bridges' obituary, The New York Times, 2013)

The sudden and unexpected loss of a work-group member obviously qualifies as a major transition within a work-group. Comprehending and thoroughly understanding that transition (and exactly where that work-group is within those transitional phases) are of utmost importance in studying these work-groups in transition.

Symbolic Interactionism

Another way to understand how meaning is created in work-groups is symbolic interactionism. The theory of symbolic interactionism will be critical in this research study due to the fact that, if the work-group is capable of attaining any new beginnings, the interpretations and the meanings of the work-group need to be negotiated.

According to this theory, language is the source of all meaning (Garfinkel, 1967). If the replacement group member refuses to accept the existing language of the group, there may be confusion and / or conflict that could develop within the work-group. Thus, human interaction is mediated by the use of symbols and signification, by interpretation, or by ascertaining the meaning of one another's actions. The meaning of the losing a member would need to be interpreted for the reconfigured group. If the lost member's interpretation by the remainder of the group was lacking, perhaps the group moves on with a brand new interpretation for itself (Blumer, 1962).

When discussing symbolic interactionism, role-taking is a key mechanism that permits people to see another person's perspective to understand what an action might mean to another person. With the roles potentially becoming 'blurred' during the rapid transition, the roles (or at least the interpretations of them) may become clouded, cloaked, or confused. With symbolic interactionism, because of the uncertainty of roles in social contexts, the burden of role-making is on the person in the situation (Garfinkel, 1967).

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Could it be possible that the leader of both the ghost group and the go group

maintains such strong role definitions that this transition does not become a 'tipping

point' for the group? Would the role of the replacement member need to be very clearly

defined by the leader, so as not to have any feelings hurt within the work-group, or to

maintain and preserve the group's momentum? Within symbolic interactionism, in this

sense, we are proactive participants in our environment. If the missing member had the

strongest voice, if he / she had the most vital links between the languages used and the

accepted meanings, how will that be replaced? Can it be replaced? Would it need to be

replaced at all? Could the work-group survive without it? Or would the legacy of the

missing member's meanings continue to resonate within the group and carry the group

through to mission fulfillment?

Working through all of the machinations of the work of a group and the

definitions of meanings being constantly re-defined by the work-group, the potentially

lasting memory of how the work-group had existed could play into the group's dynamics.

Anthony Giddens (1979) states agents (groups or individuals) draw upon rules and

resources to perform social actions through embedded memory, called memory traces.

Memory traces are thus the vehicle through which social actions are carried out. Structure

is also, however, the result of these social practices. The ghost group could be determined

to have an embedded memory, which then may, or may not, become a legacy system for

the go group.

W.H. Sewell Jr. added to Giddens' work by arguing that change arises from the

multiplicity of structures, the transposable nature of schemas, the unpredictability of

resource accumulation, the polysemy of resources and the intersection of structures. (Sewell, 1992, p. 20).

The entire concept of multiplicity of structure truly resonates with this researcher. Sewell states that the existence of multiple structures implies that the knowledgeable agents whose actions produce systems are capable of applying different schemas to contexts with differing resources, contrary to the conception of a universal habitus (learned dispositions, skills, and ways of acting). Sewell wrote that, "Societies are based on practices that derived from many distinct structures, which exist at different levels, operate in different modalities, and are themselves based on widely varying types and quantities of resources…It is never true that all of them are homologous" (Sewell, 1992, p. 16).

The theory of symbolic interactionism is not a simple concept to fully grasp immediately. There are five central ideas to symbolic interactionism according to Joel M. Charon (2004, p. 31), author of *Symbolic Interactionism an Introduction, an Interpretation, an Integration*. These five central ideas of symbolic interactionism and the potential links that this researcher can make to the main research question are as follows:

1. "The human being must be understood as a social person. It is the constant search for social interaction that leads us to do what we do. Instead of focusing on the individual and his or her personality, or on how the society or social situation causes human behavior, symbolic interactionism focuses on the activities that take place between actors. Interaction is the basic unit of study. Individuals are created through interaction; society too is created through social interaction. What we do depends on interaction with others

earlier in our lifetimes, and it depends on our interaction right now. Social interaction is central to what we do. If we want to understand cause, focus on social interaction" (Charon, 2004, p. 31). This researcher can make the following link to the main research question: The surviving members of the work-group now will have an entirely new set of social interactions that will influence what it is that they will do as a group. The activities that take place between actors will now be forced onto an entirely brand new script. If individuals are created through interactions, then each surviving individual will need to re-create his or her internal dialogue because one of the main actors is now absent. In understanding cause, we need to focus on social interaction. Does the cause now change with the missing member now gone?

2. "The human being must be understood as a thinking being. Human action is not only interaction among individuals, but also interaction within the individual. It is not our ideas or attitudes or values that are as important as the constant active ongoing process of thinking. We are not simply conditioned, we are not simply beings who are influenced by those around us, we are not simply products of society. We are, to our very core, thinking animals, always conversing with ourselves as we interact with others. If we want to understand cause, focus on human thinking" (Charon, 2004, p. 31). This researcher can make the following link to the main research question: If we truly are thinking animals conversing with ourselves as we interact with others, will those internal conversations be changed, or altered, with the sudden loss of a work-group member? Will one's "sense of self", at a minimum, be challenged and,

in some cases, altered? Will those internal conversations grow in an entirely different direction?

3. "Humans do not sense their environment directly; instead, humans define the situation they are in. An environment may actually exist, but it is our definition of it that is important. Definition does not simply randomly happen; instead, it results from ongoing social interaction and thinking" (Charon, 2004, p. 31). This researcher can make the following link to the main research question: The internal definitions of one's environment will undergo a re-constitution once the suddenly missing member's full impact is felt. One of the learnings that may be established from this research is the stature of the now missing person (or group member). If the sudden and unexpected loss occurs to a very strong leader within the group, will the remaining members' definition of their environment be any more radical of a change or alteration, as opposed to the sudden loss occurring to a weaker, or meeker, less vocal member within the group?

4. "The cause of human action is the result of what is occurring in our present situation. Cause unfolds in the present social interaction, present thinking, and present definition. It is not society's encounters with us in our past, that causes action, nor is it our own past experience that does. It is, instead, social interaction, thinking, and definition of the situation that takes place in the present. Our past enters into our actions primarily because we think about it and apply it to the definition of the present situation" (Charon, 2004, p. 31). This researcher can make the following link to the main research question:

This central idea of symbolic interactionism will be, to this researcher, the most fascinating aspect of this study. The work-group, that has experienced the sudden and unexpected loss, will be forced to deal with its new and present reality in order to accomplish the task. The present definition will become mandatory. The definition of the situation that is taking place in the present will need to be paramount in the group's new focus, to the point where the past work-group situations will still be contemplated and remembered, but still need to be modified in order to mesh with the new reality that, in some cases, has been foisted upon them. That worm-hole between the past and the present situations needs to be successfully navigated and steered in order for the work-group to achieve success in its endeavors. If the past situation trumps the current reality, and cannot be let go of by the work-group, will failure for the group become imminent? If the work-group does successfully navigate between the past and the present (an accurate translation), taking the solid learnings from the original work-group, and somehow successfully translating and interpreting those learnings to the new work-group, would that then become the winning formula for the re-configured group's inherent success?

5. "Human beings are described as active beings in relation to their environment. Words such as conditioning, responding, controlled, imprisoned, and formed are not used to describe the human being in symbolic interaction. In contrast to other social-scientific perspectives, humans are not thought of as being passive in relation to their surroundings, but actively involved in what they

do" (Charon, 2004, p. 31). This researcher can make the following link to the main research question: This central idea of symbolic interactionism will also be fascinating to this researcher from the perspective of just how passive or just how active the work-group becomes. If the work-group, that has experienced the sudden and unexpected loss, is too passive and self-defeatist in their loss, will that re-constituted work-group become successful in their goals? Or, would the re-configured work-group that is actively involved in what they are doing, who have accurately addressed the changes that have occurred, who have actively re-constituted themselves, will that work-group become successful in the achievement of their goals?

Peter Vaill's Permanent White Water

Peter Vaill's (1996) vision of "Permanent White Water" adds to this discussion regarding the potential tumultuous nature of groups. Vaill states that permanent white water conditions are "full of surprises…the continual occurrence of problems that are not 'supposed' to happen" (Vaill, 1996, p. 18). Permanent white water conditions feature events that are messy and ill-structured, and have ramifications far and wide. White water events are often extremely costly, both in terms of dollars and effort to cope with the problem and deal with the damage. Sudden and unexpected changes to a work-group's composition certainly dovetail with Vaill's thoughts on the continual occurrence of problems.

What is compelling about the concept of permanent white water in this research endeavor is that permanent white water caused the initial chaotic event (the sudden and unexpected loss of a work-group member), but then also the potential recovery of the

work-group now needs to transpire within that same, identical environment of permanent white water.

Self-Organization

The concept of self-organization weighs in on a work-group that is undergoing a sudden and unexpected event, as in the loss of a member. Once the member is lost, the reflexive action of the work-group may be to automatically self-organize, to somehow move to spontaneously repair itself.

Work-groups possess the capacity to self-organize after a chaotic event. The work-group inherently contains the ability to repair itself from sustained damage, even if substantial. According to the thesaurus website Babylon.com:

Self-organization is a process where some form of global order or coordination arises out of the local interactions between the components of an initially disordered system. This process is spontaneous: it is not directed or controlled by any agent or subsystem inside or outside of the system; however, the laws followed by the process and its initial conditions may have been chosen or caused by an agent. It is often triggered by random fluctuations that are amplified by positive feedback. The resulting organization is wholly decentralized or distributed over all the components of the system. As such, it is typically very robust and able to survive and self-repair substantial damage or perturbations. In chaos theory, it is discussed in terms of 'islands of predictability in a sea of chaotic unpredictability'. (http://thesaurus.babylon.com/SELF-ORGANIZING%20SYSTEM#!!6HEUP7Z59T)

With work-groups that have experienced a sudden and unexpected loss to their group, there may be triggered an element of a self-healing system. Knowledge of this concept would be critical to be aware of upon entering the interview phase.

Ashby (1947) states that the principle of the self-organizing deterministic dynamic system will automatically evolve towards a state of equilibrium. Each subsystem has adapted to the environment formed by all other subsystems. Self-organized learning is denoted by a self-healing system, which may prove vital in the analysis of work-groups that have experienced a sudden and unexpected loss and how that work-group will return to subsequent functioning.

Kenneth J. Doka

Of some importance, knowledge of any factors that may emotionally affect work-group members, needs to be known before entering the interview phase with these groups. Kenneth J. Doka (1996) states that, "Sudden loss, death without forewarning, understandably creates special problems for survivors. Three of the most common include intensified grief, the shattering of a person's normal world and the existence of a series of concurrent crises and secondary losses" (p.11.)

Doka (1996) lists six factors that further affect the nature of any particular sudden loss:

1. Natural or Man-Made: In natural losses, the anger may be directed toward the deceased person or even toward God. In human-made events, the anger is likely to be directed at persons held responsible.

2. The Degree of Intentionality: In intentional deaths, anger and blame can be highly directed.

3. The Degree of Preventability: When deaths are perceived as preventable, there may be a strong obsession with the losses, a constant replaying of the "What ifs?" Preventable deaths are also likely to increase a sense of guilt or anger.

4. Suffering: While the perception of suffering may complicate reactions to loss, instantaneous death may also leave feelings that the person who died had no time to prepare for death.

5. Scope: The number of people affected by the loss may also affect the intensity of grief.

6. The Degree of Expectedness: Some sudden loss may still have a degree of expectedness. For example, the heart attack of someone at risk or the sudden loss of someone struggling with a life-threatening illness, even supposedly in recovery, may not be a total surprise.

Therese A. Rando

Therese Rando is an expert on complicated mourning. Her book, *Treatment of Complicated Mourning* (1993), contains issues and therapeutic implications associated with sudden and unexpected death, interventions for major problem areas such as guilt, ambivalence, and anger. Rando also discusses a critical issue, often misunderstood, information on the duration and the course of mourning. Of tremendous learning, Rando suggests to adapt to the new world, while not forgetting the old world. This researcher's opinion is that totally and completely burying the past will not, in the long run, provide full closure to the work-group in its' attempt to redefine itself.

Therese A. Rando (1993) mentions six "R" processes of mourning necessary for health accommodation of any loss (Doka, 1996):

1. Recognize the loss. Acknowledge the death. Understand the death.

2. React to the separation. Experience the pain. Feel, identify, accept, and give some form of expression to all the psychological reactions to the loss. Identify and mourn secondary losses.

3. Recollect and re-experience the deceased and the relationship. Review and remember realistically. Revive and re-experience the feelings.

4. Relinquish the old attachments of the deceased and the old assumptive world.

5. Readjust to move adaptively into the new world without forgetting the old. Revise the assumptive world. Develop a new relationship with the deceased. Adopt new ways of being in the world. Form a new identity.

6. Reinvest (p. 141).

Rando (1993) also states that there are seven generic high-risk factors for complicated mourning. These are factors associated with either the specific death or with relevant antecedent or consequent variables which would tend to predispose any mourner to complications. These high-risk factors include:

Factors associated with the specific death:

1. Sudden, unanticipated death (especially when it is traumatic, violent, mutilating, or random)

2. Death from an overly lengthy illness

3. Loss of a child

4. The mourner's perception of the death as preventable (Doka, 1996, p. 143).

Antecedent and Subsequent Variables:

1. A pre-morbid relationship with the deceased that was markedly angry or ambivalent or dependent

2. Prior or concurrent mourner liabilities of unaccommodated losses and/or stresses or mental health problems

3. The mourner's perceived lack of social support (Doka, 1996, p. 143).

Per Rando (1993), to the extent that any bereaved individual is characterized by one or more of these factors, that individual is said to be at risk for the development of complications in one or more of the six "R" processes of mourning, and hence at risk for complicated mourning.

In 1993, Rando stated that there are eleven issues inherent in sudden, unanticipated death, that particularly complicate mourning. These include:

1. The capacity to cope is diminished as the shock effects of the death overwhelm the ego at the same time that new stressors are added (e.g., heightened personal threat and vulnerability).

2. The assumptive world is violently shattered without warning and the violated assumptions (e.g., the world as orderly, predictable, and meaningful; the self as invulnerable; etc.) cause intense reactions of fear, anxiety, vulnerability and loss of control.

3. The loss does not make sense, and cannot be understood or absorbed.

4. There is no chance to say good-bye and finish unfinished business with the deceased, which cause problems due to the lack of closure.

5. Symptoms of acute grief and of physical and emotional shock persist for a prolonged period of time.

6. The mourner obsessively reconstructs events in an effort both to comprehend the death and to prepare for it in retrospect.

7. The mourner experiences a profound loss of security and confidence in the world, which affects all areas of life and increases many kinds of anxiety.

8. The loss cuts across experiences in the relationship and tends to highlight what was happening at the time of the death, often causing these last-minute situations to be out of proportion with the rest of the relationship and predisposing to problems with realistic recollection and guilt.

9. The death tends to leave mourners with relatively more intense emotional reactions, such as greater anger, ambivalence, guilt, helplessness, death anxiety, vulnerability, confusion, disorganization, and obsession with the deceased along with strong needs to make meaning of the death and to determine blame and affix responsibility for it.

10. The death tends to be followed by a number of major secondary losses (Rando, 1984) because of the consequences of lack of anticipation.

11. The death can provoke post-traumatic stress responses (e.g., repeated intrusion of traumatic memories, numbing of general responsiveness, increased psychological arousal). (Doka, 1996, pp. 145–146).

Resilience

Before approaching work-groups that have experienced a sudden and unexpected loss, the researcher needs to be prepared for what potentially awaits him / her. In most cases, these work-groups have recently experienced a stressful event, are struggling with the loss, and are up against an adverse situation. As an agent of change, some compassion

for exactly where the work-group may exist emotionally would be highly advisable. Couching the interview questions, the interviewer should be cognizant of using positive words and phrases when addressing said work-group. An example of a question that would not be a productive question for anyone involved would be: "Could you please relay a story about just how your work-group is currently overcoming this unbearable problem?" Once labelled as "unbearable", it would be very difficult to reverse the work-group's emotional state.

In a 2008 article entitled *"Resilience in African American Children and Adolescents: A Vision for Optimal Development"* The American Psychological Association suggests "ten ways to build resilience", which are:

1. To maintain good relationships with close family members, friends, and others;

2. To avoid seeing crises or stressful events as unbearable problems;

3. To accept circumstances that cannot be changed;

4. To develop realistic goals and move towards them;

5. To take decisive actions in adverse situations;

6. To look for opportunities of self-discovery after a struggle with loss;

7. To develop self-confidence;

8. To keep a long-term perspective and consider the stressful event in a broader context;

9. To maintain a hopeful outlook, expecting good things and visualizing what is wished;

10. To take care of one's mind and body, exercising regularly, paying attention to

one's own needs and feelings

Some studies argue (Frederickson, Tugade, Waugh, & Larkin, 2003) that positive

emotion helps resilient people to construct psychological resources that are necessary for

coping successfully with significant catastrophes, such as the September 11th attacks. As

a result, positive emotion experienced by resilient people functions as a protective factor

to moderate the magnitude of adversity to individuals and assists them to cope well in the

future.

In addition to the above findings, Frederickson et al. further suggests that positive

emotions are active elements within resilience. By examining people's emotional

responses to the September 11th attacks, Frederickson et al. (2003) suggests that positive

emotions are critical elements in resilience and as a mediator that buffers people from

depression after the crises. Moreover, highly resilient people were more likely to notice

positive meanings within the problems that they faced (e.g., felt grateful to be alive),

endured fewer depressive symptoms, and experienced more positive emotions than low

resilient people after terrorism attacks. Similar results were obtained in another study

regarding the effects of September 11th attacks on resilient individuals' healthy

adjustments (Bonanno, Galea, Bucciareli, & Vlahov, 2007).

Emotional Intelligence

Per *A Dictionary of Psychology* (Coleman, 2008), emotional intelligence is "the

ability to monitor one's own and other people's emotions, to discriminate between

different emotions and label them appropriately, and to use emotional information to

guide thinking and behavior" (p. 16). Daniel Goleman (1998) defines emotional

intelligence as "an array of skills and characteristics that drive leadership performance."

A Challenge to the Notion of Stage Theories

Elisabeth Kubler-Ross (1997) discussed the resultant misunderstandings that

revolve around her groundbreaking five stages of grief.

Friedman and James (2012) have been on the forefront to contest the validity of

grief moving through stages at all. Friedman and James state:

> If there are no typical responses to loss and no typical losses, and not everyone
>
> goes through them or in order, how can there possibly be stages that universally
>
> represent people's reactions to loss? The fact is, no study has ever established that
>
> stages of grief actually exist, and what are defined as such can't be called stages.
>
> Grief is the normal and natural emotional response to loss. Stage theories put
>
> grieving people in conflict with their emotional reactions to losses that affect
>
> them. No matter how much people want to create simple, iron clad guidelines for
>
> the human emotions of grief, there are no stages of grief that fit every person or
>
> relationship. (Friedman & James, 2012, pp. 37–41).

Relevance of Literature Review

This literature review is relevant in that it details typical group development.

Additionally, this literature review is important to this study because this detail

establishes the baseline for studying groups in action and in development. Symbolic

interactionism is introduced with the thought of identifying the meaning of the lost

member within a group that has experienced a sudden and unexpected loss. Guiding this

study, Permanent White Water adds to this discussion by identifying the potential

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tumultuous nature of groups. Processes of mourning, issues inherent in sudden loss, and

resilience all are of particular relevance due to the necessary illumination of what truly

needs to transpire for a work-group to return to a solid and effective work-group

functioning.

Methodology

Qualitative Research

The major research question is as follows: How do work-groups manage the sudden and unexpected loss of a member?

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory does not, as a matter of course, place all of the literature topics up front. Grounded theory builds from the data and then ties back into the extant theories. Engaging with the literature is ongoing and can be used for comparisons with the data or as a secondary source of data. Extant literature can hinder creativity if it stands between the researcher and the data. The literature can define dimensions and properties, help with conceptual development, and can direct the theoretical sampling. Being familiar with the literature and engaging with the literature can help formulate research questions and can help improve theoretical sensitivity (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

One of the reasons that grounded theory has been receiving increased attention is because this method emphasizes understanding the voice of the participant to build a theory about phenomena. Strauss and Corbin (1990), two of the researchers who have been instrumental in defining grounded theory methodology, state that theory is "discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomena" (p. 23).

Examples of Possible Sudden and Unexpected Losses That Will Be Studied

Some samples and examples follow, in which possible types of sudden and unexpected loss will be studied and identified:

a) A Chief Financial Officer (CFO) suddenly and unexpectedly passes away in an unexpected car accident. The CFO's corporation still is required to replace the very integral position of CFO, but still must be cautious with the delicate and sudden nature of the CFO's passing with the remaining staff.

b) A valuable bank Branch Manager's health is rapidly depleting due to an advanced and acute case of pancreatic cancer. An extended medical leave is granted to the employee, with a realistically slim hope of return to that same position.

c) A fire department loses a key member of their squad, as the paralyzed fireman must move to IOD (injured on duty) status due to his having fallen through two floors of a burning building while on a call.

One Organizational Event through Many Lenses

With an entire work-group being interviewed, there remains the possibility of multiple viewpoints of the same single organizational event. That one organizational event is being viewed through the lenses of many different participants. To expect only one individualized set of expectations would be unreasonable.

This research can be described as "unfolding, emerging or open-ended" (Punch, 2000, pp. 23–25) as the leading line of questioning will initially be general in scope, the data will be inherently unstructured, and the design will have developed a more unique structure once a certain focus within the research begins to emerge. In an unfolding study such as this, where very little is known initially about just how work-groups find new meanings due to the sudden and unexpected loss, the use of an open-ended in-depth interview guide to push, investigate and flush out new questions to be asked allows the

interviewer to get prepared and accustomed to the discoveries at hand. As it is difficult from the beginning to be aware of just what the total of research questions could potentially be, a group of a leading line of questioning is proffered which thereby discovering how:

1. the participants' theories on the discoveries;
2. how the participants react;
3. how the participants change through the interaction.

The interview protocol is based on the seven specific research sub-questions of the research project already outlined, and are as follows:

1. Which actions were initially taken, and who was the principal initiator of the actions?
2. Which impediments, if any, did the work-group experience? How did the work-group overcome those impediments?
3. Which changes have transpired? How are these changes incorporated by the work-group?
4. What has been the impact on the life of the work-group?
5. What were the experiences of the work-group members?
6. Which issues happened to surface?
7. How, if applicable, has the work-group reinvented itself? How has the work-group rebuilt itself?

Analytical Approach

The data, captured from interviews, will be analyzed according to grounded theory methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This researcher will follow the Glaserian

approach and then will adhere to the constant comparative method. An overall process guide will also be used. The cases will first be analyzed with open coding, then analyzed for preliminary codes identified in this research as first-order concepts, then analyzed within individual cases, and then analyzed across cases (Eisenhardt, 1989). Building up on the use of notes, or theoretical memos, this researcher will create the linkages between the emergent ideas and the first-order concepts. The codes will then subsequently be clustered together to form second-order themes, or categories (Kendall, 1999). Aggregate Dimensions, or core categories, will be identified, followed by labels, which will reflect the Process Phases. Together, this will culminate in the emergent theory.

Grounded Theory is a systematic methodology in the social sciences involving the discovery of theory through the analysis of data. From the data that has been collected, the significant points are delineated with a series of codes, which are taken from the text. The codes are then grouped into similar concepts with the point of making them more workable. From these similar concepts, categories are formed, which are the basis for the creation of a theory. This is contrary to the traditional model of research, where the researcher first chooses a theoretical framework, and only then applies this model to the phenomenon to be studied.

Work-groups are living, growing, changing, and ever-evolving models that branch out and adapt to new and varied situations constantly. Work-groups are nothing if not organic and unique. Drawing the key points out of these dynamic, evolving work-groups will serve to capture the essence of the group's responses and adaptabilities. To approach these organic entities with any pre-conceived notions of just how a group 'should' work, this researcher feels, would perform a tremendous disservice to the work-group and to the

process itself. As the diffusion of the work-group transpires, the dissolution of the old work-group will begin to form a newer order of working structure. To approach this state of diffusion with any semblance of a pre-determined order or uniformity or rigidity or pre-ordained conceptions of structure would begin a huge disservice to the work-groups in question.

Timing of Event Data Collection

Neil Thompson, in his book entitled, *Loss, Grief and Trauma in the Workplace* states that

> Another common misunderstanding of grief, and one that has been perpetuated by the continuing adherence to outdated theory, is the idea that people grieve in stages. We now have a far wider range of theoretical understandings of grief that are much more sophisticated than the simplistic notion that people grieve in stages. (Thompson, 2009, p. 16)

Per Thompson, people will focus on what they have lost as a part of their typical grieving process, but at the same time, they will also focus on just what they would need to rebuild, and looking toward their future. There is a degree of oscillation, of swinging forwards and backwards, between looking at both the past and looking at the future.

Neimeyer (2002) argues for the process of grieving as a process of meaning reconstruction. One needs to make sense of one's life without the relationship being feasible any more. One needs to develop a new narrative, a new script.

Per Thompson (2009), "These are much more helpful approaches to understanding the complexities of grief and have been significant in moving us away

from the dangers of thinking that grieving is a simple, straight forward, albeit painful, process from one stage to the next and out the other side again" (p. 16).

In this researcher's opinion, the sudden and unexpected loss does not necessarily need to have occurred all that recently. Older data sets would still be considered very useful for data collection. The interviews would not need to be collected concurrently with the sudden and unexpected loss. The person (or group) that has been affected will be allowed to recollect their thoughts from relatively recent events.

This is due to the fact that the timeline for grief does not adhere to any type of chronological order. By only obtaining and mining concurrent or extremely recent grieving events will have the unfortunate effect of marginalizing and ignoring well-thought out and perspective-laden data sets from individuals, groups, and work-groups that have contemplated the sudden loss carefully and have the luxury of time, to where the reaction is not as much of a knee-jerk reaction, a reflex, an impulse, as much as a measured, historical viewpoint as to what this missing member truly meant to the group.

Due to the fact that we have already laid out the fact that grief does not move through given stages, that people tend to take time to thoroughly digest the loss and just what that loss truly meant to them, it would be foolish, as a researcher, to wait outside the proverbial black box for a nice and neatly packaged grief event to finish at the end of an imaginary assembly line. The learnings, as to how the grief is being dealt with, are found inside the proverbial black box. That's exactly where the research needs to go.

Measuring the oscillation that has taken place (the past and what they have lost versus the future and what they have to rebuild) may provide much better data after a little water has passed underneath the bridge.

Also, by potentially waiting for the entire process to unfold, much more of the "meaning reconstruction" may have taken place, to where the development of the "new narrative" may be a bit more mature. The "new narrative", or story to make sense of our lives without the person or relationship that we have lost, may become more varied and, subsequently, richer.

Sample, Sampling Criteria, Recruitment, and Definition of a Work-Group

Recruitment of work-groups will be through professional and personal networking opportunities, specifically the Organization Development (OD Network) affiliates in both Columbus, Ohio, and Cleveland, Ohio. The OD Network affiliate in Cleveland, Ohio, is The Northeast Ohio Organizational Development Connection (ODC). The OD Network affiliate in Columbus, Ohio, is the Capital City OD Network.

The participants will consist of work-groups within the Cleveland, Ohio, and Columbus, Ohio, metropolitan area who have been identified (through those two identified networks) as currently engaged in work-group activities and have recently experienced a sudden and unexpected loss to their work-group. Isolating at least one for-profit entity and isolating at least one not-for-profit entity will be the goal. The target population selection will be guided by a desire to provide the greatest opportunity to gather the most relevant data about the phenomenon under investigation. In other words, the intent is to cast, as widely as possible, for a variety of perspectives and situations in an attempt to obtain the full population rather than to select a random sample or choose a sample that would be representative of the total population of subjects. Focusing a research project on this group has the potential to lead to the development of theory that

will be an original contribution to the knowledge base of the emerging field of work-group re-building.

Work-teams, or work-groups, that have experienced a sudden and unexpected loss have been purposefully selected with the thinking that a cohesive group would need to adapt in very unique ways in order to adapt to its brand new circumstances.

Participants will then be recruited by telephone with contact information obtained from the two network contacts that were mentioned. A recruitment script will be used to solicit potential organizations that would be amenable to participating in said study.

Work-groups will be targeted based upon which work-groups have recently experienced a sudden and unexpected loss of one of its members within that particular work-group. Work-groups will only be selected to where the potential participants in the study would be willing to make themselves available for face-to-face interviews. Work-groups will also only be selected to where some significant time segments have the opportunity to be set aside for the face-to-face interviews. Organizations would need to be flexible to allow for on-site interviews at their current place of employment. The recruitment will take place within the Columbus, Ohio, metropolitan area and the Cleveland, Ohio, metropolitan area.

For the purpose of this dissertation, a work-group will consist of a group of people working together to achieve specified common goals. By working with the same people frequently, the idea is that members will become familiar with the repertoire of the other members, which will ideally lead to the development of trust and will progress to the encouragement of spontaneity within the work-group. The concept of the work-group will be limited, for the sake of this study, to no more than fifteen members.

Data Collection

      Semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews (Taylor & Bogdan,

1984, p. 76) will be employed as the main form of the data collection. This particular

method concentrates on creating the environment that will potentially persuade

interviewees to maintain a dialogue regarding their experiences in an open-ended

discussion, and this will subsequently enable the interviewer to "tap into" the ideas and to

the thoughts of the interviewees' unique perspectives. Two rounds of interviews with

participating work-groups will be scheduled. Prior to the initial set of interviews, the

chosen interviewees will have a brief phone discussion with the interviewer for "ice

breaking" and to generally converse regarding the study and its potential positive impact

on the work-group. After this conversation, a consent letter will be mailed to the

interviewees describing any confidentiality issues, any interviewees' expectations, and

the planned benefits of the study. Within a short timeframe, a second phone discussion

will transpire to "follow up" that the consent letters have been received and to agree on a

time at the interviewee's place of business. The initial round of interviews will

subsequently proceed as soon as possible. By arranging the beginning interviews, it is

then possible to subsequently weigh the expectations and perspectives of the work-group.

The initial round of interviews will illustrate each work-group, their paradigms, their

shared, common events and their work-group situation. As themes reveal themselves,

these themes will be pursued with the participants within a conversational framework.

      The next round of interviews will "catch" any of the important emergent themes

that may have been missed. Requesting that each of the interviewees review their

interview notes at this point for discrepancies guarantees that a valid reflection of their

entire case is being displayed. These interviews will also be used to collect the additional data about the themes which came forward from the analysis of the earlier interview notes and to isolate the thoughts that each work-group member had been having with the work-group from the first set of interviews.

After the second round of interviews, the interviewees will be called to discuss and verify the theories that came forward. The two sets of interviews will be built to gather specific data from each interviewee regarding each phase in the work-group re-building process. The precise order of the questions and the wording of the questions may be slightly different in each interview situation. This provides some flexibility to adapt to variant situations.

Observations. It is expected that the work-group will be actively involved in work-group re-building by the time of the second round of interviews, with a general understanding of how certain processes are handled. The fact that people act towards things on the basis of the meanings they have for them (Blumer, 1969) assists in observing work-group members within their environments. Observations will lead to a much clearer understanding on the meanings that work-group members hold about work-group re-building. This can be accomplished by watching the behaviors of each work-group member within their environment. Observations facilitate an uncovering of the variant strategies that work-groups use to react to the phenomenon of work-group re-building.

It is critical in these cases that focus on symbolic interaction research tradition that actions and meanings are constant. The principle purpose of observation is to observe just how work-group members' meanings get translated into strategies which are

practiced in work-group re-building. Where the observed behaviors may seem to display differences with explicit meanings, it will be critical to let the work-group members explain why this difference is not the case. These explanations will be gained by interacting with the work-groups in conversations to discover differences within meanings which have been misunderstood.

Document study. During the course of this study, interviewees will be requested to maintain diary entries. The choice to maintain such personal accounts will be at the personal discretion of the individual interviewees, as some interviewees may not feel comfortable with this personal exercise. Interviewees will transcribe what they witness, which will later be gathered. The written accounts will provide personal accounts of observations to which the researcher cannot have access, thereby complementing the interview data (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998, 123–124). The diaries will be reviewed for potential data.

Data analysis. Due to the fact that the roots of grounded theory aligns with the symbolic interactionist view of human behavior, and as it tends to make its greatest contribution in areas where little research had previously been undertaken, the utilization is relevant to this study (Chenitz & Swanson, 1986, p. 7). The reason to engage in this research using grounded theory analysis is based upon the need to generate substantial theories about the re-building of work-groups which have experienced a sudden and unexpected loss. The processes of induction and deduction will be crucial throughout this analysis. Grounded theory is an approach that is inductive in nature, grounded theory also has an aspect of deduction to it because the researcher must move back and forth in their

thinking to observe the generalizations and give them specific meaning throughout the

analytic process (Chenitz & Swanson, 1986, p. 93; Punch, 1998, pp. 166–167).

The analysis of grounded theory demands that the collected information be laid

out in a certain manner. As an example, within an interview, sufficient space must be

available to allow the researcher to label thoughts that are then applicable to the research

as opposed to a separate piece of paper. Once the interview data has been organized, the

interview data will be closely reviewed, thereby involving the theoretical sensitivity of

the researcher, specifically, "the ability to recognize what is important in data and to give

it meaning" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 46). Categories will be developed, which will

then subsequently lead to themes.

Three types of coding will be used within this study: open coding, axial coding,

and selective coding. Within this study, this researcher will leverage all three types. The

procedures of coding will be used in keeping with the alternating environments

throughout the times of data gathering, analysis and theory formulation.

Open coding. Strauss and Corbin (1998) proffer that "the first step in theory

building is conceptualizing" (p. 103). The theory behind the use of open coding is to

allow the process of breaking down the interview data into representations of events and

objects. After field notes are taken, interviews will be reviewed and laid out into

sentences and phrases that represented the main ideas of the interviewees. Lists of main

ideas will be mailed to interviewees to guarantee that the interviewer has completely

distilled the thought points that the interview participants valued as important.

Open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) is the process of "breaking down,

examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data" (p. 61). The open coding

must occur with the initial analysis, with no preconceived ideas, thereby allowing the discovery of conceptual categories and the attached properties, this will be used later to build theory. The concept is to analyze the interview data very cautiously, breaking it apart to fully examine and compare differences and similarities in the incidents by observing subsequent patterns. Two basic procedures to the coding procedure: the asking of questions and the making of comparisons (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 62). The data will be compared for differences and similarities and then subjected to questioning. By using these two variant approaches, it will then be possible to give the resultant concepts specificity and precision. Memo entries will be used to analyze the data. Memo entries are detailed notes of ideas about the categories and the data, and they represent the resultant codes from which they are derived (Glaser, 1978, pp. 83–92). Throughout the analysis, the interview notes will be examined to validate that no possibilities are dismissed.

This grouping of concepts into categories, or abstract explanatory terms, will represent the second step in the coding process. The goal of this coding phase will be to generate a list of categories regarding the perceptions and practices of the participants.

Axial coding. Once some properties and their categories have been isolated, they will be categorized, identifying relationships between instances and linking theories between them, as the information is pieced together through axial coding (Chenitz & Swanson, 1986, p. 125). Concepts and ideas will be variously connected: the research of consequences and causes; similar meanings in ideas; intervening facts that either constrain or facilitate interaction strategies; and as parts or stages of a process or seeing things as either different aspects of a category (Punch, 1998, p. 217). Throughout this

process, the researcher will move between axial and open coding, alternating between deductive and inductive modes of analysis to ascertain relationships against the interview data that has been collected to determine that the theories are grounded in the data.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) state that the purpose of axial coding is to "begin the process of reassembling data that were fractured during open coding" (p. 124). This phase of analysis will begin by grouping category notes into main and subcategories. Through this process, main categories, representing the experiences of the majority of the participants, emerged.

Selective coding. Selective coding is the third stage in Grounded Theory analysis, and it uses the same techniques as axial and open coding, but at a much more elevated level of abstraction (Punch, 1998, p. 217–218). It is the process of amalgamating categories, with particular reference to "core category" (Strauss, 1987, p. 69). Once a category has revealed itself, theories will be designed to align the category in terms of its relationship to other categories in the data and its' properties (Punch, 1998, p. 218). Selective coding will also disclose those categories that need the gathering of more information. This is known as the principle of theoretical sampling (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998).

Strauss and Corbin (1998) state that "selective coding is the process of integrating and refining categories" (p. 142). The primary goals of this step of analysis will be to develop an overarching theoretical scheme explaining just how each of the categories will relate to each other, and to identify a core category that explains the experiences of participants.

Within this step of analysis, the main categories will be examined for similarities and differences. Passages representing each of the main categories will be sorted and reviewed. These procedures will result in the emergence of a number of constructs, or overarching theoretical categories. Analysis of relational statements will result in the development of a scheme that will link the constructs. A narrative and diagram, detailing the emergent theory, will be developed, thereby explaining the factors involved in diverse contexts. Review of these schemes will help to determine the core categories that represent shared experiences. Finally, the story of each participant will be reviewed to assess its fit to the theory that will be proposed. The specific components of this theory will be shared within the next chapter of this text.

The objectivity of the researcher. Objectivity is not a term used by qualitative researchers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 314). Qualitative researchers use the terms 'credibility', 'trustworthiness', and 'authenticity'. Discretion will be maintained to ensure that the research is credible, trustworthy and authentic. The interviewees will be conversed with reviewing the interview data and the subsequent theory. The interviews will be discussed with the interviewees for verification until the interviews become accepted as reflections of the interviewees' positions. They will be triangulated, where possible, with the participants' written records.

Within any research study, qualitative or quantitative, the trustworthiness, or validity, of the research findings is an important concern (Creswell, 1998). In weighing the validity of various qualitative studies, researchers must take into consideration the interpretive methods used, the analysis used, and the data collection. Queries regarding the perceptions of the participants; whether the process is scalable to account for

differences in experiences; whether other researchers would arrive at similar results; and the degree that elements were adequately detailed to allow for similarities to other study findings and populations. Various techniques will be weighed to verify validity with these research findings.

Triangulation. Triangulation is a technique used to increase the validity of qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Triangulation details the comparing of results from various sources, or compiled using various methodology, to confirm findings. Within this study, many interviewees will be included and their experiences will be weighed for differences and similarities. The theory, that will be developed, will be developed on the amalgamation of similar experiences, rather than interview information that is particular to one interviewee. Further, the assembling of data gained through interview data will be studied to verify the validity of each piece of information. Comparison of data to the theory that will be generated through the analysis of the interviews will provide confirmation to the main concepts proposed within the theory.

Member checks. Maxwell (1996) postulates that member checking, or soliciting the feedback from the participants, is the "single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpretation of the meaning of what they say and the perspective they have on what is going on" (p. 94). Participants will be sent a list of the main concepts as compiled by the interviewer, detailed by each interview question. Interviewees will be queried to analyze these items to determine whether the interviewer is decidedly reflecting the interviewees' main ideas and perceptions that the interviewee believed to have been important.

Thick description. Creswell (1998) states that rich, thick description of study elements allows, those reading the study, to decide if results can be transferred to other populations of interest. Detailed information about just how the interviewees were selected, and some of the criteria for interview participation, were discussed within this chapter. After the interviews have been completed, summary field notes will be taken. The summary field notes will include a review of the information provided by the interviewee, as well as reflections from the interviewer regarding the divergence and convergence of the interview information disclosed within the interview in regard to previous interviews. Detailed information about the significant events that occurred during the interview and the interview setting will be documented. Detailed records will also be journaled throughout the interpretation process and data analysis, detailing the transformation of the emergent theory from its initial draft to its final draft.

Theoretical sampling. Fassinger (2005) wrote that, "one of the hallmarks of the grounded theory approach is the use of theoretical sampling" (p. 162). Theoretical sampling is described as the process of continually gathering data through the analysis process with the purpose of validating and explaining emergent concepts. This process of continually gathering data through the analysis process usually involves finding participants or data collection sources that will render more detailed information on the particular examination. Within this current project, theoretical sampling will not be used to find participants. Fassinger (2005) defines, "sampling in the theoretical sense also includes continued return to the existing data to select incidents, scenes, or events" (p. 162). This researcher will define specific incidents and experiences within the interviews to detail emergent findings.

Scope of the Research

The focus of the research was to determine which reactions that work-groups, who have experienced a sudden and unexpected loss, experienced.

The goal was to assist organizations in their attempts to assist work-groups in regaining their footing. Which steps worked? Which steps did not work? Which steps merely needed some enhancements?

Definition of Terms

- Constant Comparison – Data is simultaneously analyzed and collected.

- Theoretical Sampling – Rather than decided upon before the beginning of the study, the data collection is dictated by the emerging theory.

- Prior Knowledge – Rather than to test hypotheses, substantive areas of research relevant to the topic of study are used to inform. The assumption embedded here in this statement is that researchers can never be tabula rasa, and it is therefore very important to note areas of existing research that provide the foundation for the study.

- Transparent Methodology – Researchers must explicate links between data and core constructs, and researchers must demonstrate adherence to key grounded theory concepts.

- Data Sources – Interviews are not the only source of valid data. Robust grounded theory employs multiple data sources from various sources to aid in understanding of the phenomena under study.

- Data Presentation – Data is abstracted and presented to represent theoretical categories achieved through constant comparison. The data is then displayed

at a conceptual level. The complex process of data analysis should be

explicated.

- Emergent Theory – The theory emerges from the data based on how the

  participants make sense of their experienced reality. To provide new

  perspectives about that which is under study is the ultimate outcome of

  grounded theory.

- Systemic / Interpretive Process – Grounded theory integrates a systematic

  approach of both creativity on the part of the researcher and data analysis (i.e.,

  from open coding to theoretical codes). Grounded theory pushes the

  researcher beyond simple labeling of codes, or a mere analysis of codes, and

  then subsequent presentation of data, and into the realm of what is then best

  described by Weick as disciplined imagination (1993).

- Messiness and Tacitness – Grounded theory cannot be mandated by a preset

  determination of just when saturation is obtained but is then determined by the

  researcher's aims, experience (i.e., often intuitive) and resources. Suddaby

  suggests a middle ground between pragmatic concerns and methodological

  rigor.

- Intimate Knowledge – Researchers must then engage in a process that

  encourages an intimate knowledge of the primary site. The researcher's

  firsthand, onsite experience of the context is considered essential to the

  interpretation of the data and the subsequent emergent theory. (Definition of

  terms adapted from Suddaby, 2006)

Summary

Though a difficult work-group recovery over the sudden and unexpected loss of a work-group member is a natural response, its impact in the workplace is an important topic of study because of the insufficiency of existing research. A work-group recovery over the sudden and unexpected loss of a work-group member is often uncomfortable, unfamiliar and disquieting for survivors who must process their loss, as well as for employees who witness it among their coworkers. Too often in our society, the challenges that a work-group faces over the sudden and unexpected loss of a work-group member and its impact is a subject that exists in silence. While silence sometimes operates as a protective factor for both survivors and observers, that same silence also thwarts the meaningful communication that is critical to a work-group's recovery. Understanding how sudden and unexpected work-group loss intersects with and impacts the workplace will aid in facilitating critical communication between employers and employees. Toward that end, this study aims to expand the discussion and to increase the awareness and understanding of effective models for addressing work-group recovery in the workplace.

Chapter 4

Research Findings

Introduction

The major research question is as follows: How do work-groups manage the sudden and unexpected loss of a work-group member?

In depth interviews with six disparate groups, that have each recently experienced a sudden and unexpected loss of one of its work-group members, occurred during the final two weeks of 2014. The following are the field research findings.

Theme Development from Individual Groups

Case #1: Terry's University Work-Group name of work-group member lost – "John".

Group Background and Interview Summary – "John"

The member who was lost to this work-group was a man named John. John had worked at the university for 15 to 16 years and was in his late 50s. He suddenly and unexpectedly passed away from pancreatic cancer, which is known to debilitate the person very quickly.

John had a tremendous and relevant amount of job knowledge, and he was very highly respected within the work-group; therefore he left quite a void once he passed away. The interim supervisor, Ron, who attempted to replace John, was not respected among the work-group members. In addition, John was a key member of the workers' union, and he was seen as the quintessential "one of the guys". By all accounts, John had a way of truly embracing the challenges in front of the work-group, moreover he enjoyed seeing the work-group perform the task as a true team.

Some of the work-group's quotes accurately described John's prowess revolving around his work at the university. Some insightful and telling quotes were, "John knew this place." "John kept people on track." "John just kept people 'on task.'" "John was very versatile." "John had a very high internal 'bull$hit' detector." "The group lost their voice." "John was a great translator." "John was like a Swiss Army knife…he could do everything…" "John would stop and talk to you…see how your day was going."

John had been very involved on campus. He was a President of a Facilities Services Union, which helped the others gain exposure to their rights and their plights, so he was held in very high regard. John had a very good mix of leadership, and people would accept whatever John was proposing.

1st Order Concept	Case #1 - "John"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Respect / admiration from work-group towards member	*John is highly admired & respected within the work-group*	a) *"John knew this place."* b) *"John had a very high internal BS detector."* c) *"Some significant job knowledge fell through the cracks now."*

Figure 1. (#1) Respect and Admiration from Work-Group – "John"

John is very highly regarded by his work-group. He functions as the real "go to" person within this work-group. His job knowledge was considered very practical and necessary.

1st Order Concept	Case #1 - "John"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Role within the work-group that the missing member played	*Teamworker (a.k.a."Glue Guy")*	a) *"John just enjoyed seeing everybody engaged…getting' along as a team…"* b) *"John kept people on track."* c) *"John kept people on task."*

Figure 2. (#2) Which Type of Team Role Did the Missing Person Fill? – "John"

John was definitely a "Teamworker". John was cooperative, perceptive, and diplomatic. He averted friction and built and listened. John mediated issues within the

work-group and facilitated team functions, and especially John was sensitive and socially oriented. With his very strong ability to respond to situations and to people, he promoted team spirit.

John was the oil between the cogs that kept the machine (the work-group) running smoothly. John was also a very good diplomat and a good listener. The work-group shared with this researcher that John was talented at smoothing over conflicts and helping parties understand one another without becoming confrontational. All of the benefits of John seemed to go unappreciated and unnoticed until he was absent, and then the work-group began to argue, and small but important goals ceased to happen.

1st Order Concept	Case #1 - "John"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
The size of the void that has been left / the value of the member that was lost	The value of the missing member is tremendous; the void is large	a) "John was very versatile." b) "The group lost their voice." c) "John was like a Swiss Army knife...he could do everything..."

Figure 3. (#3) How Does the Work-Group At Least Attempt to Recover? – "John"

The work-group is only now re-looking at just what the work-group needs to accomplish and to seeing just how the work-group functions. The work-group is now in the midst of finding new ways to operate and how to function.

Once John passed away, work became more disconnected. Discontent grew once John was gone.

The work-group is only now in the midst of reinventing itself. John's 1.00 FTE (a full-time equivalent) became a 2.00 FTE. As a result, John's single job now had to be performed by two people.

One of the interviewees accurately summed up the formidable challenge, "Some significant job knowledge fell through the cracks now."

Once John had passed away (and due to his weak replacement), the remaining work-group members felt as though they could "now get away with things". John's replacement, Ron, was treated almost as an unruly classroom would treat a substitute teacher.

Ron attempted to replace John, but the work-group summarily rejected him. Ron was only "one of the guys". "How could he possibly think that he could boss us around?" was the thought. In contrast and what is highly interesting, is that the term "one of the guys" is used in a very positive light to describe John's leadership style, but is used in a very derogatory fashion while describing Ron's leadership style. Ron subsequently becomes frustrated enough with the situation that he submitted, and was approved for, an early retirement. In a sense, the work-group refuses to accept that John is truly gone and will never return to the group.

1st Order Concept	Case #1 - "John"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
The resonance of the person that has been lost	*John had a very high resonance with his work-group*	a) *"John was just one of the guys."* b) *"We all went to the wall for John."* c) *"John seemed to know us."*

Figure 4. (#4) How Did the Resonance of the Missing Member Affect the Work-Group? – "John"

John really had a way around his work-group of setting them at ease in order for them to see just where their contributions could be toward the betterment of the work-group. John acted as though he had known each of them for a long time.

1st Order Concept	Case #1 - "John"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Tuckman Stage resolution	*Work-group refuses to move to mourning stage*	a) *"I just keep thinkin' that he's somehow gonna come back."* b) *"It's not workin' right now…we just gotta keep pluggin' away…"* c) *"John's gone…it's hard to think that way…like it didn't really happen…"*

Figure 5. (#5) How Did the Work-Group Move through Tuckman's Stages? – "John"

The work-group simply does not believe that John's loss is really happening to them: that somehow John is still around to do the job. As a result, the work-group completely refuses to enter the mourning phase (a.k.a. the adjourning phase). The work-group needs to enter the mourning phase, come to some closure as a work-group, and develop another work-group, e.g., a repaired work-group so that the job functions can return to a normal fashion and job productivity summarily will improve.

The work-group still clings to the idea that it is still a high-performing work-group. The work-group is united in its denial of the situation; consequently, they are still sticking together as a work-group.

The work-group agrees that it needs to "get on the stick" and quickly appreciate and recognize just what John meant to the work-group. Only then, can the work-group come to closure and then slowly go about the task of replacing John. The Ron experiment as supervisor was flawed from the beginning because of the loyalty to John.

1st Order Concept	Case #1 - "John"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Loyalty of the work-group to the lost member	*Work-group was almost "too loyal" to John (affects Ron)*	a) *"With Ron, now we could get away with all sorts of things…"* b) *"Ron just didn't have that 'presence' that John had."* c) *"Ron's just one of the guys…How could he possibly think that he could boss us around?"*

Figure 6. (#6) How Did the Loyalty Toward the Missing Member Affect the Work-Group? – "John"

John had so much presence that he proves very difficult to replace. Ron doesn't

really stand much of a chance in replacing John. John is definitely a hard act to follow.

1st Order Concept	Case #1 - "John"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Manner of the loss	*Sudden death saddens & incapacitates work-group*	a) *"He just seemed so young for something like that to happen to him...it's still a shock to the system...."* b) *"I'd be lying if I told you that I was over it…I think about him every single day…"* c) *"I try to think of just how he would handle it, but I really just wanna go ask him…I am NOT adjusting to this at all…"*

Figure 7. (#7) How Did the Manner of the Loss Affect the Work-Group? – "John"

John was so well loved, that his sudden passing truly takes the work-group by

surprise. The loss proved out to be a technical loss as well as a resonant loss. Due to the

double-edged nature of this loss, the work-group rebels against the loss and refuses to

accept it.

1st Order Concept	Case #1 - "John"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
EI of the lost member	*EI with John was high*	a) *"John was a great translator."* b) *"John would stop and talk to you…see how your day was going…"* c) *"He just had a way about him."*

Figure 8. (#8) How Did the Emotional Intelligence (EI) of the Missing Member Affect the Work-Group? – "John"

John seemed to really love his work-group. He kept in strong touch with his

work-group members throughout the work day.

1st Order Concept	Case #1 - "John"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Mgmt's handling of the situation	*Mgmt didn't really deal with the loss*	a) *"I was told that the grief needs 'to be worked out at home'."* b) *"We filled the vacant position…the work's moving through the pipeline as it should."* c) *"To be honest, it really pissed me off the way that they handled the whole thing."*

Figure 9. (#9) How Did Management Manage the Transition from the Sudden and Unexpected Nature of the Loss? – "John"

The workplace truly did not deal with the loss of John in a direct manner. The employees who regularly worked with John were expected by management to "leave their grief at the factory gate" and get on with their work as if nothing had happened. Management can also be considered guilty of some elements of conflation; management somehow assumes that John and Ron are a single entity or a single identity (per the job description). This fusion of two distinct and separate personalities tended thereby to obscure the analysis of the needed processing of the many and varied relationships that very much needed to be emphasized by the work-group.

William Bridges speaks of a "neutral zone" (Bridges, 2009, pp. 4–5) found within transitions, where work-groups tend to sometimes get "stuck". Workers encounter the following dangers in the neutral zone: people become overloaded, turnover becomes more prevalent, important tasks go undone, and mixed signals are high, as well as high confusion. Management is encouraged within the "neutral zone" to assist by developing temporary work roles for the group and providing training on problem solving, teamwork, etc.

The organization could have done a much better job in clearly understanding and identifying just how John's roles and, more importantly, the loss of same would affect the work-group. The management of the organization also could have done a much better job in asking the employees which problems they had with the transition and simply speaking with them about the transition.

One of Bridges' "don'ts of managing transitions" is to turn change over to an individual contributor and ask them to develop the entire plan; yet that "don't" was precisely the plan by "dumping" everything on Ron.

In better considering endings, management needs to focus on just how to allow employees to embrace the change, eliminate their fears, and work with employees to develop a new identity and sense of purpose in it. In encouraging endings, management is asked to identify the ripple effects of change, notice intangible losses, and identify who has to let go of what. The interviews did not reveal management as having addressed any of these issues.

1st Order Concept	Case #1 - "John"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
End result for Work-Group	Work-group stuck; needs to re-boot	a) "We just need to unpack everything, and see just what it is that we've got here." b) "We need a 're-do'." c) "Maybe there's a chance that he'll come back? (sarcastically).

Figure 10. (#10) Learnings and Take-Aways (aka "A-Ha Moments") – "John"

This researcher would classify this work-group as a "Frankenstein Group". In this researcher's opinion, this work-group does not see itself as dead. This mantra seemed to be the work-group's thought on the subject. The skill set and unique personality of the suddenly lost member is simply too unique to overcome or replace easily.

The "next man up" philosophy, found in other interviews, is simply not feasible in this situation. The "next man up" philosophy simply cannot work in this particular case.

The work-group needs a complete re-boot. The work-group needs entirely to rethink the entire job description. In this particular case, the missing member's one job subsequently becomes two jobs.

The work-group was united in their lack of acceptance of Ron, and remains fiercely loyal to the memories of John, so, subsequently, will not accept new leadership. This futile loyalty was detrimental to the work-group.

1st Order Concepts	Case #1 - "John"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Respect / admiration from work-group towards member	*John is highly admired & respected within the work-group*	a) *"John knew this place."* b) *"John had a very high internal BS detector."* c) *"Some significant job knowledge fell through the cracks now."*
Role within the work-group that the missing member played	*Teamworker (a.k.a."Glue Guy")*	a) *"John just enjoyed seeing everybody engaged…getting' along as a team…"* b) *"John kept people on track."* c) *"John kept people on task."*
The size of the void that has been left / the value of the member that was lost	*The value of the missing member is tremendous; the void is large*	a) *"John was very versatile."* b) *"The group lost their voice."* c) *"John was like a Swiss Army knife…he could do everything…"*
The resonance of the person that has been lost	*John had a very high resonance with his work-group*	a) *"John was just one of the guys."* b) *"We all went to the wall for John."* c) *"John seemed to know us."*
Tuckman Stage resolution	*Work-group refuses to move to mourning stage*	a) *"I just keep thinkin' that he's somehow gonna come back."* b) *"It's not workin' right now…we just gotta keep pluggin' away…"* c) *"John's gone…it's hard to think that way…like it didn't really happen…"*
Loyalty of the work-group to the lost member	*Work-group was almost "too loyal" to John (affects Ron)*	a) *"With Ron, now we could get away with all sorts of things…"* b) *"Ron just didn't have that 'presence' that John had."* c) *"Ron's just one of the guys…How could he possibly think that he could boss us around?"*
Manner of the loss	*Sudden death saddens & incapacitates work-group*	a) *"He just seemed so young for something like that to happen to him...it's still a shock to the system…"* b) *"I'd be lying if I told you that I was over it…I think about him every single day…"* c) *"I try to think of just how he would handle it, but I really just wanna go ask him…I am NOT adjusting to this at all"*
EI of the lost member	*EI with John was high*	a) *"John was a great translator."* b) *"John would stop and talk to you…see how your day was going…"* c) *"He just had a way about him."*
Mgmt's handling of the situation	*Mgmt didn't really deal with the loss*	a) *"I was told that the grief needs 'to be worked out at home'."* b) *"We filled the vacant position…the work's moving through the pipeline as it should."* c) *"To be honest, it really pissed me off the way that they handled the whole thing."*
End result for Work-Group	*Work-group stuck; needs to re-boot*	a) *"We just need to unpack everything, and see just what it is that we've got here."* b) *"We need a 're-do'."* c) *"Maybe there's a chance that he'll come back? (sarcastically).*

Figure 11. Summary for "John"

Case #2: Bert's Work-Group name of work-group member lost: "Buddy"

Group Background and Interview Summary – "Buddy"

Buddy was a work member who had helped to organize a company softball team. He was the type of guy who was highly unique. For example, he regaled his work softball team with jokes and stories of his time in the United States Navy. By all accounts, Buddy had led, and was continuing to lead a very colorful life, which had entailed, in his apparently sordid past, being deported from the United Kingdom. He was a fan of the drink, and when he was inebriated with his work softball teammates, he would slip into his old Navy speech patterns and begin calling everyone "Buddy".

He had helped to organize the work softball team for 10-plus years. He was the type of guy who would call softball teammates personally to make certain that they would be in attendance at the team practice or the team's game. He also was the one to organize the group's social activities.

He seemed to be very much loved and admired by the group. It could be surmised that, in a way, Buddy was the heart-and-soul of the team, perhaps even the team's mascot. Buddy dripped charisma, according to two of his former teammates.

Buddy tragically passed away in a car accident in the middle of the softball season. Some within the work-group wondered if his penchant for living in the fast lane may have contributed to his tragic ending.

The palpable loss from the work-group is found within the following solid quotes: "He took all of the fun out of it for us when he passed away so suddenly like that." "The fun was gone." "Buddy was just so unique…he was truly one of a kind". "He was always good for a joke." "Buddy had seen a lot, so he had a ton of stories!"

1st Order Concept	Case #2 - "Buddy"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Respect / admiration from work-group towards member	*Buddy is highly admired & respected within the work-group*	a) *"Buddy was just so unique…he was truly one of a kind…"* b) *"Buddy had seen a lot, so he had a ton of stories…"* c) *"We all loved Buddy."*

Figure 12. (#1) Respect and Admiration from Work-Group – "Buddy"

Buddy was truly admired and respected within his work-group. His combination

of uniqueness and straight forwardness was a winning combination for him among his

teammates. The admiration and respect was the currency that he used to propel the

success of the team, applying it where he saw fit.

1st Order Concept	Case #2 - "Buddy"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Role within the work-group that the missing member played	*Teamworker (a.k.a."Glue Guy")*	a) *"He always made sure that I was at the game."* b) *"Oh! I didn't say that he was the leader! Ryan is more of our leader on this team. You can even say Mike. No, Buddy was more of the glue that held everything together. He was 'the glue guy'."* c) *"Buddy was just the one that held everything together for the entire group."*

Figure 13. (#2) Which Type of Team Role Did the Missing Person Fill? – "Buddy"

Buddy was definitely a "Teamworker". Buddy was the oil between the cogs that

keeps the machine running smoothly. Buddy was a good listener and a solid diplomat,

very talented at smoothing over the conflicts and assisting the parties to more solidly

comprehend one another, so that they prevented becoming confrontational with one

another.

1st Order Concept	Case #2 - "Buddy"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
The size of the void that has been left / the value of the member that was lost	The value of the missing member is tremendous; the void is large; one can argue 'irreplaceable'	a) "He took all of the fun out of it for us when he passed away so suddenly like that." b) "Buddy held it all together for us." c) "He brings us our identity."

Figure 14. (#3) How Does the Work-Group at Least Attempt to Recover? – "Buddy"

The team forfeits a number of games due to a lack of a number of players by the end of the season. The team has no intention of continuing next season. Management is not supportive, as it does not see this as task-related to the organization's work needs. The softball team is seen by management as superfluous to the organization. Two of the members of the softball team have subsequently left the employment of the organization.

1st Order Concept	Case #2 - "Buddy"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
The resonance of the person that has been lost	Buddy had a very high resonance with his work-group	a) "I'm never going to forget him. How exactly do we replace him?" b) "The fun was gone." c) "Buddy loved hangin' around with us."

Figure 15. (#4) How Did the Resonance of the Missing Member Affect the Work-Group? – "Buddy"

Buddy's resonance was so strong that the group could not see functioning without him. The resonance was so unique, that it became difficult to replace within the work-group. The unseen aspect of "fun" that Buddy had brought to the group took on an inverse aspect once he had passed.

1st Order Concept	Case #2 - "Buddy"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Tuckman Stage resolution	*Work-group subsequently implodes on loss*	a) *"I'm done…I'm thinkin' I'm done…"* b) *Everyone had the thought, 'What are we gonna do now?'"* c) *"I don't think that I'm gonna work here for long."*

Figure 16. (#5) How Did the Work-Group Move through Tuckman's Stages? – "Buddy"

What may happen, in these instances, is that, with the loss of "the glue guy", the work-group's structure immediately becomes almost compromised and untenable, to the point where the work-group moves immediately to Tuckman and Jensen's more recent 5th stage (adjourning / transforming / mourning). This would make complete sense that, if "the glue guy" is suddenly and unexpectedly removed from the work-group, the work-group would almost immediately implode.

Buddy was simply so valuable as "the oil" of the work-group, that the sudden absence of that oil just grinds the machine's gears down to non-functioning nubs.

1st Order Concept	Case #2 - "Buddy"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Loyalty of the work-group to the lost member	*Work-group was very loyal to Buddy*	a) *"It was almost like we did it all for him."* b) *"He's the only reason that I'm on the team in the first place..."* c) *"I would just really go to the wall for him…literally…I'm an outfielder…"*

Figure 17. (#6) How Did the Loyalty Toward the Missing Member Affect the Work-Group? – "Buddy"

The resonance of Buddy with the team brought forth the loyalty that the team subsequently had for him. That loyalty, by definition, is a difficult aspect to replace. That loyalty drove the team, and once Buddy was gone, there remained the question of who to be loyal to now. Perhaps, by disbanding the team, the work-group remained loyal to the memory of Buddy.

1st Order Concept	Case #2 - "Buddy"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Manner of the loss	*Sudden death saddens & incapacitates work-group*	a) *"I feel like he's gonna walk right through that door again…"* b) *"The fun was taken out of the game for us."* c) *"Where are we gonna find another one like him? We're not moving at all now."*

Figure 18. (#7) How Did the Manner of the Loss Affect the Work-Group? – "Buddy"

Due to the unanswered questions revolving around Buddy's death, the work-group is put at unease. They are seeking, but not receiving, closure on Buddy. This unsettling issue rattles the work-group. There is a strong sense of not wanting to let him go.

1st Order Concept	Case #2 - "Buddy"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
EI of the lost member	*EI with Buddy was high*	a) *"He was always good for a joke."* b) *"If you happened to strike out, he would always come talk to you…always…"* c) *"He's been a friend of mine for a very long time."*

Figure 19. (#8) How Did the Emotional Intelligence (EI) of the Missing Member Affect the Work-Group? – "Buddy"

Buddy's ability to really see what the team needed at the right time (like the strike-out example) only enhanced the team and its functioning. His personal connections with everyone also enhanced attendance at the practices, games, and social events. The multiple tasks that Buddy took on for the sake of the team leads to a highly-functioning group.

1st Order Concept	Case #2 - "Buddy"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Mgmt's handling of the situation	*Mgmt refused to recognize the loss*	a) *"They told me, 'Hey, it's only a softball team'."* b) *"They (management) just don't get it."* c) *"The guy said, 'Buddy took some risks.'" (employee perturbed by management speaking of his teammate in that way)*

Figure 20. (#9) How Did the Management Manage the Transition from the Sudden and Unexpected Nature of the Loss? "Buddy"

In this particular case, the individual who was lost may have made life choices that potentially could have resulted in his death. The work-group is searching for resolution to the event, but the employer is not assisting with the endeavor because the group is "only a softball team". This is very much a case of disenfranchised grief, or grief that is not readily acknowledged by society: a microcosm of which is the employer in this instance.

There is an observation from this researcher that if management readily had accepted the grieving situation as legitimate, the work-group would have had the proper emotional support that would have been necessary to keep the group together as a functioning unit. Without that proper employer intervention, that particularly difficult transition unwittingly placed the work-group on a tenuous emotional ground, to where the group could not be reasonably expected to recover. A company softball team could not be reasonably expected to be equipped enough to handle such a sudden and unexpected transition. While in this transitional period, management was encouraged to prevent rationalizing the fact that they are not communicating, yet the lack of communication is precisely what transpired.

1st Order Concept	Case #2 - "Buddy"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
End result for Work-Group	*Work-group becomes non-functioning*	a) *"There's really no point anymore."* b) *"Nobody on the team laughed anymore."* c) *"It's almost way too painful now."*

Figure 21. (#10) Learnings and Take-Aways (aka "A-Ha Moments") – "Buddy"

A truly "a-ha moment" transpires for this researcher during the following exchange with the work-group. This researcher erred, when addressing the group, by

referring to "Buddy" as the leader of the group. One of the interviewees sharply rebuked me.

Oh! I didn't say that he was the leader! Ryan is more of our leader on this team. You can even say Mike. No, 'Buddy' was more of the glue that held everything together. He was the 'glue guy'.

Everyone in the group nodded their approval of the comments that were just mentioned. That simple comment really made this researcher focus on just what a leader truly is and what a "glue guy" truly is.

This interviewer was corrected initially by the work-group member, and then by the work-group in total, when the interviewer referred to Buddy as "the leader". The return comments stated that others within the group were more of "the typical leaders of the group". One concurred when he mentioned, "Buddy was just the one that held everything together for the entire group." This was truly insightful and was a true "a-ha" moment for this interviewer.

The work-group collapses upon itself quickly upon the sudden and unexpected loss of the very valuable member. This researcher has determined that the "Glue Guy", in some instances, may be one of the quietest guys in the room. He may be the least one that you would expect out of the entire group. He may be the class clown, or the group's story-teller. This proved to be a truly revealing comment, a real learning moment for this researcher.

What becomes painfully evident to this researcher is that the work-group now cannot function as a complete, working unit. It is almost like a high-performance engine

has now been drained of all of its oil. The work-group's functionality has now been compromised.

This group had been a highly functioning team and had been a highly functioning work-group. The loss of the "glue guy" completely and totally implodes the work-group, and the enthusiasm for the work seems to quickly leave the work-group.

One of the interviewees remarked that "The fun was taken out of it for us", which makes a significantly relevant point.

"He held it all together for us" another interviewee added.

When an interviewee added "He brings us our identity" it seemed significant that the present tense was being used when referring to Buddy in this instance.

N.B. A personal note: Everyone in the work-group uses the word "glue" to describe Buddy.

1st Order Concepts	Case #2 - "Buddy"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Respect / admiration from work-group towards member	Buddy is highly admired & respected within the work-group	a) "Buddy was just so unique…he was truly one of a kind…" b) "Buddy had seen a lot, so he had a ton of stories…" c) "We all loved Buddy."
Role within the work-group that the missing member played	Teamworker (a.k.a."Glue Guy")	a) "He always made sure that I was at the game." b) "Oh! I didn't say that he was the leader! Ryan is more of our leader on this team. You can even say Mike. No, Buddy was more of the glue that held everything together. He was 'the glue guy'." c) "Buddy was just the one that held everything together for the entire group."
The size of the void that has been left / the value of the member that was lost	The value of the missing member is tremendous; the void is large; one can argue 'irreplaceable'	a) "He took all of the fun out of it for us when he passed away so suddenly like that." b) "Buddy held it all together for us." c) "He brings us our identity."
The resonance of the person that has been lost	Buddy had a very high resonance with his work-group	a) "I'm never going to forget him. How exactly do we replace him?" b) "The fun was gone." c) "Buddy loved hangin' around with us."
Tuckman Stage resolution	Work-group subsequently	a) "I'm done…I'm thinkin' I'm done…" b) Everyone had the thought, 'What are we gonna

	implodes on loss	do now?'" c) "I don't think that I'm gonna work here for long."
Loyalty of the work-group to the lost member	*Work-group was very loyal to Buddy*	a) "It was almost like we did it all for him." b) "He's the only reason that I'm on the team in the first place..." c) "I would just really go to the wall for him...literally...I'm an outfielder..."
Manner of the loss	*Sudden death saddens & incapacitates work-group*	a) "I feel like he's gonna walk right through that door again..." b) "The fun was taken out of the game for us." c) "Where are we gonna find another one like him? We're not moving at all now."
EI of the lost member	*EI with Buddy was high*	a) "He was always good for a joke." b) "If you happened to strike out, he would always come talk to you...always..." c) "He's been a friend of mine for a very long time."
Mgmt's handling of the situation	*Mgmt refused to recognize the loss*	a) "They told me, 'Hey, it's only a softball team'." b) "They (management) just don't get it." c) "The guy said, 'Buddy took some risks.'" (employee perturbed by management speaking of his teammate in that way)
End result for Work-Group	*Work-group becomes non-functioning*	a) "There's really no point anymore." b) "Nobody on the team laughed anymore." c) "It's almost way too painful now."

Figure 22. Summary for "Buddy"

Case #3: Scott's Work-Group name of work-group member lost: "Susan"

Group Background and Interview Summary – "Susan"

This loss takes place with the sudden loss of a middle-aged female, named Susan, who was very disruptive towards the group as a whole. Susan was hired off of the organization's lay-off list, as per hiring policies for their particular department.

Susan does not last long within the work-group (one year), before she suddenly submits her two weeks' notice of leaving the department to move to another department within the agency. Susan made a huge negative impression upon her peers. Essentially, the work-group spits her out.

Susan is quite a classic "character". She portrays the role of a drama queen, or diva, as exemplified by the conversations that are ensuing.

Particularly, in one team member's initial interactions with Susan, Susan's first words out of her mouth to this person was, "I can't wait to get out of here...this place is a complete and total waste of my time…"

By all accounts within the work-group, Susan did not want to be a member of this group right from the beginning.

The work-group essentially, and eventually, rejects her, but only after the work-group becomes dysfunctional by her antics during work hours. Examples given were that time was wasted by the work-group attempting to appease her. Also, others state that energy is wasted by the work-group attempting to placate her whims.

From the interviewer pressing on from this comment, it was shared that the supervisor had exhausted herself, attempting to get it to work with Susan, but there was "no light at the end of the tunnel with Susan", per her supervisor. This researcher concluded that Susan was very much "a guilt-thrower", and she became very annoyed at you if you were not "a guilt-catcher". This researcher had relayed the story of "the glue guy" (only in general terms) to this work-group, and the return comment was, "Susan was like 'negative glue' to this group." Seemed as if Susan did need support from the work-group itself, but she was not willing to give it herself, i.e. no reciprocity from Susan.

Although the work-group did lose some skill set components with her leaving, the work-group was now ecstatic to now form a team without her and to figure out just how to get about moving forward again. This researcher was a little disappointed to hear just how someone could be so detrimental towards the work-group, but they did look so happy to begin the journey toward moving on without her.

Susan seemed to deeply resent the people who were, by their very nature, calm personalities. She seemed frustrated that her emotional outbursts did not sway the other person. The people who really "drew their line in the sand" with her, and would not budge for her, would cause her to have a tremendous amount of frustration. Susan would continue bad-mouthing her old work-group, even after she determined that she would need to move on to elsewhere within the organization.

The work-group used to have these weekly meetings, but Susan's very presence in those meetings soon became problematic. The weekly meetings soon became impossible to function smoothly with Susan in the meeting room. The Section Chief would make a comment during the meeting, to the effect of: "Tom over here did a great job on this project!" Susan (after the meeting was over, in the Section Chief's office): Susan asked, "Why did you point out the great things that Tom has done, but you did not single me out?"

Susan would have so many of these long-lasting break-out sessions after the meeting had ended (meeting individually with each person all on that very same day) that the weekly meetings were summarily and subsequently abandoned!!!

The work-group uses the word "bottleneck" frequently when speaking about Susan. The work-group told stories of just how many work-arounds were needed with Susan in the picture, even on a daily basis. The work-group would circumvent around Susan strictly to avoid Susan and her attitude.

1st Order Concept	Case #3 - "Susan"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Respect / **admiration**	*Susan is not respected*	a) *"The respect for Susan was low because she had problems that followed her there. She had issues of 'perceived*

from work-group towards member	within the work-group at all	disrespect." b) "No light at the end of the tunnel with Susan." c) "She just drove everyone crazy."

Figure 23. (#1) Respect and Admiration from Work-Group – "Susan"

The work-group truly ran away from Susan. One interviewee had really struggled

with just why that was. His perception that there was this "perceived disrespect" that had

followed her from her previous position was truly insightful to this researcher.

(#2) Which Type of Team Role Did the Missing Person Fill? – "Susan"

1st Order Concept	Case #3 - "Susan"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Role within the work-group that the missing member played	*(A refusal by the member to take on a role within the work-group)*	a) "Susan was like 'negative glue' to this group." b) "She was avoided in the workflow (on additional special projects). She was intentionally avoided…definitely…" c) "It was way more painful for the supervisor to supervise her…it was far better to merely do it yourself…"

Figure 24. (#2) Which Type of Team Role Did the Missing Person Fill? – "Susan"

On analyzing input from the work-group, this researcher concluded that Susan's

unwillingness to accept the work-group, by definition, would mean that she was not

willing to accept a role within that work-group. Her supervisor worked with her to find a

solid role within that work-group. Due to Susan's refusal to accept any of these roles, the

work-group is subsequently hamstrung. Upon her leaving the work-group, there

unsurprisingly would be rejoicing within the work-group because the work of the work-

group can now commence.

1st Order Concept	Case #3 - "Susan"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
The size of the void that has been left / the value of the member that was lost	Void is minimal; only task is to divvy up her work	a) "The days that she was absent…everyone was in a much better mood…" b) "We were all very happy to just figure out what she was working on." c) "There was a lot of compassion for her supervisor…'I have dealt with that (expletive)'."

Figure 25. (#3) How Does the Work-Group at Least Attempt to Recover? – "Susan"

It is noteworthy that stress within the work-group actually decreased once Susan left the group. Anxiety went down.

This is a direct quote from Susan's immediate supervisor: "On the day after Susan left, there were rainbows and unicorns prancing around my cubicle!!!" The fact that this quote is directly from her immediate supervisor is very telling.

The weekly meetings were reinstated soon after Susan left the work-group. In essence, two distinct work-groups are operating concurrently. In Information Technology jargon, the two work-groups are "running parallel", or running side-by-side.

1st Order Concept	Case #3 - "Susan"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
The resonance of the person that has been lost	Susan had zero resonance with her work-group whatsoever	a) "You wouldn't even walk on eggshells with her…you would try your best to jump clear over those eggshells…" b) "You were really afraid to even walk by her desk during the course of the day." c) "On the day after Susan left, there were rainbows and unicorns prancing around my cubicle!!!"

Figure 26. (#4) How Did the Resonance of the Missing Member Affect the Work-Group? – "Susan"

It was funny for this researcher to see the interviewees' eyes light up when they spoke of Susan. It appeared that everyone was very anxious to give his or her story, hoping to top the other one's story. The amount of colorful metaphors were particularly insightful (prancing unicorns; rainbows; jumping over eggshells; fear of walking be her desk). The colorful metaphors indicated to this researcher that many had tried, but many

had failed, in reaching out to Susan, so now the work-group had this "shared pain" that they could each identify with.

1st Order Concept	Case #3 - "Susan"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Tuckman Stage resolution	*Forming never takes place*	a) *"You could just never get comfortable with Susan."* b) *"There were no niceties." (coming from her)* c) *"It was sort of an unwritten opinion…and each opinion was consistent…that she was just a (expletive)."*

Figure 27. (#5) How Did the Work-Group Move through Tuckman's Stages? – "Susan"

It appeared that the work-group had been working on this problem of Susan subconsciously for a while: attempting to solve it.

As a result, the work-group reached a stalemate and could not leave the initial stage of forming.

In Tuckman's initial stage of team building, the forming of the team takes place. There is intended to be behavior that is driven by a desire to be accepted by the others. This group could not get impetus in this stage.

The initial stage means members avoid controversy and conflict, which this cannot then transpire.

Serious issues and feelings are avoided, which this cannot then effectuate.

This is intended to be a comfortable stage to be in, which this cannot then actualize. The work-group agrees on goals. The team members are usually on their best behavior. They make new friends. The group sees how others respond to pressure.

It is as if the work-group, knowing that progress is mandatory, somehow evaluates that this member needs to be removed in order to progress or somehow worked around if the removal proves to be impossible.

1st Order Concept	Case #3 - "Susan"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Loyalty of the work-group to the lost member	*NO loyalty toward Susan from work-group*	a) *"We were not gonna lose our jobs over her."* b) *"There was a reason that her previous group didn't get along with her."* c) *"Oh! I've got a better story for you on just what I had to put up with!" (competitive stories made their rounds…people were bonded in spite of her…)*

Figure 28. (#6) How Did the Loyalty Toward the Missing Member Affect the Work-Group? – "Susan"

There was no loyalty displayed by the work-group toward Susan. The fact that competitive stories (about just how bad Susan could be to work with) circulated and made their way around the office proved to be insightful for this researcher. Members went out of their way to distance themselves from Susan.

1st Order Concept	Case #3 - "Susan"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Manner of the loss	*Work-group rejoices in Susan's "moving on"*	a) *"There was no guilt over the loss."* b) *"How could you be sad about losing a bottleneck?"* c) *"It was almost like we had a party once she left."*

Figure 29. (#7) How Did the Manner of the Loss Affect the Work-Group? – "Susan"

The joy that the work-group members felt had some comic value to the work-group. There was no middle ground as to the decision of the group. There was no polarization. Susan failed to establish any ties to anyone who may have been able to assist her when she needed it.

1st Order Concept	Case #3 - "Susan"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
EI of the lost member	EI was nonexistent with Susan	a) "She had complained to upper management that too many people were coming by her cubicle to say 'hello'." (people were concerned because Susan had shown up for work with some tubes in her nose…it was genuine concern from everyone…) b) "I can't wait to get out of here…this place is a complete and total waste of my time…(from Susan…relayed from a new employee who stated that was the initial greeting from Susan) c) "Why did you point out the great things that Tom has done, but you did not single me out?" (from Susan…relayed from an employee on Susan's complaint to him)

Figure 30. (#8) How Did the Emotional Intelligence (EI) of the Missing Member Affect the Work-Group? – "Susan"

Susan lacked Emotional Intelligence. From confronting others on compliments that they may have paid to other people to confessing her disdain for her work position as an initial greeting to a new employee, Susan seemed to say the wrong things to the wrong people at the wrong times.

One day, Susan had come into the office wearing tubes in her nose from a recent trip to the physician. It must have been somewhat of a shocking sight because staff approached her with some genuine concern for her well-being. Mild questions from the staff posed to Susan ranged from and included: "Is everything okay?" to "Hello, Susan." This upset Susan enough that she complained to upper management about the fact that far too many people were "concerned for her health".

1st Order Concept	Case #3 - "Susan"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Mgmt's handling of the situation	Mgmt allowed the situation to go on too long	a) "They (management) really let it get outta hand." b) "I really wish that they would have done something about her." c) "It was a union position, so it made it difficult to get rid of her." (from management)

Figure 31. (#9) How Did Management Manage the Transition from the Sudden and Unexpected Nature of the Loss? – "Susan"

This researcher concluded that the organization's management should never have permitted Susan to become the bottleneck that she eventually became. There is an onus and a responsibility on management to see just what is working and what is not working up front. Management should obviously attempt to not allow the organization to become so hamstrung right from the beginning: to emphasize instead "organizational enlightenment" and "workplace well-being".

Interventions to help smooth transitions include communicating individual behavior change, talking to employees and asking just what problems they may have with the change, and holding regular team meetings even before the change. Management allowed Susan to prevent these regular team meetings from even occurring. A classic mistake that management makes is failing to communicate during the transition. Supervisors are in transition themselves, so they do not rely on trickle-down communication, which is precisely what Susan's management team did. Susan's immediate supervisor was asked to develop the entire transitional plan, when contemplating and strategizing workplace communications, knowing also that "the grapevine" already has the news.

1st Order Concept	Case #3 - "Susan"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
End result for Work-Group	Work-group kicks her out of the work-group	a) "She was toxic for the entire group." b) "We really just needed to 'move on' from her." c) "I had to move her out to a different department." (from management)

Figure 32. (#10) Learnings and Take-Aways (aka "A-Ha Moments") – "Susan"

The story of "Susan" a.k.a. ("The Ballad of Susan") is an example of a toxic member actively attempting to sabotage the work-group. The member actively attempts to "co-opt" the work-group.

Toxic member has some disdain for the work-group as a whole; furthermore, the toxic member attempts to "short circuit" the entire work-group. As a result, the work-group will work collectively and collaboratively to avoid that toxic personality, and the work-group will avoid and work-around that toxic personality. A "shadow" work-group will be developed (almost as a life support system…in a way, it's needed)

Monthly meetings were cancelled specifically because of Susan (and then the work-group promptly resumed immediately after she had left).

Values of the toxic member are just so different (there's a real disconnect) for this individual person, that the work-group almost "spits her out" like Jonah's Whale. Susan had been required to be hired from an active lay-off listing initially. She may have had issues previously within the agency.

1st Order Concepts	Case #3 - "Susan"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Respect / admiration from work-group towards member	*Susan is not respected within the work-group at all*	a) *"The respect for Susan was low because she had problems that followed her there. She had issues of 'perceived disrespect'."* b) *"No light at the end of the tunnel with Susan."* c) *"She just drove everyone crazy."*
Role within the work-group that the missing member played	*(A refusal by the member to take on a role within the work-group)*	a) *"Susan was like 'negative glue' to this group."* b) *"She was avoided in the workflow (on additional special projects). She was intentionally avoided…definitely…"* c) *"It was way more painful for the supervisor to supervise her…it was far better to merely do it yourself…"*
The size of the void that has been left / the value of the member that was lost	*Void is minimal; only task is to divvy up her work*	a) *"The days that she was absent…everyone was in a much better mood…"* b) *"We were all very happy to just figure out what she was working on."* c) *"There was a lot of compassion for her supervisor…'I have dealt with that (expletive)'."*
The resonance of the person that has been lost	*Susan had zero resonance with her work-group whatsoever*	a) *"You wouldn't even walk on eggshells with her…you would try your best to jump clear over those eggshells…"* b) *"You were really afraid to even walk by her desk during the course of the day."* c) *"On the day after Susan left, there were rainbows and unicorns prancing around my cubicle!!!"*

Tuckman Stage resolution	Forming never takes place	a) "You could just never get comfortable with Susan." b) "There were no niceties." (coming from her) c) "It was sort of an unwritten opinion…and each opinion was consistent…that she was just a (expletive)."
Loyalty of the work-group to the lost member	*NO loyalty toward Susan from work-group*	a) "We were not gonna lose our jobs over her." b) "There was a reason that her previous group didn't get along with her." c) "Oh! I've got a better story for you on just what I had to put up with!" (competitive stories made their rounds…people were bonded in spite of her…)
Manner of the loss	*Work-group rejoices in Susan's "moving on"*	a) "There was no guilt over the loss." b) "How could you be sad about losing a bottleneck?" c) "It was almost like we had a party once she left."
EI of the lost member	*EI was nonexistent with Susan*	a) "She had complained to upper management that too many people were coming by her cubicle to say 'hello'." (people were concerned because Susan had shown up for work with some tubes in her nose…it was genuine concern from everyone…) b) "I can't wait to get out of here…this place is a complete and total waste of my time…(from Susan…relayed from an employee who stated that was the initial greeting from Susan) c) "Why did you point out the great things that Tom has done, but you did not single me out?" (from Susan…relayed from a new employee on Susan's complaint to him)
Mgmt's handling of the situation	*Mgmt allowed the situation to go on too long*	a) "They (management) really let it get outta hand." b) "I really wish that they would have done something about her." c) "It was a union position, so it made it difficult to get rid of her." (from management)
End result for Work-Group	*Work-group kicks her out of the work-group*	a) "She was toxic for the entire group." b) "We really just needed to 'move on' from her." c) "I had to move her out to a different department." (from management)

Figure 33. Summary for "Susan"

Case #4: Kelly's Work-Group Name of Work-Group Member Lost: "Renee"

Group Background and Interview Summary – "Renee"

Renee was very well-liked and in her upper 40s, but unfortunately succumbed to a quickly-moving cancer. She was described by the group as very much of "a calming influence". This governmental work-group displays some callousness to the event of her death. This callousness that the work-group displays upon her death, is not due to any type of a negative reaction due to Renee's prickly personality. Renee was a very private

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person, however. From the moment that she had left her work station and took her sick

leave, Renee had passed within one week's time. The agency did bring in grief

counselors, but at least initially, management explained the impending change through a

revamped organizational chart.

1st Order Concept	Case #4 - "Renee"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Respect / admiration from work-group towards member	*Renee has respect from the work-group; however not admired*	a) *"She was a Union Steward…she had more respect for that aspect…the respect was more for her handling of the union situation…"* b) *"She was an excellent translator for management."* c) *"People accepted the opinions coming from her mouth, as opposed to management."*

Figure 34. (#1) Respect and Admiration from Work-Group – "Renee"

Renee was a Union Steward, and she was highly respected for her role in that

regard. Renee was respected more for her handling of the union. She was very good at

that role. People accepted the opinions coming from her, as opposed to the management.

An example would be Renee stating, "Okay, did you hear what they just said? That you

need to be at your desk at 9:00am?" The employee would subsequently nod in agreement.

The consequence then to Renee is that few co-workers would come over to her desk on a

strictly personal basis and merely ask her how her day was going.

1st Order Concept	Case #4 - "Renee"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Role within the work-group that the missing member played	*Specialist*	a) *"Because she was a Union Steward, her conversations needed to be personal and private…'Renee, can we go somewhere private to talk?'".* b) *"She was really a stickler for all of the details that were necessary."* c) *"Renee was a real self-starter."*

Figure 35. (#2) Which Type of Team Role Did the Missing Person Fill? – "Renee"

Renee was a specialist. She was single-minded, dedicated, and self-starting.

Renee provided skills and knowledge in rare supply. She subsequently only contributed

on a narrow front. She would dwell on technicalities. Specialists are very passionate

about their learning in their own particular field. If there is anything at all that they do not

know the answer to, specialists will very happily go and find that out. Specialists also

strive to build and to improve upon their expertise. Renee enjoyed imparting knowledge

to others, and was a fountain of knowledge. Specialists bring a high level of skill, ability,

and concentration to their team.

Especially in a highly structured governmental situation, or agency, perhaps there

is merely this "weaving of specialists". Perhaps that may feed into the feeling of "Let's

just get another specialist." Renee's situation may have merely been seen as just a web of

specialists. This sudden loss doesn't significantly alter, or change, the stability of the

structure much at all.

1st Order Concept	Case #4 - "Renee"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
The size of the void that has been left / the value of the member that was lost	Renee has not left much of a void; "next man up" strategy is employed	a) "No special job knowledge was needed or necessary." b) "It was more of, 'who's gonna do that crap job now?'" c) "It was really a 'next man up' strategy."

Figure 36. (#3) How Does the Work-Group at Least Attempt to Recover? – "Renee"

This researcher is calling this model a "next man up" version or work-group

coping strategy.

This method of recovery seems to take place in a very hierarchical in nature / very

structured in nature / very bureaucratic in nature (environment).

This method of recovery almost appears to favor work positions, or job

descriptions, that are not necessarily filled by unique skill sets. Almost as if the skill level

is not unique. The missing position is not unique. The missing skill level is not unique.

Very much management's thought is: "We need to replace this position." A reflexive

group action is that "this may mean more work for the rest of us." Work-group becomes

concerned over just who is going to "pick up the slack". One particularly callous

interviewee, who was not eager to participate in these interviews, mentions that "$hit

happens". One stated, "Life goes on." There is very much a palpable detachment within

this group. Survival is really the name of the game within this work-group. There

definitely appears to be a detachment that is prevalent within the group. Perhaps that

detachment is a survival mechanism?

1st Order Concept	Case #4 - "Renee"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
The resonance of the person that has been lost	Renee was neutral with regards to resonance within her work-group	a) "Her regular work…it was NOT a unique skill set…she was more of a processor…". b) "After she passed away, people kinda moved on…loyalty doesn't really play into it…" c) "I don't know of anyone who went to her funeral."

Figure 37. (#4) How Did the Resonance of the Missing Member Affect the Work-Group?
– "Renee"

Renee, by all accounts, was a worker who gave a decent effort; however, she did

not seem to resonate within her work-group. Upon her passing, no one recalled hearing of

anyone who had attended her funeral. Her role and personality failed to register with her

work-group.

1st Order Concept	Case #4 - "Renee"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Tuckman Stage resolution	"Next Man Up" (considered their performance stage)	a) "This may mean more work for the rest of us, and we're not thrilled about that." b) "Any performance would need to take place within this structure and within this hierarchy." (The governmental hierarchy was strictly established and was inflexible.) c) "Look Jim, none of us have ever seen working here as any type of a 'life's calling'…we are merely attempting to earn a living here…"

Figure 38. (#5) How Did the Work-Group Move through Tuckman's Stages? – "Renee"

From the organization's perspective, being in the performing stage is assumed. From the governmental agency's standpoint, the success in the performing stage is seen as "the machine moving forward", not this delicate inter-weaving of individual members of a work-group. By the government's definition of "performing", this "performance" is already taking place. This "next man up" strategy provides the logs for the fire to continue burning, but this strategy also leads to a tremendous amount of anxiety within the work-group's members, where all they see is more potential work for each individual person.

Within a Tuckman "performing" unit, dissent is allowed and expected as long as it is channeled through means acceptable to the team. Within this governmental unit, dissent is really not tolerated to this degree. This harsh reality is what may possibly lead members of this work-group to become somewhat absorbed only with how each member is affected individually, and not as a work-group.

The "next man up" strategy may then subsequently lead to this "lack of attachment" to the overall organization goals. This "detachment" subsequently filters down to the individual work-group members, who are then lacking the willingness to attach to each other in activities that are not specifically task-related or work-related.

1st Order Concept	Case #4 - "Renee"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Loyalty of the work-group to the lost member	*Loyalty toward Renee was surprisingly absent from work-group*	a) *"Life goes on."* b) *"(expletive) happens!"* c) *"Who's gonna pick up the slack?" (so no loyalty was built up)*

Figure 39. (#6) How Did the Loyalty Toward the Missing Member Affect the Work-Group? – "Renee"

Renee did not generate loyalty from within her work-group. It was difficult for this researcher to truly "tease out" the competing aspects of Renee's personality not

generating loyalty and merely how the work-group may be responding in a negative

manner.

1st Order Concept	Case #4 - "Renee"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Manner of the loss	*"Next Man Up" philosophy neutralizes & protects from loss*	a) *"Nothing is done that is not essential to the work…so there IS no connection with her personal life…"* b) *"It's too bad about what happened to Renee, but we do need to soldier on…"* c) *"We're all mercenaries here anyway."*

Figure 40. (#7) How Did the Manner of the Loss Affect the Work-Group? – "Renee"

Renee's work-group saw the manner of her loss to be inconsequential. It was all about

"soldiering on" for the work-group. As in the loyalty of the work-group mentioned

above, it was difficult for this researcher to truly "tease out" the competing aspects of the

work-group's grief and anxiety over the loss of Renee with this "next man up"

philosophy that the organization employed. It was almost as if the "next man up"

philosophy almost protected the work-group from the loss or neutralized the work-group

from the loss. The "next man up" philosophy could serve the role of insulating the work-

group from truly dealing with the loss on a much more personal scale. The "next man up"

philosophy could potentially serve the work-group as a defense mechanism.

1st Order Concept	Case #4 - "Renee"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
EI of the lost member	*EI was negligible with Renee*	a) *"Renee never really reached out to anyone."* b) *"Renee blended into the wallpaper."* c) *"It was more like, 'hey! There's a friendly face that was present'."*

Figure 41. (#8) How Did the Emotional Intelligence (EI) of the Missing Member Affect the Work-Group? – "Renee"

The Emotional Intelligence of Renee appeared to be negligible. This work-group appeared to keep people "at a distance". If the work-group would keep people "at a distance", that would neutralize the effects of Emotional Intelligence to a certain degree.

1st Order Concept	Case #4 - "Renee"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Mgmt's handling of the situation	"Next Man Up" is a "Boilerplate" solution	a)"Management offered a standard counseling loss of a work member." b)"We need to replace this position."(from management) c)"Renee did a minimal amount of work…any production that she did was a bonus on top of her normal union activities."

Figure 42. (#9) How Did Management Manage the Transition from the Sudden and Unexpected Nature of the Loss? – "Renee"

This researcher wonders if the workplace is helping to develop a new and positive narrative after this significant loss. Or could it be a case to where the workplace is somehow hindering this new and positive narrative or adding to the difficulties?

William Bridges (2009) mentions the differences between change and transition. Change is situational and happens without people transitioning. Change is fast.

Transition is psychological and is a three-phase process, to where people gradually accept the details of the new situation and the changes that come with it. Transition is slow.

This researcher feels that management has approached replacing Renee as merely a "change", and not a "transition", ignoring the slow psychological change that is necessary and vital for the work-group to adequately recover from this sudden and unexpected loss.

Within interventions to help transitions, management is encouraged to talk to employees and ask which problems they may have with the change. They are also encouraged to talk about the transition and let people know that it is human to feel.

One of the "don'ts" of managing transitions is for management to explain the change through a memorandum or a new organizational chart, which management unfortunately did by producing the organizational chart.

Management is advised to consider endings. They are asked to consider what the work-group is letting go of and just how management can get employees to acknowledge the change, eliminate their fear, and develop a new identity and sense of purpose in it. Which strategies and communications are then subsequently needed to get the work-group there?

Management is also encouraged to notice intangible losses and identify the ripple effects of the sudden and unexpected change.

Management needs to avoid the neutral zone as much as possible, unless employees become overloaded, important tasks go undone, turnover becomes a problem, and both confusion and mixed signals are high. Employees tend to become absent more often in the neutral zone, less productive, self-doubting, more resentful and more protective.

1st Order Concept	Case #4 - "Renee"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
End result for Work-Group	Work-group moves forward with "Next Man Up"	a) "She was replaced quickly." b) "We just had to get 'a move on'." c) "She was low enough in the pecking order…low enough on the food chain…that she was easily replaceable…" (from management)

Figure 43. (#10) Learnings and Take-Aways (aka "A-Ha Moments") – "Renee"

Interviewee comments were:

"It's too bad about what happened to Renee, but we do need to 'soldier on'"…

"We need to replace this position."

"This may mean more work for the rest of us, and we're not thrilled about that"…

This researcher assesses that survival is very much what drives these groups, e.g. they do what they need to do in order to survive. Perhaps that is why some people do not enjoy being a part of a bureaucracy; there is a limited creativity involved in these positions.

Functioning as a complete and whole performing unit is assumed by the organization's management. It seems as if the major assumption by management may be: "Chemistry within the work-group will eventually come with time".

It's almost as if management is stating: "Forget the work-group's internal chemistry!!! We've got structure!!! That's all that we need here!!! The uniqueness of the person lost almost does not weigh into just how the work-group responds to the loss. The work-group response is more along the lines of "how do we quickly distribute this work-load?"

The work-group is very concerned about the speed of the transition. The work-group has grown accustomed to change. They have become almost callous about it.

The Fire Department of New York (FDNY) is also a governmental agency that would also happen to have some examples of sudden and unexpected loss. Why would this then be different? Is it because FDNY becomes more along the lines of a family due to the fact that they need to live with one another? Is it because they each rely upon the work-group, quite literally, for their very survival, their lives, their existence? If you would completely trust a fellow firefighter, perhaps that's subsequently not so easy to

replace? Is it the more that you can do skill-wise, the more valuable that you are? Perhaps the complete interdependence between the members of the FDNY work-group completely dwarfs the interdependence that needs to be displayed by your run-of-the-mill bureaucratic office worker? This may sound harsh.

From their own admission…from management's own admission as well…there is no ownership within the agency. Perhaps if it was a small business, and everyone was a minority shareholder, there would be some pride of ownership? Now, it's almost like a "Why should I care?"-type of attitude. No camaraderie is present. The word "mercenary" was used by one of the interviewees. "Nothing is done that is not essential to the work." There also is no company pride that is observable.

This researcher may have failed "to stay in character", and made a disgusted face (or bristled) at the group's seeming callousness at this death within their work-group. I slipped up and accidentally used the word "robotic" when I was referring to my perceived callousness of the situation. I was then 'confronted' by one of the interviewees, who stated, "Look, Jim, none of us have ever seen working here as any type of a 'life's calling', we are just attempting to earn a living here."

What also is fascinating is that, perhaps what corporate work-groups may be privy to, such as Christmas bonuses and Christmas parties are not a part of this work-group. This work-group is not one to go out after work hours are over with. Social niceties are limited to work hours. Everything is about function. Lunch is usually on your own, or at your desk. Lunches are sometimes as brief as a half-hour in length. There seems to be some very real, humanistic aspects of this agency that are somehow missing (I do not want to use the word "robotic" here.). Does this then invariably translate to, and

feed into, this "next man up" philosophy in how this work-group responds to the sudden

and unexpected loss of a group member?

1st Order Concepts	Case #4 - "Renee"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Respect / admiration from work-group towards member	*Renee has respect from the work-group; however not admired*	a) *"She was a Union Steward…she had more respect for that aspect…the respect was more for her handling of the union situation…"* b) *"She was an excellent translator for management."* c) *"People accepted the opinions coming from her mouth, as opposed to management."*
Role within the work-group that the missing member played	*Specialist*	a) *"Because she was a Union Steward, her conversations needed to be personal and private…'Renee, can we go somewhere private to talk?'".* b) *"She was really a stickler for all of the details that were necessary."* c) *"Renee was a real self-starter."*
The size of the void that has been left / the value of the member that was lost	*Renee has not left much of a void; "next man up" strategy is employed*	a) *"No special job knowledge was needed or necessary."* b) *"It was more of, 'who's gonna do that crap job now?'."* c) *"It was really a 'next man up' strategy."*
The resonance of the person that has been lost	*Renee was neutral with regards to resonance within her work-group*	a) *"Her regular work…it was NOT a unique skill set…she was more of a processor…".* b) *"After she passed away, people kinda moved on…loyalty doesn't really play into it…"* c) *"I don't know of anyone who went to her funeral."*
Tuckman Stage resolution	*"Next Man Up" (considered their performance stage)*	a) *"This may mean more work for the rest of us, and we're not thrilled about that."* b) *"Any performance would need to take place within this structure and within this hierarchy." (The governmental hierarchy was strictly established and was inflexible.)* c) *"Look Jim, none of us have ever seen working here as any type of a 'life's calling'…we are merely attempting to earn a living here…"*
Loyalty of the work-group to the lost member	*Loyalty toward Renee was surprisingly absent from work-group*	a) *"Life goes on."* b) *"(expletive) happens!"* c) *"Who's gonna pick up the slack?" (so no loyalty was built up)*
Manner of the loss	*"Next Man Up" philosophy neutralizes & protects from loss*	a) *"Nothing is done that is not essential to the work…so there IS no connection with her personal life…"* b) *"It's too bad about what happened to Renee, but we do need to soldier on…"* c) *"We're all mercenaries here anyway."*
EI of the lost member	*EI was negligible with Renee*	a) *"Renee never really reached out to anyone."* b) *"Renee blended into the wallpaper."* c) *"It was more like, 'hey! There's a friendly face that*

			was present'."
Mgmt's handling of the situation	*"Next Man Up" is a "Boilerplate" solution*	a) b) c)	*"Management offered a standard counseling loss of a work member."* *"We need to replace this position."(from management)* *"Renee did a minimal amount of work…any production that she did was a bonus on top of her normal union activities."*
End result for Work-Group	*Work-group moves forward with "Next Man Up"*	a) b) c)	*"She was replaced quickly."* *"We just had to get 'a move on'."* *"She was low enough in the pecking order…low enough on the food chain…that she was easily replaceable…" (from management)*

Figure 44. Summary for "Renee"

Case #5: Mark's Work-Group Name of Work-Group Member Lost: "Lou Anne"

Group Background and Interview Summary – "Lou Anne"

This researcher is calling this model "A Resonant Group" version (or work-group coping strategy). This will also be known as "The Liberty Bell Metaphor".

This researcher will introduce the two terms that I have used to separate the complexities of the evolving work-groups. One term is "the Ghost Group". The "Ghost Group" is the work-group that was. This work-group is the group that has lost the working member. This work-group is the historical group that had functioned with that soon-to-be-missing member. Memories may strongly exist (and remain active) for this "Ghost Group".

The second term is the "Go Group". This "Go Group" is the reconstructed team. This reconstructed work-group then needs to wrestle with the memories of how things existed before the loss, but now this work-group needs to "go" to meet the current needs of the organization.

This work-group consisted of Lou Anne, who was the main person responsible for fiscal matters within her agency. Lou Anne was the Director. The two others in the work-

group (Bo and Mark) were equal on the organizational chart below Lou Anne. Bo and Mark were Deputy Directors. From conversations with Bo and Mark, there was some trepidation with working with Lou Anne right from the beginning. Lou Anne had been brought in from a similar agency in Buffalo, New York, and was placed as the overall fiscal head of the organization. She had been their supervisor for roughly 10 months before a transformative event took place.

For both Mark and Bo, Lou Anne had personally come across as far too much of a task master for their tastes. Mark had stated that Lou Anne was "someone who needed to learn how to relax". She was fair to the both of them, but something was inherently missing from the relationship standpoint between the three of them. Bo had referred to her at that point as "An Ice Queen". The work-group was functioning, but barely.

After Lou Anne had been their supervisor for roughly 10 months, the work-group had an opportunity to attend a training conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The training conference almost exclusively dealt with items of a nature that were highly valuable to the work-group. There were some elements of the training conference that had some distant connections to what the work-group's current tasks entailed.

Near the last day of the training conference, Lou Anne approached Bo and Mark with this apparently "indecent" proposal. Lou Anne wanted the work-group to "blow off" this particular two-hour segment of the training conference, and instead, walk, as a team, to view the Liberty Bell.

Per their interviews, both Bo and Mark were absolutely dumbfounded. They really didn't know just how to answer Lou Anne on this one. Bo was convinced that it

was "some type of a trick" or "some type of a test" from her. She convinced the both of them that this was not the case.

The three agreed that the value of staying for that particular part of the training conference would be minimal at best. The three walked their way to view the Liberty Bell (roughly a half-hour walk from where their training conference was being held).

In short, the three of them had an absolute blast.

Mark commented that there were very profound differences between the walk to the Liberty Bell and the walk from the Liberty Bell. Per Mark, Lou Anne seemed to finally relax with them and discussed the pressures that she had felt in her position and shared some hopes and dreams that she personally held for the agency. Lou Anne shared her vision with Bo and Mark. Lou Anne also opened up more about her family situation.

Things had truly changed within this particular work-group.

Upon returning from Philly, the work-group was entirely different. The Liberty Bell event proved to be very transformative. Bo and Mark truly "went to the wall" for her from that point forward. The three of them became an extremely tightly-knit work-group. Work became fun again, and simply held more meaning now for the three of them.

Roughly two years after returning from Philadelphia, Lou Anne succumbed to a rare form of a brain tumor and passed away while employed with the agency.

1st Order Concept	Case #5 - "Lou Anne"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Respect / admiration from work-group towards member	*Initially, low respect & admiration, but that changes*	a) *"No one really understood her at first."* b) *"After that trip to Philly, we were both willing to go to the wall for her."* c) *"Lou Anne really surprised me…after we got back, I felt a real connection to her…"*

Figure 45. (#1) Respect and Admiration from Work-Group – "Lou Anne"

Lou Anne took a while to really win the respect and the admiration of her work-group. Lou Anne was unorthodox, and this may explain why there was a slow "ramp up" time with regards to those aspects. Lou Anne had a strong capacity to surprise others who may have underestimated her with regards to communicating with others.

1st Order Concept	Case #5 - "Lou Anne"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Role within the work-group that the missing member played	*Plant*	a) *"Initially, it seemed to me that she wasn't doing a Cracker Jack job of communicating with us at all."* b) *"Lou Anne didn't sweat the 'small potatoes', as she said."* c) *"Lou Anne was very unorthodox, but I very much liked that in her…she made it work for her…"*

Figure 46. (#2) Which Type of Team Role Did the Missing Person Fill? – "Lou Anne"

Lou Anne was definitely a "Plant". Lou Anne was unorthodox, imaginative, and creative. She had enjoyed solving difficult problems while generating her ideas. Her allowable weaknesses would then subsequently entail being too preoccupied to communicate effectively and her ignoring of incidentals, not getting too bogged down in the details. She would then be somewhat of an "absent minded professor", and then having a difficult time in communicating those great ideas to others. The timing of her ideas could have been better. Typically, if a team has already decided on any type of valid way forward and may even now be within the implementation stage of that plan, it will not prevent the Plant from continuing to come up with even newer solutions and subsequently disrupting that implementation process.

1st Order Concept	Case #5 - "Lou Anne"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
The size of the void that has been left / the value of the member that was lost	*A large void is left by her absence, but the void is filled within a relatively short amount of time*	a) *"Her not being here kinda forced me to rethink why I was comin' in here every morning."* b) *"I guess that they needed to backfill her position, but it was still sad for us when they did do that."* c) *"She left a big hole."*

Figure 47. (#3) How Does the Work-Group at Least Attempt to Recover? – "Lou Anne"

Bo and Mark were very distressed over the loss of Lou Anne. She had truly made an impact upon them. They both felt truly loyal to their "Ghost Group". The metaphor and analogy of "a resonant leader" and the resonance of the Liberty Bell are not lost on this researcher. Upon speaking with Lou Anne's family, both Bo and Mark had discovered that Lou Anne had been diagnosed with the brain tumor just shortly before the Philadelphia trip, but did not disclose her illness until right before taking a sick leave right before she passed.

Bo and Mark both attempted to remain loyal to their "Ghost Group", but could only maintain her vision and hopes for roughly half-a-year. Soon there was a reorganization of the group, to where another Director had been brought in with a much different agenda.

Both Bo and Mark then became a part of the brand new "Go Group" that now needed to take orders from a different Director, and they both had now far different marching orders. The new Director, although respectful of the memory of Lou Anne, had his own version of empire building in mind. He attempted to downplay Lou Anne's past achievements by almost attempting to "rewrite" just how the organization got to this point.

1st Order Concept	Case #5 - "Lou Anne"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
The resonance of the person that has been lost	*Lou Anne's resonance was quietly there (suddenly shows)*	a) *"She was just so quiet, but that didn't make her a bad leader."* b) *"Once she revealed herself a little bit, she made more sense to me."* c) *"On that walk to the Liberty Bell that we were just talking about, it seemed like every step we all took, I understood her a little bit more."*

Figure 48. (#4) How Did the Resonance of the Missing Member Affect the Work-Group? – "Lou Anne"

There was "ramp up" time with regard to Lou Anne's resonance within her work-

group. Her quiet nature may have initially led to misconceptions about Lou Anne. Her

resonance was always quietly there.

1st Order Concept	Case #5 - "Lou Anne"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Tuckman Stage resolution	Damage in performance stage	a) "It was a shame, because we're all really humming." b) "Her loss kinda put us back to ground zero." c) "It's not like we blew a tire…it's like we blew an engine…"

Figure 49. (#5) How Did the Work-Group Move through Tuckman's Stages? – "Lou
Anne"

The Storming Stage subsequently becomes so solid with Lou Anne that the

Norming Stage goes very smoothly (like a fast pass). The work-group goes straight to the

Performing Stage, and remains there until her death.

The Resonant Leader then leaves. Trust now is not there with the newer people.

The work-group holds on as long as possible, but newer hierarchies and strategies are

introduced.

Damage occurs to the Performing Stage. A change in leadership may cause the

team to revert to the Storming Stage as the newer members challenge the existing norms

and dynamics of the work-group. The "Ghost Group" would like to continue Lou Anne's

vision and dreams for the work-group.

1st Order Concept	Case #5 - "Lou Anne"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Loyalty of the work-group to the lost member	Loyalty toward Lou Anne was very present from work-group	a) "We all thought of her as a real leader…someone that you would go into battle for." b) "Once she opened up to us, we were very responsive to her." c) "Lou Anne really made us accountable, and we all really responded to that in her."

Figure 50. (#6) How Did the Loyalty Toward the Missing Member Affect the Work-
Group? – "Lou Anne"

The loyalty toward Lou Anne carried forward from her time with her work-group in Philadelphia. Lou Anne had somehow parlayed that initial uneasiness about her into some very solid and strong loyalties within her department.

1st Order Concept	Case #5 - "Lou Anne"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Manner of the loss	Sudden death saddens & incapacitates work-group	a) "It was a pretty sad situation for all of us." b) "What, exactly, were our next steps?" c) "We were really broken up about it."

Figure 51. (#7) How Did the Manner of the Loss Affect the Work-Group? – "Lou Anne"

The loss of Lou Anne hit her work-group hard. The group had difficulties seeing what their initial steps forward would be. The sadness revolving around the loss of Lou Anne incapacitated the workings of her group for a substantial amount of time.

1st Order Concept	Case #5 - "Lou Anne"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
EI of the lost member	EI with Lou Anne was high (but hidden)	a) "When Lou Anne did talk to me, at the beginning, I was very moved by what she had to say…by the way that she had thought about things…" b) "Lou Anne seemed to have a real sense for the group." c) "She had a real way about her. She would be unafraid to attempt some real paradigm shifts for the group."

Figure 52. (#8) How Did the Emotional Intelligence (EI) of the Missing Member Affect the Work-Group? – "Lou Anne"

Lou Anne had a very high Emotional Intelligence, although it was initially hidden. She had a way of truly moving and inspiring others to her way of thinking about things. Lou Anne had a courage to try "some real paradigm shifts for the group".

1st Order Concept	Case #5 - "Lou Anne"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Mgmt's handling of the situation	Mgmt needed to "move on", but could have handled differently	a) "They (management) didn't really know just what they had with her…with her being a leader and all…" b) "It just seemed to me that the transition could have been handled much differently than it actually was…" c) "I really wish that they would have followed up on her plans."

Figure 53. (#9) How Did Management Manage the Transition from the Sudden and Unexpected Nature of the Loss? – "Lou Anne"

This also is an example of disenfranchised grief. With management not fully

cognizant of just how Lou Anne resonated with her two employees, there is not that

connection from management to adequately and significantly mirror that loss.

Zohar and Marshall (2000) speak of spiritual intelligence to "reach more fully

towards the developed persons that we have the potential to be. Each of us forms a

character through a combination of experience and vision, a tension between what we

actually do and the bigger, better things we might do" (p. 14). Lou Anne had that level of

spiritual intelligence, and that needs to be recognized by the organization.

The new Director was not respectful of the endings that the work-group was

encountering. To respect the past, management needs to allow people to take something

with them. A big "no-no" is to stamp out the past like an infection, yet this is what the

new Director is attempting to accomplish. Instead, what is advised to management is to

position the past as a positive legacy that will pave the way for the new reality. If

management ridicules the past, it negates people's feelings of self-worth in a very

profound way.

1st Order Concept	Case #5 - "Lou Anne"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
End result for Work-Group	*Change in leadership & resonance dissipates*	a) *"I wish that management took the time to get to know her…"* b) *"I still think about her often, and I wish that she was still here in some way…"* c) *"It became impossible for us to see her plans through…it was very unfortunate…"*

Figure 54. (#10) Learnings and Take-Aways (aka "A-Ha Moments") – "Lou Anne"

The leader leaves, but she had truly resonated within the work-group…literally.

Even after she was gone, the work-group continues with "the voice" of the missing

leader, continuing to resonate within their heads, and the work-group then attempts to

"keep it up" (continue to keep Lou Anne's memory alive within the work-group) as best

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as they can, but eventually and invariably, once the new leadership is installed, the work-group then hangs on as long as possible, but the new leaders (and new voices) must be heard. The work-group then eventually is broken off into pieces, and the hierarchy is altered and changed.

1st Order Concepts	Case #5 - "Lou Anne"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Respect / admiration from work-group towards member	Initially, low respect & admiration, but that changes	a) "No one really understood her at first." b) "After that trip to Philly, we were both willing to go to the wall for her." c) "Lou Anne really surprised me…after we got back, I felt a real connection to her…"
Role within the work-group that the missing member played	Plant	a) "Initially, it seemed to me that she wasn't doing a Cracker Jack job of communicating with us at all." b) "Lou Anne didn't sweat the 'small potatoes', as she said." c) "Lou Anne was very unorthodox, but I very much liked that in her…she made it work for her…"
The size of the void that has been left / the value of the member that was lost	A large void is left by her absence, but the void is filled within a relatively short amount of time	a) "Her not being here kinda forced me to rethink why I was comin' in here every morning." b) "I guess that they needed to backfill her position, but it was still sad for us when they did do that." c) "She left a big hole."
The resonance of the person that has been lost	Lou Anne's resonance was quietly there (suddenly shows)	a) "She was just so quiet, but that didn't make her a bad leader." b) "Once she revealed herself a little bit, she made more sense to me." c) "On that walk to the Liberty Bell that we were just talking about, it seemed like every step we all took, I understood her a little bit more."
Tuckman Stage resolution	Damage in performance stage	a) "It was a shame, because we're all really humming." b) "Her loss kinda put us back to ground zero." c) "It's not like we blew a tire…it's like we blew an engine…"
Loyalty of the work-group to the lost member	Loyalty toward Lou Anne was very present from work-group	a) "We all thought of her as a real leader…someone that you would go into battle for." b) "Once she opened up to us, we were very responsive to her." c) "Lou Anne really made us accountable, and we all really responded to that in her."
Manner of the loss	Sudden death saddens & incapacitates work-group	a) "It was a pretty sad situation for all of us." b) "What, exactly, were our next steps?" c) "We were really broken up about it."
EI of the lost member	EI with Lou Anne was high (but hidden)	a) "When Lou Anne did talk to me, at the beginning, I was very moved by what she had to say…by the way that she had thought about things…" b) "Lou Anne seemed to have a real sense for the

			group."
		c)	*"She had a real way about her. She would be unafraid to attempt some real paradigm shifts for the group."*
Mgmt's handling of the situation	*Mgmt needed to "move on", but could have handled differently*	a)	*"They (management) didn't really know just what they had with her…with her being a leader and all…"*
		b)	*"It just seemed to me that the transition could have been handled much differently than it actually was…"*
		c)	*"I really wish that they would have followed up on her plans."*
End result for Work-Group	*Change in leadership & resonance dissipates*	a)	*"I wish that management took the time to get to know her…"*
		b)	*"I still think about her often, and I wish that she was still here in some way…"*
		c)	*"It became impossible for us to see her plans through…it was very unfortunate…"*

Figure 55. Summary for "Lou Anne"

Case #6" Denny's Work-Group name of work-group member lost: "Russ"

Group Background and Interview Summary – "Russ"

Denny's supervisor, Russ, never truly wanted to be the leader of this particular

work-group. Russ seems perturbed by needing to be reliant upon this work-group. He

does not invest much time or energy into the group, and he had taken to relying upon a

consulting team, as opposed to relying upon his own work-group.

Not enough trust has been built up by the supervisor. Russ never organizes the

work-group. He should have been gathering information on the work-group and gathering

impressions on the work-group. He should have been putting in an effort to get the work-

group to know each other, to make new friends. Russ needed to see how each member of

the team works as an individual and to see just how each member responds to pressure.

The team should be meeting to learn about opportunities and challenges, to agree on

goals, to begin tackling the tasks.

Russ had issues with "fully investing" with the group that reports directly to him, and the work-group that he is very much responsible for. This is definitely not lost on the work-group.

As a relevant example of this, at one point, not having built up enough trust with the work-group, Russ came out of his office to address the group and to get an update on a work project and states, "How are you a$$holes doing on this project?" His comment was seen as completely offensive by the work-group as a whole. Eventually, Russ left the agency to work with that same consulting firm.

1st Order Concept	Case #6 - "Russ"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Respect / admiration from work-group towards member	Low respect & low admiration for Russ from the work-group	a) "I don't see just how Russ had gotten so high within this organization." b) "Russ didn't wanna hang around with us…he wanted to hang around with the consultants…" c) "Russ was just such a nut. Doesn't he trust us?"

Figure 56. (#1) Respect and Admiration from Work-Group – "Russ"

Russ had very low respect from his work-group. One of the larger issues with the work-group was that Russ would alternate work projects between his work-group and his consultants (whichever benefitted him more). This did not sit well with his work-group from the standpoint that they did not feel that they were being relied upon or taken very seriously.

1st Order Concept	Case #6 - "Russ"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Role within the work-group that the missing member played	Completer / Finisher	a) "Russ was a real worry wart." b) "He never really gave us a chance to 'bring the thing home'." c) "Russ DID sweat the small stuff."

Figure 57. (#2) Which Type of Team Role Did the Missing Person Fill? – "Russ"

Russ can be seen as "Completer / Finisher". Furthermore, he was painstaking, anxious, and conscientious. As a result, he searched out omissions and errors. Russ would perfect and polish. Russ was, however, reluctant to delegate, and was also inclined to worry incessantly. Russ's unwillingness to delegate provided stagnation between the initial Tuckman Stages.

1st Order Concept	Case #6 - "Russ"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
The size of the void that has been left / the value of the member that was lost	Void left is negligible	a) "You know that even his replacement left, right?" b) "We'll get someone in here in charge who wants to be with us." c) "It's (the loss of Russ) like it doesn't really matter either way."

Figure 58. (#3) How Does the Work-Group at Least Attempt to Recover? – "Russ"

The work-group does attempt to move forward in Russ's absence. The woman who replaced Russ has now left the agency as well. She did at least attempt to have the work-group return to their basic functioning, and not to be as reliant on the outside consultants.

1st Order Concept	Case #6 - "Russ"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
The resonance of the person that has been lost	Russ had zero resonance with his work-group whatsoever	a) "He never really spoke with me." b) "Talking to Russ was very similar to speaking to a wall." c) "I didn't like him…nobody did…"

Figure 59. (#4) How Did the Resonance of the Missing Member Affect the Work-Group? – "Russ"

Russ had zero resonance with his work-group whatsoever. Part of the issues that the work-group had with him was that Russ would vacillate between attempting to "be your best buddy" and "being the meanest boss that you could ever imagine". That vacillation swiftly wore thin with his work-group.

1st Order Concept	Case #6 - "Russ"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Tuckman Stage resolution	*Work-group stuck between forming & storming*	a) *"You'd gain some momentum with Russ and then he'd leave…"* b) *"He was always so 'back-and-forth'."* c) *"Russ never really established any trust with all of us."*

Figure 60. (#5) How Did the Work-Group Move through Tuckman's Stages? – "Russ"

This researcher is calling this model "A Gearbox Group" version or work-group coping strategy.

In the Forming Stage, individual behavior is driven by a desire to be accepted by the others, and avoid controversy, or conflict. Denny's supervisor, Russ, never allows this stage to fully form.

The Forming Stage is supposed to be a comfortable stage to be in, but the avoidance of conflict means that not much actually gets done in this stage. Denny's group never gets to fully form at this initial stage. The work-group has stalled within this initial stage.

The leader of the work-group never allowed the work-group to move from the Forming Stage to the Storming Stage. Eventually some work-group movement is found within the Storming Stage, but it is short-lived.

Not enough initial trust within the work-group had been built up in the Forming Stage in order for the work-group to phase into the Storming Stage normally. The work-group subsequently stalls. The leader was not willing to "fully invest" in the Forming Stage. He cursed them and called them names; hence he was rejected summarily by the entire work-group. Initial trust just wasn't there to begin with.

What this researcher found intriguing with this comment was that, having now gotten quite familiar with Tuckman's stages, it was transparently clear that Russ had

severely underestimated the amount that he had "in the bank" with this work-group, by almost advancing directly to the Storming Stage by mentioning such an off-the-cuff comment such as that. Russ's assessment as to where he was in the model was way off target!!!

This researcher has known Denny since 1992, so he and this researcher have a tremendous protracted history with one another. He is quite cerebral, and well-read, so he was familiar with Tuckman's Model. From having a spontaneous conversation with Denny, this researcher had asked him just why his work-group never reached the Storming Stage. His return comment was very insightful to me, "Russ would have been okay if he would have gone back and established a little trust with everyone."

Within the Storming Stage, the ideal for the work-group is that they will not feel that they are being judged, and will therefore share their opinions and views. If Russ has left his work-group for a few weeks (in his mind, his work-group is in the Storming Stage), and he goes off and performs some tasks with the consulting team that he liked to deal with, and then comes back, after a while, and goes right to such off-handed and challenging comments that he was prevalent to do, he assumes that he and his work-group are still within that Storming Stage. Instead, if Russ would, after that break, re-establish himself with the work-group by dabbling in the Forming Stage again, he may have been okay with the work-group.

1ˢᵗ Order Concept	Case #6 - "Russ"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Loyalty of the work-group to the lost member	*NO loyalty toward Russ from work-group*	a) *"We could take him or leave him."* b) *"We all sort of hated Russ."* c) *""Ya know…loyalty needs to be a two-way street."*

Figure 61. (#6) How Did the Loyalty Toward the Missing Member Affect the Work-Group? – "Russ"

Russ did not demonstrate any loyalty toward his work-group by having his consulting team "stand in" for his regular work-group on many occasions. Subsequently, his work-group responded in kind with regards to the issue of loyalty.

1st Order Concept	Case #6 - "Russ"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Manner of the loss	Russ did not invest in work-group, so work-group not concerned	a) "Russ didn't care about us one lick." b) "It's not like I really cared either way." c) "I was like…so what?…ya know?...there was absolutely no skin off of my nose either way."

Figure 62. (#7) How Did the Manner of the Loss Affect the Work-Group? – "Russ"

The work-group was very happy to see Russ leave his position due to the fact that he rarely invested in them. Russ had generated some serious animosity among the work-group at the time of his departure.

1st Order Concept	Case #6 - "Russ"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
EI of the lost member	EI was nonexistent with Russ	a) "It's like Russ had no skin in the game." b) "I never got the idea that Russ cared at all." c) "Maybe he worked better with the consultants…we'll never know for sure, I guess…"

Figure 63. (#8) How Did the Emotional Intelligence (EI) of the Missing Member Affect the Work-Group? – "Russ"

Russ's Emotional Intelligence was nonexistent among his work-group. The image that he generated with them was someone who did not have any concern for them. The work-group wanted to believe that Russ cared about the group, but they could find no solid evidence of that belief.

1st Order Concept	Case #6 - "Russ"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Mgmt's handling of the situation	Mgmt should not have allowed Russ to "disconnect"	a) "Why they (management) let Russ get away with all of that, I'll never figure out…" b) "They should have held Russ accountable for all of us." c) "Russ ran amok."

Figure 64. (#9) How Did Management Manage the Transition from the Sudden and Unexpected Nature of the Loss? – "Russ"

Similar to Case #3 with "Susan", this researcher determined that the employer needs to see what is working and what is not working up front. Do not allow the organization to get so hamstrung from the beginning. "Workplace well-being" and "Organizational Enlightenment" need to be emphasized by management.

What this researcher found interesting as well was that there appeared to be, with this particular case, an example of emergent change processes.

There seemed to be a type of "swarm intelligence" with regards to Russ's leadership style because of his penchant for preferring the company of the outside consultants as opposed to his own staff.

There were these new organic group processes that were designed implicitly to maximize emergence and self-organization. As a result, the work-group monitored and supervised themselves.

1st Order Concept	Case #6 - "Russ"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
End result for Work-Group	*Work-group stuck between stages; successor even left*	a) *"As a group, we weren't getting anywhere fast."* b) *"When are we gonna get someone in here who gives a (expletive)?!?!* c) *"There's gotta be somebody around here who cares about this."*

Figure 65. (#10) Learnings and Take-Aways (aka "A-Ha Moments") – "Russ"

This researcher had a discovery of "condensed phases".

Even highly performing work-groups still need to have all phases covered periodically. Stages need to be renewed. Work-groups very much need to "touch base" on stages.

As an example, a high-performing work-group on a Monday morning: *Forming* ("Everything go okay this weekend?"); *Storming* ("What happened to your Buckeyes this

weekend?"…good natured needling); *Norming* ("Are you still working on that aspect of the project?"); now *Performing* can take place.

Tuckman's (1965) model states that a work-group can be found within a particular stage, and, then, at times, will change stages. "Even the most high-performing teams will revert to earlier stages in certain circumstances. Many long-standing teams go through these cycles many times as they react to changing circumstances. For example, a change in leadership may cause the team to revert to storming as the new people challenge the existing norms and dynamics of the team" (p. 65).

This researcher is challenging and is taking issue with this "lock step approach" to this team model. From what this researcher has seen, groups cannot be classified as existing in a certain tank of water like a goldfish. Work-groups seem to move almost as if within a gearbox motion of a racecar. These stages are much more fluid than originally stated!!! The motion of a high-performing work-group can move from forming to storming to norming to performing all within the same day if it's deemed necessary by the work-group. These work-groups need to be re-booted periodically and refresh these stages on a periodic basis. Members of a work-group need to "ping" one another periodically, in order to see if their impressions of each other and the group have changed or have now been altered.

1st Order Concepts	Case #6 - "Russ"	Back-Up For Themes Discovered (Results From Coding)
Respect / admiration from work-group towards member	*Low respect & low admiration for Russ from the work-group*	a) *"I don't see just how Russ had gotten so high within this organization."* b) *"Russ didn't wanna hang around with us…he wanted to hang around with the consultants…"* c) *"Russ was just such a nut. Doesn't he trust us?"*
Role within the work-group that the missing member played	*Completer / Finisher*	a) *"Russ was a real worry wart."* b) *"He never really gave us a chance to 'bring the thing home'."* c) *"Russ DID sweat the small stuff."*
The size of the void that has been left / the value of the member that was lost	*Void left is negligible*	a) *"You know that even his replacement left, right?"* b) *"We'll get someone in here in charge who wants to be with us."* c) *"It's (the loss of Russ) like it doesn't really matter either way."*
The resonance of the person that has been lost	*Russ had zero resonance with his work-group whatsoever*	a) *"He never really spoke with me."* b) *"Talking to Russ was very similar to speaking to a wall."* c) *"I didn't like him…nobody did…"*
Tuckman Stage resolution	*Work-group stuck between forming & storming*	a) *"You'd gain some momentum with Russ and then he'd leave…"* b) *"He was always so 'back-and-forth'."* c) *"Russ never really established any trust with all of us."*
Loyalty of the work-group to the lost member	*NO loyalty toward Russ from work-group*	a) *"We could take him or leave him."* b) *"We all sort of hated Russ."* c) *"Ya know…loyalty needs to be a two-way street."*
Manner of the loss	*Russ did not invest in work-group, so work-group not concerned*	a) *"Russ didn't care about us one lick."* b) *"It's not like I really cared either way."* c) *"I was like…so what?…ya know?...there was absolutely no skin off of my nose either way."*
EI of the lost member	*EI was nonexistent with Russ*	a) *"It's like Russ had no skin in the game."* b) *"I never got the idea that Russ cared at all."* c) *"Maybe he worked better with the consultants…we'll never know for sure, I guess…"*
Mgmt's handling of the situation	*Mgmt should not have allowed Russ to "disconnect"*	a) *"Why they (management) let Russ get away with all of that, I'll never figure out…"* b) *"They should have held Russ accountable for all of us."* c) *"Russ ran amok."*
End result for Work-Group	*Work-group stuck between stages; successor even left*	a) *"As a group, we weren't getting anywhere fast."* b) *"When are we gonna get someone in here who gives a (expletive)?!?!* c) *"There's gotta be somebody around here who cares about this."*

Figure 66. Summary for "Russ"

1st Order Concepts	Case #1 - "John"	Case #2 - "Buddy"	Case #3 - "Susan"	Case #4 - "Renee"	Case #5 - "Lou Anne"	Case #6 - 'Russ"
Respect / admiration from work-group towards member	*John is highly admired & respected within the work-group*	*Buddy is highly admired & respected within the work-group*	*Susan is not respected within the work-group at all*	*Renee has respect from the work-group; however not admired*	*Initially, low respect & admiration, but that changes*	*Low respect & low admiration for Russ from the work-group*
Role within the work-group that the missing member played	*Teamworker (a.k.a."Glue Guy")*	*Teamworker (a.k.a."Glue Guy")*	*(A refusal by the member to take on a role within the work-group)*	*Specialist*	*Plant*	*Completer / Finisher*
The size of the void that has been left / the value of the member that was lost	*The value of the missing member is tremendous; the void is large*	*The value of the missing member is tremendous; the void is large; one can argue 'irreplaceable'*	*Void is minimal; only task is to divvy up her work*	*Renee has not left much of a void; "next man up" strategy is employed*	*A large void is left by her absence, but the void is filled within a relatively short amount of time*	*Void left is negligible*
The resonance of the person that has been lost	*John had a very high resonance with his work-group*	*Buddy had a very high resonance with his work-group*	*Susan had zero resonance with her work-group whatsoever*	*Renee was neutral with regards to resonance within her work-group*	*Lou Anne's resonance was quietly there (suddenly shows)*	*Russ had zero resonance with his work-group whatsoever*
Tuckman Stage resolution	*Work-group refuses to move to mourning stage*	*Work-group subsequently implodes on loss*	*Forming never takes place*	*"Next Man Up" (considered their performance stage)*	*Damage in performance stage*	*Work-group stuck between forming & storming*
Loyalty of the work-group to the lost member	*Work-group was almost "too loyal" to John (affects Ron)*	*Work-group was very loyal to Buddy*	*NO loyalty toward Susan from work-group*	*Loyalty toward Renee was surprisingly absent from work-group*	*Loyalty toward Lou Anne was very present from work-group*	*NO loyalty toward Russ from work-group*
Manner of the loss	*Sudden death saddens & incapacitates work-group*	*Sudden death saddens & incapacitates work-group*	*Work-group rejoices in Susan's "moving on"*	*"Next Man Up" philosophy neutralizes & protects from loss*	*Sudden death saddens & incapacitates work-group*	*Russ did not invest in work-group, so work-group not concerned*
EI of the lost member	*EI with John was high*	*EI with Buddy was high*	*EI was nonexistent with Susan*	*EI was negligible with Renee*	*EI with Lou Anne was high (but hidden)*	*EI was nonexistent with Russ*
Mgmt's handling of the situation	*Mgmt didn't really deal with the loss*	*Mgmt refused to recognize the loss*	*Mgmt allowed the situation to go on far too long*	*"Next Man Up" is a "Boilerplate" solution*	*Mgmt needed to "move on", but could have handled differently*	*Mgmt should not have allowed Russ to "disconnect"*
End result for Work-Group	*Work-group stuck; needs to re-boot*	*Work-group becomes non-functioning*	*Work-group kicks her out of the work-group*	*Work-group moves forward with "Next Man Up"*	*Change in leadership & resonance dissipates*	*Work-group stuck between stages; successor even left*

Figure 67. Overall Summary

Emergent Ideas

Bruce Tuckman's Stages of Group Development

What was seen from the six cases studied was that the work-group loss had a variety of impacts upon just how the work-group moved through those stages. How the work-group responded was dependent upon which stage sustained the damage of the missing work-group member.

In Case #1 – "John", the work-group remained so loyal to its lost member, John, that the work-group refused to move to the final Tuckman stage, the mourning stage.

In Case #2 – "Buddy", the work-group subsequently imploded on the loss of its member, Buddy, moving the group to adjournment.

In Case #3 – "Susan", the forming stage never takes place, as Susan never allows the initial and necessary stage to form around her.

In Case #4 – "Renee", the "Next Man Up" philosophy essentially functions as the work-group's performance stage.

In Case #5 – "Lou Anne", damage in the performance stage forces the work-group to move back through initial stages.

In Case #6 – "Russ", the work-group gets stuck between the forming stage and the storming stage.

William Bridges' Theories on Organizations in Transition

Organizations that are transitioning between Tuckman's stages are subject to Bridges' organizational transitional theories.

William Bridges (2009) emphasized just how important understanding transitions could be in order to harness the group's success. Adapting to change is the psychological process of transition. Bridges broke down transition into three phases: letting go of the past, the "neutral zone" where the past is gone, but the new is not fully here, and making the new beginning.

In Case #1 – "John", John's work-group absolutely cannot let go of the past, and subsequently becomes stuck in the "neutral zone".

In Case #2 – "Buddy", Buddy's work-group unfortunately fails to make the new beginning, subsequently disbanding what had been a very enjoyable, productive team.

In Case #3 – "Susan", Susan had alienated her work-group enough that the group was very eager to jump to make the new beginning.

In Case #4 – "Renee", Renee's loss is dealt with merely by employing a "Next Man Up" philosophy, or strategy.

In Case #5 – "Lou Anne", Lou Anne's sudden and unexpected loss has kept her previous work-group churning in the "neutral zone", where the past is gone, but the new isn't fully present.

In Case #6 – "Russ", Russ's work-group also was very eager to jump to make the new beginning.

Peter Vaill's "Permanent White Water"
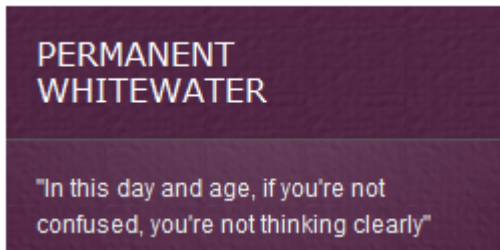
Source:

Figure 68. Peter Vaill's "Permanent White Water"

The sudden and unexpected loss of the work-group member takes place within the "permanent white water" that Peter Vaill speaks of.

Peter Vaill had coined the term "permanent white water", which was defined as "the turbulent social and organizational conditions that managerial leaders face today". Peter Vaill's thoughts on Permanent Whitewater were entitled: *Learning as a Way of Being: Strategies for Survival in a World of Permanent White Water* and *Managing as a Performing Art: New Ideas for a World of Chaotic Change.*

In Case #1 – "John", the turbulent social and organizational conditions entailed a sudden and unexpected loss of a tremendous leader. Subsequently replacing John, the Ron experiment miserably fails. These conditions also include radically different attitudes toward how John was treated and how Ron was treated.

This researcher feels that two quotes from Peter Vaill accurately relay the quandary that John's work-group found themselves in:

In the world of permanent whitewater, one cannot know where the next opportunity or threat is going to come from. Yet when it comes, a great deal depends on possessing or being able rapidly to acquire a useful way of thinking

about it so that courses of action one has under way will not be shattered. This job that calls for the whole person is enormously absorbing.

Also,

Teamwork doesn't happen automatically, and it doesn't result just from the exhortations of a single leader. It results from members paying attention to how they are working together, and consciously developing patterns of working together that all members find challenging and satisfying. Team members have to talk to each other about how they are working as a team; they have to process their group actions. This calls for a collective self-awareness, openness, and maturity that are still not widely found in very many teams in our culture. (Quotes attributed to: http://www.setanewdirection.com/en/world-globalization/89-articles/164-peter-vaill)

In Case #2 – "Buddy", the turbulent social and organizational conditions entailed a sudden and unexpected loss of a loved member of a team. The "disenfranchised grief" that this loss generated was not addressed or supported by management.

In Case #3 – "Susan", the turbulent social and organizational conditions entailed a sudden and unexpected loss of a toxic work-group member, to where the group jubilantly tackled handling the transition away from Susan.

In Case #4 – "Renee", the turbulent social and organizational conditions entailed a sudden and unexpected loss of a work-group member who handled delicate union worker relations, but, nonetheless, was replaced with a boilerplate "Next Man Up" philosophy by management.

In Case #5 – "Lou Anne", the turbulent social and organizational conditions entailed a sudden and unexpected loss of a work-group member who had finally gained leadership traction, only to see the work-group struggle without her, attempt to remain loyal to her memory, but eventually needed to acquiesce to newer management philosophies.

In Case #6 – "Russ", the turbulent social and organizational conditions entailed a sudden and unexpected loss of a work-group member who did not have the support of his work-group, and, at least socially, had serious issues with his co-workers. Russ's relationship with his work-group was the definition of "white water".

Meredith Belbin's Team Role Inventories

Meredith Belbin authored the book *Management Teams* in 1981. Within his work, he presented conclusions on how team members interacted during business games. One of his key conclusions was that an effective team has members that cover the key role in how the team carries out the work and the key role in the managing of the team. These roles could potentially be separate and distinct from the role that each team member originally had been designated in carrying out the work of the team.

In Case #1 – "John", John was the consummate Teamworker. He served as an in-group diplomat. John calmed the waters of the work-group. John resolved conflicts, was sensitive to others' needs, and was socially oriented. He gave help to others, and he gave his own personal support to the entire work-group. This proved detrimental to the work-group when he needed to be replaced.

In Case #2 – "Buddy", Buddy was also a Teamworker. Many in his group referred to Buddy as "the Glue Guy" for holding everything together for his work-group. Buddy's skills enabled the team's long-term cohesion. Buddy always wanted to make certain that everyone was at the practices, that, without even thinking about it, he was ensuring that the team was fully functioning by working on the myriad of interpersonal relationships that were necessary for functioning. This also proved to be detrimental towards the work-group when absolutely no one was available to suddenly take on that mantle.

In Case #3 – "Susan", Susan had a toxic enough of a personality, she essentially refused to adequately take on a role within her personal work-group. The work-group subsequently removes her from her "role" within the group.

In Case #4 – "Renee", Renee was a specialist. Her expertise as a Union Representative brought knowledge to the team, but Renee could only contribute on that particular specialty, and she did prove to be uninterested in anything that lay outside that specialty.

Due to her disinterest in the work-group's regular day-to-day activities, she was found to be easily replaced ("Next Man Up" strategy).

In Case #5 – "Lou Anne", Lou Anne was a Plant. She tended to have brilliant ideas, but did tend to situate herself away from her other work-group members, at least initially. Once she leaves, her loss of creativity proves very difficult for the work-group to replace.

In Case #6 – "Russ", Russ was a Completer / Finisher. He proved to be true to his role by unduly worrying and his refusal to delegate. His prickly manner, in

refusing to delegate and to trust his work-group led to a distrust and a disliking of

Russ by his work-group.

The Concept of Collective Intelligence

Diagram from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:CI_types1s_2.jpg (Author: Olga Generozova)
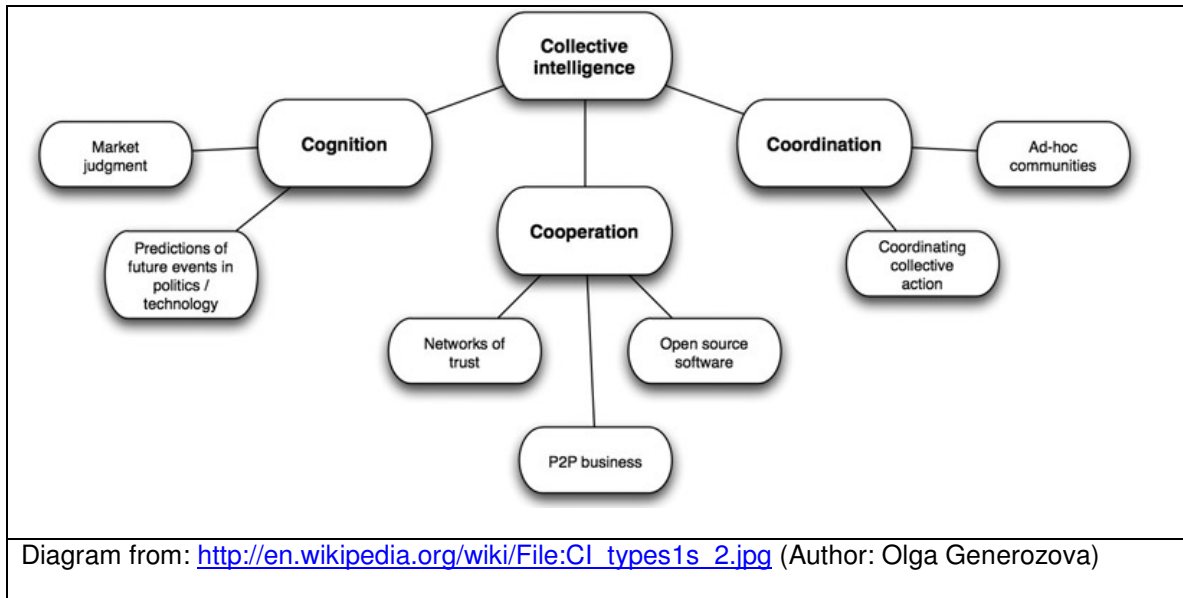
Figure 69. The Concept of Collective Intelligence

Collective Intelligence appears in consensus decision making and emerges from

the competition of many individuals, the collective efforts of many individuals, and the

collaboration of many individuals (Hofstadter, 1979). Collective Intelligence is

considered a group intelligence, or a shared intelligence.

This researcher witnessed the effects of this Collective Intelligence when

researching the events of what transpired with both Susan's work-group, as well as

Russ's work-group.

In Susan's work-group, the self-organized system, the Collective Intelligence of

the group, works around Susan by establishing an informal support network to counteract

her toxic nature towards the group. The self-organized system essentially forms an "ad

hoc community" (as in the figure above) in order to provide the necessary support to the

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members who need support and also to "fill in the gaps" of internal communications that were thwarted by the necessary cancelling of the meetings in order to avoid Susan.

In Russ's work-group, the self-organized system, the Collective Intelligence of the group, works around Russ by establishing an informal support network to counteract his detached nature towards the group. The self-organized system essentially forms an "ad hoc community" (as in the figure above) in order to provide the necessary support to the members who need support and also to "fill in the gaps" of lapses in managerial communications and lapses in managerial functions, which were carelessly created by the disinterested and detached Russ.

Symbolic Interactionism

With Symbolic Interactionism, people do not respond to a physical reality, but rather to a social understanding of reality. This reality is seen as a social, developed interaction with others. One of the central ideas behind Symbolic Interactionism is that individuals are created through interaction. Society, as well, is created through social interaction.

When thinking on this central idea of Symbolic Interactionism, this researcher contemplates Russ, to where Russ refuses to interact with his work-group; therefore, Russ cannot create a helpful society for himself.

Another central idea behind Symbolic Interactionism is that human action is not only interaction among individuals, but also interaction within the individual.

When thinking on this central idea of Symbolic Interactionism, this researcher contemplates Lou Anne, to where Lou Anne was thoughtful in her interactions with others. Lou Anne was also a deeply thoughtful person. There was a balance in her. The

human being must be understood as a thinking being, and Lou Anne was a thinking being.

Another central idea behind Symbolic Interactionism is that humans define the situation that they are in. An actual environment exists, but it is our definition of it that is important.

When thinking on this central idea of Symbolic Interactionism, this researcher contemplates Susan, to where Susan defines her very own environment in such negative terms. Susan's definition of her workplace is one which is stifling and very disrespectful. She subsequently suffocates within this environment, while she was easily offended and hurt. Susan's definition of the workplace was radically different from others' perceptions of the very same, identical workplace. Inherently, the definition results from ongoing social interaction and thinking. If everyone is avoiding Susan's desk, she is denied that necessary social interaction. Without that necessary social interaction, her definition of her environment becomes skewed. Susan has no one to check her definition of the stifling and very disrespectful environment. It subsequently becomes a downward spiral for Susan because, with her definition growing worse and worse by the day, more people avoid her desk, her definition decreases, ad infinitum.

Another central idea behind Symbolic Interactionism is that the cause of human action is the result of what is occurring in our present situation.

When thinking on this central idea of Symbolic Interactionism, this researcher contemplates John, to where John's "transition" to Ron is an abysmal failure. The work-group is definitely not focused on the present. John's old work-group is focusing intently on the past instead, hence, no human action is transpiring.

Susan A. Berger's Five Identities of Grievers

Susan A. Berger (2009, p. 4) identified five variant types of grievers who are grieving a loss:

Seekers tend to adopt spiritual, philosophical, or religious beliefs to provide a sense of belonging and to create some meaning in their lives that they never had or lost when their loved one died. They ask philosophical, existential questions about the world and their relationship to others. They also look outward towards the universe.

Activists' main focus is on helping other people who are dealing with the myriad of issues that caused their loved one's death, such as social problems, a sudden or terminal illness, or violence. Activists may also focus on education. They create meaning from their loss by energetically contributing through careers that give them a purpose in life or contributing to the quality of life through activities.

Normalizers are committed to creating or recreating community due to the fact that they have a strong sense of having lost their community, friends, and family, as well as their lifestyle (that accompanied them) once their loved one passed away. They place their initial emphasis on community, friends, and family.

This researcher finds that Buddy's work-group was displaying this identity type. Their group was attempting to normalize their sense of community, but came up short as a group.

Memorialists commit themselves to attempting to preserve the memory of the loved one that they have lost.

This researcher finds that Lou Anne's work-group was displaying this identity type. They had fought hard to attempt to preserve her memory, but eventually acquiesced once new management came online with their own ideas on how to run the division.

Nomads don't yet understand how their loss has currently affected their lives. They have not yet resolved their grief.

This researcher finds that John's work-group was displaying this identity type. John's previous work-group has definitely not resolved their grief, and they are still wrestling, as a work-group, with exactly how that loss of John has affected their lives.

Disenfranchised Grief

Disenfranchised grief (Doka, 1989) is a relatively new term that identifies grief that is not being acknowledged by society. Disenfranchised grief is challenging for people, or groups of people to overcome, for a variety of reasons.

Initially, society does not recognize the loss or death, subsequently the griever does not possess the community support socially, not having the ability to openly discuss what he is dealing with. The griever may become more angry or depressed because he is not able to openly discuss the recently experienced loss; therefore, he does not have the ability to fully express his grief.

With Buddy's work-group, the group is searching for some resolution to the event of Buddy's death, but the employer is not assisting with the endeavor because, according to management, the group is "only a softball team".

With Lou Anne's work-group, management is not fully cognizant of just how Lou Anne resonated with her two employees; therefore, there is not that connection from

management towards the work-group to adequately and significantly mirror that loss, and for management to assist the struggling work-group in any way possible.

Frank Eyetsemitan's Stifled Grief

Frank Eyetsemitan suggested that organizations promote *stifled grief,* which he defined as grief denied its full course, as recommended in Worden's (1991) four tasks of mourning. Eyetsemitan stated, "While organizations seem to recognize different losses, the emotional attachments formed by their employees are poorly comprehended." (Eyetsemitan, 1998). This concept of stifled grief could be applied to many of the cases denoted in this dissertation. The work-group members of Lou Anne were denied their grief in its full course. The same could be said of Buddy's work-group, as well as John's.

Eyetsemitan (1998, p. 477) further states: "Also, understanding that grief is a process and how Worden's (1991) four tasks of mourning are applied in the workplace, as suggested below, may be a helpful guide to organizations in handling employee grief:

Task 1: Accept the Reality of the Loss

Task 2: Work Through to the Pain of Grief

Task 3: Adjust to the Environment in Which the Deceased is Missing

Task 4: To Emotionally Relocate the Deceased and Move on With Life

Allowing that process to run its course, especially in the John, Buddy, and Lou Anne scenarios would have had pronounced effects on their respective work-groups. Eyetsemitan (1998) concludes with, "Future studies should investigate the effects of stifled grief on both the employee's mental health and on performance of different jobs, as the effects may vary depending on the nature of the work" (p. 469).

John's work-group was prominently impacted by the loss of John. The performance of the work-group suffered a noticeable downturn from management's perspective. The concept of stifled grief demands further validation from a large-scale study.

Chapter 5

Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations for Further Research

The major research question is as follows: How do work-groups manage the sudden and unexpected loss of a work-group member?

Theory Development

Ultimately, several theories presented themselves. Second order themes (or categories) subsequently emerged.

1. *(Second Order Theme) Emotion within the work-group plays a large role within the work-group.*

   a. The elevated emotional intelligence (EI) of the lost employee factored in strongly not only in their personal performances, but also in the difficulties in replacing that emotional intelligence.

   b. The more "emotionally invested" the lost person was in his ownership of the work-group, the work-group would feel that loss much more strongly.

   c. What was also revealing to hear was how one person can sabotage an entire work-group (a toxic member) and hijack an entire work-group. Reflexively, hearing how that work-group subsequently works around that person also provided tremendous learning for this researcher.

   d. What this researcher also found insightful was just how callous, or in denial of their emotional state, workers can be.

   e. Conversely, just how loyal people can be was also a tremendous learning point for this researcher.

f. The higher the respect and admiration that the work-group has for the lost work-group member, the more difficult the work-group survival.

g. The greater the resonance that the missing member had, the more difficult the work-group survival.

h. The greater the loyalty that the work-group has for the missing member, the more difficult the work-group survival.

2. *(Second Order Theme) The role of management is of high importance in the recovery of the work-group.*

   a. Seemingly, on the surface, unimportant work-group members may actually be the ones that figuratively oils the entire machine. Within that same vein, seemingly unimportant groups (like the softball team) have a quietly tremendous impact on an organization. There is resonance.

   b. The greater the size of the void that the missing member leaves, the more difficult the work-group survival.

   c. Management's handling of the loss situation plays a significant role in determining the work-group's survival.

3. *(Second Order Theme) The Tuckman stages were pliable in nature.*

   a. The pliability of Tuckman's stages and seeing condensed phases of that model playing out within these conversations were truly learning moments.

   b. Tuckman Stage resolution plays a significant role in determining the work-group survival.

4. *(Second Order Theme) The role of the missing member weighed heavily with just how the work-group responded to the sudden and unexpected loss of the group member.*

   a. The role of the lost work-group member within the work-group plays a major role in work-group survival.

5. *(Second Order Theme) The manner of the loss of the missing work-group member played a major role in just how the work-group responded to the recovery opportunities that were placed in front of them.*

   a. The manner of the loss of the missing work-group member plays a significant role in determining work-group survival.

Model Based Upon Theme Progressions (Emergent Theory)

Three major theme progressions have developed from the second level of coding (second –order themes). These three major theme progressions are as follows:

1. All three of William Bridges' phases of organizational transition need to be allowed significant time to progress and transpire. An expansion of grieving space is needed. In the cases where the lost members were considered toxic, the significant time is used by the work-group to detoxify and recover from the loss of the missing member.

2. There is a need to delicately strike a balance between the understanding and the comprehension of the meaning of the chaos event, while still establishing the true new beginning.

3. Both sides (both management and employees) need to establish and assist with meanings. Both sides (both management and employees) need to

establish ownership of the loss equally. Both sides (both management and employees) need to be peacefully reconciled with one another. Human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them.

a) Allow significant time for all three of William Bridges' phases of organizational transition to transpire. There must be an expansion of the grieving space. Grieving time is needed. In the cases where the lost members were considered toxic, the significant time is used by the work-group to detoxify and recover from the loss of the missing member.

John - John's work-group needs some time to adjust to this sudden and unexpected loss. The work-group may not be in a good emotional state to really be ready to move on. "Moving on" cannot be forced onto a work-group. The fact that John was highly admired and respected within this work-group, that John had a very high resonance within his work-group, that the sudden death saddened and incapacitated this work-group, and that the emotional intelligence with John was high all lead to a need for an increase, or an expansion of, the grieving space. More grieving time will be needed by this work-group.

Buddy – Buddy's work-group was significantly dealing with disenfranchised grief. More grieving time will be needed. The grief timeline for Buddy's work-group needs to be substantially lengthened. The employees need some space to process this case of disenfranchised grief. This sudden and unexpected loss to this work-group is having a much larger impact than anyone had originally thought. By that same thought process, management itself needs some grieving time to substantially and significantly recognize the effect of the sudden and unexpected loss. The fact that Buddy was highly admired and

respected within this work-group, that Buddy had a very high resonance with his work-group, that the sudden death saddened and incapacitated this work-group, and that the emotional intelligence with Buddy was high all lead to a need for an increase, or an expansion of, the grieving space.

Susan – Susan was a toxic member. There is no question of that. There needs to be an adequate amount of time for the detoxification of the staff. Susan was not respected within the work-group at all. Susan had zero resonance with her work-group whatsoever. The work-group rejoiced when Susan "moved on". Emotional intelligence was nonexistent with Susan. Although not possibly considered true "grieving time", the work-group, even though perhaps eager to "let go of the past", there still remains the tasks of learning exactly what Susan did in the way of everyday work, detoxifying the work-group, and making the new beginning a hard reality.

Renee – Time will be needed to find someone that the employees will trust in a union steward situation. Especially with regards to sensitive issues, such as the union interactions, a Next Man Up strategy could be devastating to the work-group. Renee had respect from the work-group; however, she was not admired. Renee was neutral with regards to resonance within her work-group. The "Next Man Up" philosophy neutralizes and protects the work-group, in a sense, from the sudden and unexpected loss. Emotional intelligence was negligible with Renee. The thought behind the "Next Man Up" strategy is to seemingly protect and quickly replace a lost member. This researcher feels that this condensed grief timeline will not benefit the work-group in an overall, holistic manner. It would merely be a "band-aid" approach to the sudden and unexpected loss.

Lou Anne – The employees need a much larger timeline in order to adequately process and transition between supervisors. The grief timeline needs to be substantially lengthened. The respect and admiration that the work-group displayed toward Lou Anne was initially low, but that changed more towards the positive. Lou Anne's resonance was quietly there, but suddenly showed. Her sudden death saddened and incapacitated the work-group. Lou Anne's emotional intelligence was high, but was hidden. All of these factors point to a need for an expansion of the grieving space. This expansion of the grieving space will assist in preventing stifled grief.

Russ – Time will be needed for the staff to re-acclimate to a brand new supervisor, one who cares about his or her work-group. There was a low respect and a low admiration for Russ from the entire work-group. Russ also had zero resonance with his work-group whatsoever. Russ did not invest in the work-group, so the work-group was not concerned with the manner of loss. Emotional intelligence was nonexistent with Russ. Although not possibly considered true "grieving time", the work-group, even though perhaps eager to "let go of the past", there still remains the tasks of learning exactly what Russ did in the way of everyday work, detoxifying the work-group, and making the new beginning a hard reality. This work-group has grown accustomed to having an absentee boss. There may be significant transitions ahead for them if they find themselves with a very hands-on, micromanager type of a supervisor.

b) The thought is in delicately striking a balance between understanding and comprehending the meaning of the chaos event while still establishing the true new beginning. One needs balance in the permanent white water. The thought is "don't tip

over the raft"…"don't tip over the canoe"…"don't over-compensate"…"row on both sides of the craft"…"balance the ghost group with the go group".

John – The situation is not balanced now. John is a very difficult person to replace. The managerial transition plans need to be established and balanced while the manager in charge is present and engaged. John was the "Glue Guy" within his work-group. There needs to be a balance struck between understanding exactly the value that John brought to the work-group and what is lost versus the likelihood of adequately replacing John. The value of the missing member is tremendous. The void of John's loss is large. Understanding this void will assist with the work-group's comprehension of the chaos event. Within Tuckman's stages, the work-group is refusing to move to the mourning stage. This refusal to move to the mourning stage must be addressed by the work-group in order to establish that balance that is needed for the work-group, in a reconstituted form, to move on and progress.

Buddy – There very much needs to be balance established in order to make sense of the chaos and the true new beginning. The work-group needs a balanced recognition of their group's loss, even if management deems this loss to be inconsequential to the work-group's main functionality. Buddy was the "Glue Guy" within his work-group. There needs to be a balance struck between understanding exactly the value that Buddy brought to the work-group and what is lost versus the likelihood of adequately replacing Buddy. The value of the missing member is tremendous. The void of Buddy's loss is large. One can argue that Buddy is irreplaceable. Understanding this void will assist with the work-group's comprehension of the chaos event. Within Tuckman's stages, the work-group subsequently implodes on the sudden and unexpected loss. The balance that the work-

group needs is an understanding from management that this loss is significant to them, and that they are currently suffering from disenfranchised grief. This disenfranchised grief needs to be adequately comprehended and understood in order for the work-group to establish their true new beginning, which would be in a reconstituted form.

Susan – There is zero balance in the Susan situation to begin with. Ironically, there may be a tighter and better-functioning work-group now that Susan has "moved on" because the work-group has been through the stories of sustaining themselves and the stories of surviving Susan together as a work-group. Now the work-group is bonded. Susan had refused to take on a role within the work-group. The work-group is unbalanced right from the beginning. The size of the void that she has left is minimal. The only task is to divvy up her work. There may be some difficulties, however, in re-balancing this situation if Susan may have taken some important computer files with her or she was not forthcoming in really advising others just what she was up to, work-wise, on a day-to-day basis. Within the Tuckman stages, the forming of the work-group never takes place. This work-group is way behind where it needs to be and is subsequently unbalanced. Upon getting the work-group back up to an acceptable pace of work, maintaining that day-to-day balance will be critical to the work-group in order for the group's progression to occur.

Renee – "Next Man Up" is not a balanced strategy. "Next Man Up" is a strategy with a boilerplate solution, and cannot be leveraged in every single instance. Renee has not left much of a void. The "Next Man Up" strategy is considered their performance stage.

Lou Anne – This work-group needs time to balance. The work-group needs a balanced recognition of their group's loss, even if management deems this loss to be inconsequential to the work-group's main functionality. Lou Anne has left a large void by her absence, but the void is filled within a relatively short amount of time. There appears to be at least some semblance of balance, at least with regards to replacing her. There is an imbalance, however, with regards to truly understanding and comprehending the true meaning of the sudden and unexpected loss, at least when it comes to understanding and comprehending just how loved and valuable Lou Anne was to her work-group.

Russ – Balance needs to be restored. There is zero balance in the Russ situation currently. The present trend is that management now has employees who are now not accustomed to being led by a supervisor who cares. This is not a sustainable situation and remains tenuous. The void left with Russ is negligible. There is an imbalance present within the work-group right from the beginning. This imbalance needs to be rectified. With regards to Tuckman's stages, the work-group is stuck between the forming stage and the storming stage. There is a fluctuation between both of these stages. If some balance and consistency are maintained, there may be established then some regular movement between the stages.

c) Both sides (both management and employees) need to establish and assist with meanings. Both sides (both management and employees) need to establish ownership of the loss equally. Both sides (both management and employees) need to be peacefully reconciled with one another. Human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them.

John – Management definitely needs to "step up" in this situation. Management does need to address the loss in an immediate fashion for the sake of work flow continuation. Management didn't really address the loss. Subsequently, the work-group reacts by becoming almost "too loyal" to John, so this affects John's replacement, Ron.

Buddy – Management is not recognizing the loss. Management needs to recognize that a seemingly inconsequential loss can have the capacity for far-ranging effects within a work-group, especially if not addressed by management. Management refused to recognize the loss of Buddy. Subsequently, the work-group reacts by becoming overburdened with the complete and total ownership of a very heavy loss.

Susan – The Susan situation is an untenable situation. It needs a solution. Management needs to address that situation. The employees need some managerial support in an untenable work situation. Management needs to address the potential personality conflict issues before they can have the possibility to get way out of hand. Management allowed the situation to go on far too long. There is no loyalty toward Susan from the work-group. Subsequently, neither management nor the employees are willing to establish and assist with meanings.

Renee – The "Next Man Up" strategy is untenable. The current trend is that management does not embrace the required sensitivities necessary to handle the delicate situations. The "Next Man Up" strategy is far too "boilerplate" of a solution to be used in every single instance. Loyalty toward Renee was surprisingly absent from the work-group. Both management and the employees need to take ownership of the loss equally. Both sides appear to be unwilling to accomplish this. Both management and the employees need to assist with establishing and assisting with meanings. Both sides

appear to be unwilling to accomplish this. This subsequently leads to a situation that appears to be lacking a solid resolution. Unless these items are resolved, there appears reasoning that the work-group will remain in limbo.

Lou Anne – Management needs to recognize the potential emotions of loss. Management needs to recognize that there needs to be some sensitivities shown to employees who have experienced a sudden and unexpected loss. The potential emotions caused by the sudden and unexpected loss could run deeper than upon first analysis. Management was eventually required to "move on", but could have handled the sudden and unexpected loss in a more humane manner. The loyalty toward Lou Anne was very present from the work-group. The work of establishing and assisting with meanings was all accomplished on the side of the employees. There was not an equal weighting of the loss between both management and the employees.

Russ – Management needs to immediately address the issues of the manager's discontent with their staff in a timely and judicial manner. The highest level of management left Russ's employees "out to dry". Management refused to address the manager's discontent with his staff. The employees need some managerial support in an untenable work situation. The employer should use caution not to place the employees in a "no win" situation. Management should not have allowed Russ to "disconnect". There was no loyalty toward Russ from the work-group. Neither the employees nor the management seemed to be willing to establish and assist with meanings. Neither the employees nor the management seemed to be willing to take ownership of the loss.

The figure contains the following labels:

- CHAOS EVENT
- true new beginning
- mgmt support
- employee support
- tipping point
- pain
- difficulty
- struggle
- transition
- establish & assist with meanings
- an expansion of grieving space needed (to prevent stifled grief)
- an environment of permanent white water
- thought is in striking a balance between understanding & comprehending the meaning of the chaos event while still establishing the true new beginning

Figure 70. Model: Grieving Space Expansion

Description of Model: Above is a diagram detailing the final determined model, based upon this grounded theory research project. The model is entitled "Grieving Space Expansion". The model is seen as a timeline with older events to the left of the model and more recent events to the right of the model. The entirety of this timeline of grieving space expansion transpires within an environment of permanent white water. The white dialogue box below the blue timeline indicates that an expansion of grieving time, or an expansion of grieving space, is required for a proper healing of the work-group that has experienced the sudden and unexpected loss of its work-group member. The expansion of grieving space is needed to prevent stifled grief within the work-group, allowing time for all three of William Bridges' phases to transpire.

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There is a mirrored timeline at the top of the "delta" (or change) triangle where the "balance" needs to be struck between understanding and comprehending the meaning of the chaos event (the sudden and unexpected loss of the work-group member), while still attempting to "strike the balance" by establishing the true new beginning. The chaos event is to the left of the top mirrored timeline due to the fact that it is an older event on the time horizon. The "true new beginning" is to the right of the top mirrored timeline due to the fact that it is a newer event on the time horizon.

The fulcrum, the delta (or change), also known as "the tipping point" contains the inescapable aspects of pain, struggle, difficulty, and transition. The thought is to never fully "let go" of the valuable learnings that arrive from the chaos event. The true new beginning is only possible if that arrow stays positioned and balanced on the top of the fulcrum.

The diamond shapes represent just how management support and employee support need to strongly coincide with one another in order to establish and assist with meanings early on within the framework of the time horizon, coinciding with the chaos event of the sudden and unexpected loss of the work-group member.

The diamond shapes also represent just how management and employee support need to strongly coincide with one another in order to establish and assist with meanings later on within the framework of the time horizon, coinciding with the true new beginning, where the reconfigured work-group has an opportunity to get themselves re-adjusted as a group and take a legitimate shot at re-defining themselves as a group.

Grieving space expansion takes place within an environment of permanent white water. The thought is in striking a balance between understanding and comprehending the

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meaning of the chaos event (the sudden and unexpected loss of a work-group member) while still establishing the true new beginning.

An expansion of grieving space is needed to prevent stifled grief, allowing time for all three of William Bridges' phases to transpire.

The "tipping point", where the true balance needs to be struck, is purposefully in the form of a triangle (and an intentional symbol for delta), indicating change. The change contains pain, struggle, difficulty, and transition.

Both "employee support" and "management support" are necessary to strike that balance between the understanding and comprehending the meaning of the chaos event, while still establishing the true new beginning. Both employees and management need to take on ownership of the sudden and unexpected loss equally. Both the employee side and the management side need to be reconciled. Teamwork between both the employee side and the management side is imperative. Human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them. Both sides (management and employees) need to establish and assist with those meanings. Balance of the responsibilities for managing the necessary transitions between both management and employees must take place within the white water environment, with buy-in from management to assist with those transitions.

The final determined model was the result of the entire Grounded Theory exercise. The model attempts to relay the turbulent emotion and the permanent white water that surrounds a work-group that has experienced a sudden and unexpected loss of a group member.

Grieving space will be defined as an expansion of the time horizon, to where the necessary and required grieving processes are given the adequate time that is needed for some proper closure to be achieved by the work-group that has experienced the sudden and unexpected loss. This allows any disenfranchised grief the necessary time to stabilize as well.

The model also hopes to relay the delicate balance that must be struck between the letting go of the past (the chaos event) and the true new beginning. To completely disregard the learnings (albeit painful) of the chaos event does no favors for the work-group attempting to reconfigure itself. The learnings would become lost.

The counter-balance aspect of this model as well is that the hand-in-hand, almost fraternal, coalescing between management and employees is absolutely necessary to cement a pivotal future for the damaged work-group.

Importance of This Research

The importance of this research is that the research does indeed present a road map for "bridging the gap" between how employers view sudden and unexpected losses within their work-group and how that work-group views the sudden and unexpected loss.

Future Research

Further study is also warranted for the study of just how various work-groups happen to respond to these impetus events. This research only sampled six groups, but key learnings quickly emerged, even with only six cases.

Another area of additional study would be to examine the organizational structure of other entities which could encompass more unexpected aspects of a loss.

Further study would also be appropriate into understanding how the primary learning from this study could be applied in other settings such as areas where losses may be more frequent events, such as nursing homes, hospitals, and emergency rooms.

Implications for Organization Development

This research has several important implications for the field of Organization Development. The initial important implication for Organization Development is that the findings of this grounded theory approach are consistent with the very foundational values inherent within Organization Development that people matter, that feelings matter, that we are all connected.

This research also presents findings that are consistent with interventions using trained transitional counselors.

Finally, this research presents a methodology for interventions that is largely focused on viewing the loss from the ground up: taking the portions of the loss and strategically analyzing how each facet of the loss impacts which person and/or group and why.

Personal Impact

This entire process of a sudden and unexpected loss to a group has very deep, emotional roots for this researcher that go way back to Christmas 1975.

From my sudden and unexpected loss of a 30-year-old uncle (Uncle Paul, also my Godfather) at the age of nine years old, and then the subsequent and unwitting analysis (on my part) of just how Paul's other three brothers (one of which was my father), his mother, his widow, and his two daughters adapted and changed and coped with this sudden and unexpected loss to their group, I had radically ambivalent feelings. There was

so much learning inherent within this situation occurring; albeit, the lessons were very painful.

Also, a sudden and unexpected loss of a cousin, Brendan, in 2011, while in the early formulation stage of this dissertation was also impactful to this researcher and to his parents and sister.

I am pretty much of an old-school organizer when it comes to tracking my thoughts with regards to this dissertation. With pen and paper in an Asian-themed restaurant, I had finally written down on paper all of the thoughts and notes that I definitely wanted to encompass within this dissertation. This was definitely everything that I had aspired to say.

As I gazed at my finalized pen and paper dissertation findings, I set the paper and pen down on the restaurant table, and I was immediately struck by the suddenness of the group losses, and I had experienced a sad emotion as to the sudden deaths of some of these very valued work-group members. At that point, I felt this tinge of regret that these valued team members did not live full and complete lives, by my definition, to where they could have fulfilled and finalized their tasks that they had initially set out to do. Per this researcher's assessment, there was limited closure for them as far as I was concerned.

As I wrestled with that own sense of my interpretations of sudden and unexpected loss, I then received my final learning with regards to the findings within this dissertation. As the check came at the Asian-themed restaurant, and I read the fortune written on the white slip of paper gently folded into my chocolate fortune cookie. My final learning took place for me, and tears of closure suddenly streamed down my face very quickly and uncontrollably.

The serendipitous fortune cookie read thusly:
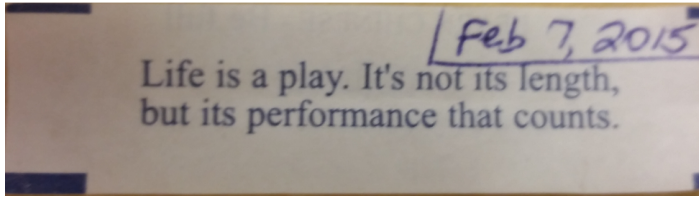
Figure 71. Serendipitous Fortune Cookie

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Appendix A

"The Darcy Principle"

I have a 7-year-old daughter named Darcy. Two years ago, while beginning this process of writing this dissertation, I had a moment with her where she almost rebuked me by stating, "You don't like mistakes, do you Daddy?"

I will have to admit that, as a CPA who is in charge of large portions of The Ohio State University's Agricultural budget, I would have to say to that, "No, I do not like mistakes!"

Yet, thinking further on her question though, and surmising how the adult version of her would describe that question to me, I found tremendous value in her comment.

Especially when we are speaking of the sudden and unexpected loss of a work-group member, her question really seems to ask, "What makes you think that everything was going to stay the same way that it was?" "Why can't you see the opportunity in the mistake, or the change?" "It's going to happen anyway, you may as well rejoice in it!!!" "Why can't you embrace the mistake, or the change?" "Why are you thinking that it necessarily is a bad thing?" "Why are you presuming that this mistake or change is bad?"

Her thought process and her lack of inflexible paradigms truly generated portions of this work.

Appendix B

"Kireji (or the "cutting word")

Kireji is a term for a special category of words in Japanese traditional poetry.

It is used in haikus, as well as in the opening verse of some Japanese literature.

What is telling here is that there is no exact equivalent of kireji in English. In English, we

need to account for kireji grammatically with ellipses or a dash. Its function is sometimes

difficult to define. It is said to supply structural support to the haiku verse.

Examples in haikus are:

"spring going-

birds crying and tears

in the eyes of fish"

OR

"how cool the feeling

of a wall against the feet-

siesta"

When placed at the end of a verse, it provides a dignified ending, concluding the

verse with a heightened sense of closure. Used in the middle of a verse, it briefly cuts the

stream of thought, indicating that the verse consists of two thoughts half independent of

each other. In cutting a poem into two parts, it implies an equation, while inviting the

reader to explore their interrelationship. Placed elsewhere in the verse, a kireji performs

the paradoxical function of both cutting and joining; it not only cuts the poem into two

parts, but also establishes a correspondence between the two images it separates,

implying that the latter represents the poetic essence of the former, creating two centers

and often generating an implicit comparison, equation, or contrast between the two separate elements.

Eastern culture goes much further back through history than Western culture.

I find beauty in this concept that there can be a "cutting" and a "joining" simultaneously within the same poem. We are being invited to see the beauty within the separation, and I am hoping that this dissertation allows us to focus on just how many possibilities are involved with something that we may initially see as a "mistake", as in The Darcy Principle. A discovery is awaiting to where a work-group can find the balance in the separation. We need to explore that inter-relationship.
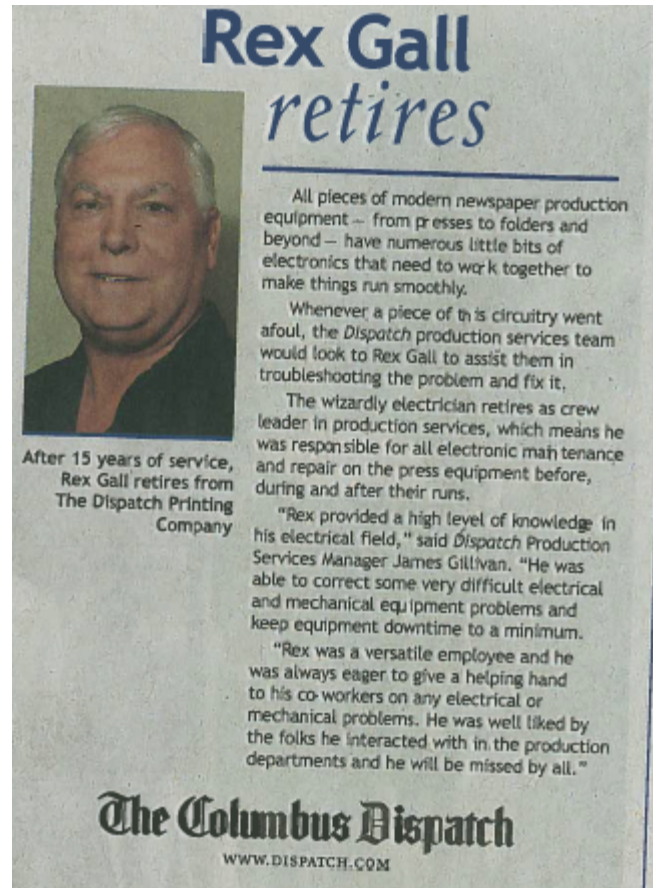
Appendix C

Rex Gall Retires

I had found this announcement in the Sunday, February 15th, 2015, Columbus Dispatch and was seeing so many comparisons to this dissertation.

   If you read this, it's not as if Rex has been there for 50 years, but he has made a tremendous impact in 15 years of work.

   He is compared to the intricacies of the printing process that he has mastered. The values state that everything "needs to work

Rex Gall
retires

After 15 years of service, Rex Gall retires from The Dispatch Printing Company

All pieces of modern newspaper production equipment — from presses to folders and beyond — have numerous little bits of electronics that need to work together to make things run smoothly.

Whenever a piece of this circuitry went afoul, the *Dispatch* production services team would look to Rex Gall to assist them in troubleshooting the problem and fix it.

The wizardly electrician retires as crew leader in production services, which means he was responsible for all electronic maintenance and repair on the press equipment before, during and after their runs.

"Rex provided a high level of knowledge in his electrical field," said *Dispatch* Production Services Manager James Gillivan. "He was able to correct some very difficult electrical and mechanical equipment problems and keep equipment downtime to a minimum.

"Rex was a versatile employee and he was always eager to give a helping hand to his co-workers on any electrical or mechanical problems. He was well liked by the folks he interacted with in the production departments and he will be missed by all."

The Columbus Dispatch
WWW.DISPATCH.COM

together". To refer to Rex as "wizardly" denotes just how high he was regarded amongst his work-group. Rex is valued not only for his tremendous skill, but also in the compassion that he displayed in his day-to-day worklife. "He will be missed by all." Rex is going to be tremendously difficult to replace. Rex was definitely "The Glue Guy".

"In The Aeroplane Over The Sea" by Neutral Milk Hotel (by Jeff Mangum)

In The Aeroplane Over The Sea Lyrics

○ from **In The Aeroplane Over The Sea**

"In The Aeroplane Over The Sea" is track #3 on the album In The Aeroplane Over The Sea. It was written by Mangum, Jeff.

What a beautiful face I have found in this place
That is circling all 'round the sun
What a beautiful dream that could flash on the screen
In a blink of an eye and be gone from me
Soft and sweet
Let me hold it close and keep it here with me

And one day we will die and our ashes will fly
From the aeroplane over the sea
But for now we are young let us lay in the sun
And count every beautiful thing we can see
Love to be in the arms of all
I'm keepin' here with me

What a curious life we have found here tonight
There is music that sounds from the street
There are lights in the clouds, Anna's ghost all around
Hear her voice as it's rolling and ringing through me
Soft and sweet
How the notes all bend and reach above the trees

Now how I remember you
How I would push my fingers through
Your mouth to make those muscles move
That made your voice so smooth and sweet
But now we keep where we don't know
All secrets sleep in winter clothes
With one you loved so long ago
Now we don't even know his name

What a beautiful face I have found in this place
That is circling all 'round the sun
And when we meet on a cloud I'll be laughing out loud
I'll be laughing with everyone I see
Can't believe how strange it is to be anything at all