

Lesson 3 – What’s Your Context

Norman: Some of you have taken this program to better your personal life. Others may be listening to learn how to improve the results of their organization. In terms of creating results, it’s all the same. An organization is a living entity, just like a person. The principals of activity, relationship and context work the same for both. The best way to incorporate these principals is first apply them to your personal life. Work with them. Learn what it takes to live from a new perspective. Then you will be much more effective in applying them to your organization. As you work through this and other lessons, you can always substitute your organization every time you hear the word you. The same principals apply. That is because both you and your organization are living, creative beings.

Jane: In today’s class we will further the discussion that we started in Lesson 2 about Context Energy and how it impacts your life.

Remember, it’s the field of energy that surrounds you, that makes up the conditions of your life. As you will learn, everything emanates from Context field and flows into Activity defining the choices we make, the relationships we have, and the actions we take in response to life. Like the film strip that changes pure light into an amazing movie.

Norman: Think of your life as a spherical container that holds all forms of energy. It contains all the relationships and interactions, all the actions you take and the outcomes you create. In fact, it contains everything you experience as your world. Anything, any beliefs, thought, even actions and experiences, that is outside of your spherical container, does not exist.

Jane: Let’s review from our last lesson how this is container formed and what defines its shape. Let’s review context.

First, we are born pure. Then an experience happens and we give it meaning i.e. create a story about it. We then establish a behavioral strategy – if it was positive we seek more of it, if it was painful we create behavior choices to prevent it. This begins to form our beliefs about how life works and how we should respond. We co-mingle the stories we create with the stories of our cultures. And the thousands of stories we have created weave together to form a tapestry, a template for our life.

Norman: To understand how all this fits together to create the outcomes of your life let’s look at the metaphor of how a movie is projected. There are four major components. First there is an original light source, usually a white light of high intensity. Then we add the film strip which contains the story. Next is the lens that focuses the movie. And lastly, there is the screen that captures the movie and

reflects it back to you. Take away any of these items and of course you would not be able to watch the movie. Without a light source, there is no energy to flow the images onto the screen. Without the filmstrip, there is no story to be seen, all we would have is a nice blob of white light. Without the lens the movie would show up rather hazy, fuzzy and out of focus. And without the screen we would not be able to enjoy the movie as the energy would simply dissipate out into space.

Jane: We create the experiences and outcomes of our life in the same way a movie works. The white light is the source energy of life, known by many names (God, divine energy or infinite intelligence, the ether, quantum field) Whatever you want to call it is fine. The film strip is the tapestry of your stories, it is the template of your life through which the source energy passes through. The lens is focused through your attention. What you put your attention on is what you will bring into focus. The projection screen is life itself. It reflects back to you that which you hold as your personal filmstrip.

Norman: Just as a film strip allows you to see the movie unfold, so does your story tapestry. Your personal film strip filters the infinite nature of the Source of Universal Energy to create your unique world. Almost by definition then, no two worlds could ever be exactly the same, even if there are many shared story elements between them. The very act of creating the world you live in is also an act of limiting the world you live in. This is what the eastern religions refer to as Maya or illusion, because it is an illusion to think that our world represents the whole of existence. In more modern terms quantum physics would say we have taken the field of infinite potentialities and collapsed the wave function into a singular possibility. However you choose to look at it each of our personal worlds is very real to us. It does not feel like an illusion. It is reality, our reality. And all of our personal realities are very real to each of us.

Jane: We are living our story. And we are living within stories that are also within stories. Imagine you are like those Russian nesting dolls, where there is a set of wooden dolls, each decreasing in size and placed one inside the other. We are born into our parent's stories, within the story of our faith path, whatever it may be, within our community and country, within our society, etc. And it is our stories that make us quite unique and different. We may think we live in the same world as everyone else but in fact we are all living in our own unique world.

Norman: People can even exist in the same set of experiences and still come out differently. That's because the meaning we put to the experiences will invariably be personal and very different.

Jane: This can lead to some fairly impactful misunderstandings. I can recall one of

my first annual employee reviews at a new job. I had far exceeded all the financial goals by almost 100%, had gotten national recognition for Innovation in Non Profits, and I had investigated and recovered a significant loss due to theft. In the review, the CEO had focused on one idea that she had that I had not followed up on to her satisfaction. After I found out that it was not feasible financially, I had dropped it. After the review, I was furious. That night I wrote down all the things that I had accomplished. The next morning, I went into her office and reviewed the list with her. I knew that and you've done great, she said. I just wanted to show you where you could improve.

In my world, an annual review was the time to acknowledge all my hard work and accomplishments. In her world, an annual review was the time she had to tell me how I could improve in my job.

Norman: Jane and I periodically use the phrase in my world when we are sharing an experience we are having. This helps us remember that while much of what we share in our life experiences has a lot of commonality to it, there are those times when her world and mine are not the same at all. This has really helped us work through many periods of conflict and has helped us expand the limitations of our world.

Jane: As Norman just indicated, there are many implications to how we work with this model of how we create our world. How we work with relationship energy and how we modify our context field to expand our range of possibilities is all based on understanding this foundational model. Some of that we will explore in later lessons, while some of it will be in our advance trainings.

Norman: For purpose of this introductory class here are the key takeaways: First, It is the flow of energy passing through your unique filmstrip that is what creates the outcomes of your life. Your filmstrip is the tapestry created by weaving together the many stories you have created throughout your life. Everything in our lives flows from the context field which is framed by our stories. Like a film strip, this tapestry eliminates some of the frequencies of the infinite energy to create our unique world. We emphasize your world is unique – No two worlds are exactly alike. Change your stories and you change your world, change your outcomes.

Jane: It is our ability to create stories that sets us apart and is what makes us creative beings. We are creating meaning in our life all the time. It's not just the events of our lives, it's the meaning we put on them.

Whether we are getting the results we expect or not, consciously or unconsciously we are constantly creating something. How do we become more

aware... creating extraordinary impact rather than let life happen to us. We spend considerable time in our workshops, sharing the major stories of our lives, those stories that have the most impact. There is incredible power in stories. Change your story, change your life.

Norman: Stories weave into the tapestry or the filmstrip of your life. Which in turn creates the spherical container of your unique world. Its spherical container is also commonly referred to as the culture of an organization or a community. On a personal level you culture might also be viewed as your persona or personality. I think this story is a good example of cultural change. I was working with a technology company who was facing some significant challenges from a changing competitive landscape. Remember an organizations culture, their contextual container will define what they can and cannot do. One of the reasons it is so difficult to change an organizations culture, is because the stories that define the cultural container reside in the collective unconscious of the organization. If you ask someone to explain why things are done the way they are, they will often answer, it's simply the way we do things around here.

To help the organization unravel these unconscious forces and make them explicit so they could reframe them, I set up a timeline exercise. I had all of the executives, about 20 individuals, line up in order of their hire date. On a big sheet of butcher paper that covered two wall, we began with the oldest, who happened to be the founder and one by one I had them write what was it like when they started? I broke it down into the energy field categories.

First the activity field information: how many employees, how much revenue, what ere the products...the things that could be measured.

Second, I had them write relationship information – what were the interactions internally like, how did you work with customers? Then they wrote about the Context information, what did it feel like working here, what was your experience.

And lastly what were the significant events over the course of the organizations life and how did the organization respond?

The outcome was they were able to clearly see how they became the type of organization they became, without any judgments about it. They were then able to decide which elements of their stories fit their future challenges and would support them, and which ones would undermine their efforts.

Jane: In our workshops we often have the participants do a similar timeline exercise for their lives. You might try this or yourself.

In a journal or in your workbook, draw a line from 0 to your current age. Then tick off 10 year intervals. If you want, you can increase the number of intervals to 5 to

gain perhaps even more insight.

Then for each decade, or half decade of your life, look at the same four elements.

- *What activities in the way of events or life conditions stand out in your mind?*
- *What relationships seem to have the most significance for you during that period.*
- *What do you remember about how you felt about your life during each of those periods and around each of the events and relationships?*
- *And then what specific most significant events happened and what meaning to you associate with those events?*

This exercise will help you to begin to unravel your personal contextual story and allow you to determine which elements support you now in your life and which ones it would be better for you to let go of.

Norman: To help you further unravel your stories it is useful to note that every event or experience will carry with it one of two types of stories; those that impact the shape of your container and those that don't. All stories that impact us follow a certain pattern.

- My life is in balance, everything is as it should be
- An event occurs that upsets the balance
- I set on a quest to find a resolution – to make sense of it and put my life in balance again
- And finally if find the story, the explanation that brings balance back into my life

Jane: You might recognize this pattern in all of the great literature that moves us

- The balance: Once upon a time ... and every day...
- The un-balance: But then one day...
- The quest for a resolution: ... and because of that ... and so ... until finally....
- The new balance: ... and ever since that day....

As a licensed hypnotherapist, I often found that people's patterns were formed as very young children, in fact many are formed in the womb. Changing these patterns often means that the decision of a three-year old no longer rules the life of the adult who wants to break up life-long patterns.

Look over the timeline you created seeking the patterns for each significant event that stood out for you. See if you can identify what was life like before the event, how did the event upset the balance and what did story did you create to bring your life back in balance.

Norman: This is the how we set up the stories of our lives. From the time we are born into this world we start creating stories and continue to create our stories. Some of our current stories may simply be reinforcing stories. Current experiences that we neatly fit into and further cement an ongoing story.

Then there are transforming stories. Experiences that challenge our existing framework. We can dismiss them as untrue, choose to fit them neatly into our existing framework or we can choose to change our framework and transform who we are and what we now believe.

Jane: When we make a choice, a decision to set into motion a new belief and change the tapestry of our lives, the shape of the context container is forever changed.

To return to our metaphor, the filmstrip of your life, has changed. The light of the universe now passes through the new filmstrip and projects a new story onto the screen, that is your daily 3 dimensional lives. You will experience a different movie, have different experiences, live a different life.

Norman: This is the major shift in the worldview of how results are created. Everything in your life flows through the context container. If it is shaped in such a way as to support your desired outcomes, the results will flow effortlessly. If it is not, it will make achieving your desired outcomes very difficult if not impossible. Everything starts with your context. And your context is a tapestry of your stories. For some of you it may be hard to accept that our lives are created from the stories we ourselves created. The external world looks and feels very real. It feels very real when things happen to us. And it is very difficult for us to see, in that moment, that it is something we created.

Jane: That is Ok if you cannot accept this fully. In fact, it is often difficult for me to see or understand how some of the things that happen to me comes from my own stories. I respond to the external world in the same way all of us do. I go into blaming, anger, frustration, when things don't go the way I want. Or I experience joy, delight excitement when things go the way I hoped.

Norman: Through years of looking at the stories that make up the patterns of my own life's tapestry I have learned how to discern and find the inner stories that are creating my external world. And even knowing the truth of how this process works, it is still difficult at times, when I am in the midst of it, to step back and work at the context field.

Rather than approaching life thinking I need to have it all worked out, or I have fix this problem or face that challenge, I have shifted to living a life of discovery. It has become a playful, lighthearted dance with life itself. I do what I do, life reflects it back to me and I discover how that particular aspect of my context has served me and is it still serving me. This is how we expand our capacity, how we grow in consciousness.

Jane: Now you can get a sense of the journey of development. Everything in our

lives is set up to allow us to see and explore the way we have limited our lives. What you sow is what you reap. The face you show is the face you get back. The 3D projection screen is constantly reflecting back to us, allowing us to uncover and reframe the stories. And the real juiciness, the real power comes from knowing that you can change what you don't like by changing your stories. Life's journey is a mystery, a journey of discovery and development. We call it a mystery journey because we have to discover what our purpose is and how life has been supporting us in achieving that. And like a good mystery, we can begin to catch a glimpse of the plot, the theme of our life, by looking at various scenes and seeing what is unfolding.

Norman: Throughout this journey we dance to unique song, one that is our personal music. It is the song of our soul. It is what calls us to move in certain directions. It is what guides us to know if our inner world, our personal context is serving us or not. By learning to view every experience, every event, every interaction as a reflection of our inner world we open the field to new energy patterns that support the soulful purpose of our lives.

Jane: In the next lesson we will explore the soulful purpose and other aspects of your context field to further your journey and to make your dance light, playful, and truly impactful.