

Questions for the Circle

Once you've brought people together in a circle for a shared purpose, the next step is to choose a check-in question for everyone to answer. For example, if you're meeting to address a tense situation, you might ask a question designed to help people see the problem in new ways, such as:

- **What about this situation** can you imagine being grateful for in the future?
- **What one change in attitude** could you make that might improve the situation?
- **How is this situation** developing your leadership capacities?

As people discuss the situation at hand, it's good to remind them to attend to the group's well-being by asking themselves self-monitoring questions such as these:

- **Am I receptive** to what's being said?
- **What is my body** telling me?
- **How will what I say** benefit the group?
- **Am I speaking** from a place of competition or collaboration?

Close the meeting by asking everyone in the circle to answer a check-out question. Examples:

- **What is the most important thing** you learned today?
- **How has this discussion** changed your mind?
- **What will you do differently tomorrow** as a result of our meeting today?

Answering the check-out question can sometimes be the most important conversation of all. ■



How Unreasonable Are You?

Successful social entrepreneurs change the world by being "unreasonable"—refusing to accept the status quo. Here's how to become one of these pioneers:

- **Shrug off** the constraints of hierarchy, tradition, and bureaucracy. Never do something just because that's the way it's always been done.
- **Focus** on social value creation. In that spirit, be willing to share your innovations and insights so others can replicate them.
- **Apply** practical solutions to social problems, combining innovation, resourcefulness, and opportunity.
- **Innovate** by finding a new product, service, or approach to a social problem.
- **Have an unwavering belief** in everyone's innate capacity to contribute meaningfully to economic and social development.
- **Show** a dogged determination that pushes you to take risks that others wouldn't dare.
- **Balance** your passion for change with a zeal to measure and monitor your impact.
- **Collaborate** with change makers in other sectors.
- **Display** a healthy impatience. Understand that it's sometimes necessary to jump into change before all your ducks are in a row. If it's clear to you that it's time to act, don't hesitate. ■

—adapted from *The Power of Unreasonable People: How Social Entrepreneurs Create Markets that Change the World* (Harvard Business Press, www.hbsp.harvard.edu) by John Elkington and Pamela Hartigan

Sell Your Organization's Value

In *The End of Fundraising* (Jossey-Bass, www.josseybass.com), Jason Saul isn't really advocating for an end to raising funds. What he suggests, however, is presenting your organization in a different way by expressing its economic value, especially to for-profit entities. This approach may supplement your fundraising or, perhaps more accurately, fundraising would supplement selling your impact. Or you may even be able to raise enough resources with this method to make traditional fundraising unnecessary.

The size of the social capital market is about 20 times the philanthropic market. That fact presents great opportunity for nonprofits. As Saul points out, most donors behave like consumers, so promoting your value is necessary. It will benefit your approach to all target audiences.

Whether you agree with Saul's premise or not, it's worth noting his takeaways. For example:

- Organizations will be more productive by measuring outcomes rather than activities.
- Supporters want to see organizations contribute to solutions, not be concerned about who receives credit.
- Higher-value outcomes, an ability to articulate economic impact, and stronger selling skills will strengthen appeals to donors and business people.
- To take advantage of the opportunity the social capital market offers, organizations need to know what businesses want, speak their language, and behave in ways that for-profit organizations understand. Organizations that build these things into their strategy and marketing will attain the resources they need to grow. ■

—reviewed by Terrence Fernsler

How Coaching Strengthens Nonprofits

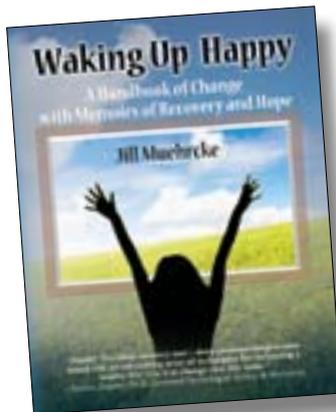
What impact does coaching have on building successful nonprofits? For many years, CompassPoint has been compiling data to answer that question. Here are some of the results:

- Coaching improves decision-making and succession planning in nonprofit organizations.
- Nonprofit leaders say that coaching increases their confidence and self-awareness.
- Coaching has a ripple effect on organizations, leading to better management, smoother transitions, and stronger teams.
- Coaching works best when it's connected to specific goals. These goals can then become the basis for assessing coaching's impact.

You can find more information, along with online action guides and a coaching tool kit, at www.compasspoint.org/coaching. □

Giving – Especially Online – Is Up

Charitable giving rose 1.8% for the three months ending December 2011 as compared to the same period in 2010—and online giving rose 12.9% for the same period, according to the Blackbaud Index of Online Giving. For more information about the index, see www.blackbaud.com/blackbaudindex. □



Insights into Change

We've all faced circumstances that threaten to overturn our lives. Those times demand change. And such transformation is possible, as Jill Muehrcke's new book *Waking Up Happy: A Handbook of Change with Memoirs of Recovery and Hope* attests.

Founding editor of *Nonprofit World*, Jill Muehrcke (Jill@snpo.org) includes her own memoir plus the memoirs of her daughter, granddaughter, and over 30 others, including world-renowned recovery expert Shelly Dutch. All these people effected radical change in their lives. They made peace with addictions to drugs, eating disorders, intolerable situations, habits that suffocated their authentic selves, and people who hurt them or quelled their power.

Readers say that *Waking Up Happy's* combination of memoirs and exercises is both unique and powerful. Each time a memoirist learns a life lesson, you'll find practical exercises to put that lesson to use in your own life. These concrete activities will guide you to becoming your most productive self. They'll help you reach your goals, ignite your purpose, and fulfill your organization's mission. They're designed to deepen your personal and professional life so you can "become the change you want to see" around you.

In addition to absorbing memoirs, the book includes *Tools for the Journey*, *Things to Do Today*, and *365 Steps on Your Journey*—an activity for every day of the year. These activities underscore the book's key message: Do just one or two simple things each day, and those tiny actions will evolve into profound change.

Everyone's life cries out for transformation. If you don't change, your innermost soul dwindles bit by bit. The cost of not continuing to grow is ultimately feeling half-dead. You can make your own miraculous changes with this empowering workbook.

Half of all proceeds from book sales will go to the Recovery Foundation (www.Recoveryfoundation.org), helping people build new lives every day. You can order *Waking Up Happy* at WakingUpHappyBook.com. □

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