

EXERCISE

A Parts Party



Time: solo 15 or more minutes, in conversation 15 or more minutes per person



Setup and materials: pencil and paper



Good For: individuals, balance, prioritizing

Framing:

A part of me wants to,

A part of me doesn't.

Several parts don't care either way, they're just watching to see what happens.

Virginia Satir created an exercise that she called a “parts party.” (Search parts party Satir for more of the story.) When we host a parts party, we check in with bits of ourselves and invite them to get to know each other. Parts have different priorities. We may want security, adventure, growth, safety, recognition, challenge, approval, and those are just a few of the possible investments. With attention and caring negotiation our parts can get much of what they want. We just need to get together and have a party from time to time.

Tim Gallwey taught his own version of a parts party. He spoke of the individual as a corporation and the party as a corporate retreat. It makes sense, corpus, the body. He described each of us as the CEO of the corporation called (your name here.) He suggests that you should hold all the voting shares in the corporation that is (your name here.) We can take advice, but any final decision must be ours alone.

He asked us to consider who the officers of the corporation are. What are their titles and job descriptions? Who are the vice presidents, the directors? What departments are central to the functioning of the corporation? How do people report to each other in the hierarchy of the organization?

Hosting a corporate retreat is both a stretch and immensely fun. People over the years have made up silly and ridiculous titles and job descriptions. “Lead peculiar sorter” was an officer in a writer’s corporation. The job was to pay attention to odd things that happened in the world around him. Real life, fuel for writing.

Another person has a CHO and a CHEW — Chief Humor Officer and CHEW - Chief Habit Easy-Wear. An overworked leader has an Executive VP for rest and quiet.

The object of the game, creating your own corporate structure, is to relieve the CEO (you) of responsibility as much as possible while you still get everything done effectively. Your

parts become a high functioning team. They use strategy, habit, and alignment to make life smooth and easy. It leaves you free to engage in more creative thought.

This tool works well for professionals with families who want to explore balance. It's helpful for entrepreneurs who want to define their work and non-work priorities. Some people repeat the exercise with quarterly meetings or yearly retreats. An exotic location or, why not, an outer space adventure... You can take your parts anywhere you like.

Your retreat mission is twofold: to define what different parts of you want and to explore how creative solutions can satisfy the different parts of you.

Steps:

1. List the behaviors that you want or need to include in your life. The first two are listed for you...
2. Evaluate if some part of you were responsible for overseeing this job, what would the job title be? Create a brief job title for each part (e.g., Vice President for Motivation, Director of NO Thank You, Chief Border Guard)
3. Evaluate the qualities or talents required for each job and write a short job description for each part
4. If you like, many people find it fun to make a map of the corporate structure. Use lines, shapes, words, symbols, images, etc.
5. Discuss with another person or in a group. What did you discover? How can you be a visionary leader of your corporation?

A Parts Party

Behaviors

1. Eat
2. Sleep
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____

Job Title

1. Eat
2. Sleep
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____

Job Description

1. Eat
2. Sleep
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____

TEMPLATE

A Parts Party

Diagram of Corporate Structure