

4 EMPOWERING SESSIONS BASED ON THE EMPOWERMENT TEST

When you study this outline with the goal of launching a Mutual Empowerment Process with another person, please consider the following points:

- This outline reflects how I structured the Mutual Empowerment Processes that I have been involved in (so far, with 22 people). In many respects, the outline suggested has been shaped by my personal setting that may be quite different from yours. Feel free to adapt the process to your own needs.
- In my case, I decided to have two sessions (#1 and #2) focused on debriefing my partner's Empowerment Profile, and just one session (#3) dealing with my own Profile. This was primarily due to the high number of Empowerment Processes that I started simultaneously. In some cases, we added an additional session on my Profile to achieve full mutuality. You may consider doing the same and adapt the outline accordingly.
- When I invited other people to the Empowerment Process, I sent them both a broad overview of the 4 sessions and my own test results (both Summary and Detailed Profiles). I told them that, if they want to start the Empowerment Process with me, they need to share their Profiles with me as well.
- I found it important to have, for all participants, both the Summary and the Detailed Profiles at hand. Each of these Profiles reveal different information. I personally wouldn't do an Empowerment Process without a Detailed Profile.
- This outline consists primarily of questions that you can ask your Empowerment Partner. Please note that I have usually provided more questions than we actually discussed. You should make a selection either beforehand or spontaneously. It is better to focus on a smaller number of questions with more reflective time, than to rush through a list that is too long.

- The main purpose of the questions is not to gain information, but to stimulate thinking. Phases of silence after having asked a question are, in my experience, among the most beneficial parts of the whole process. This is a major reason why I consider a setting with eye contact as crucial. When you have eye contact, a 2 minute phase of silence (especially if explicitly encouraged) is a normal and fruitful thing. If you don't have eye contact (for instance in a phone conversation), there is the automatic tendency to fill phases of silence with words.
- I did almost all of the sessions through Skype video conferences. This is due to the fact that I interacted with people in different countries. Of course, everything can be done in a real-life meeting as well. However, phone (or pure voice communication through the internet) is not recommended, since in an Empowerment Session you (a) should have eye contact and (b) should be able to use visuals if needed.
- I recommend you study the section on Spiritual Change Talk in *The 3 Colors of Leadership* (pages 99-144) before launching the process. That sort of preparation enables you to spontaneously apply different methods of interaction, based on the needs of the moment, which can enhance the process.
- I limited each session to 50 minutes. To me, this seems to be an ideal time-span. I wouldn't recommend sessions that last longer than one hour. Better two sessions of 45 minutes each than one of 90 minutes.
- It is a prerequisite for the process that both partners have studied their own Empowerment Profiles and the Profiles of the other person. It is not a prerequisite that they have read the book (even if this can enrich the process).
- A key factor in this kind of Process is the mutuality. This in and of itself releases empowerment. Even (and especially!) in situations where you may be the leader or the coach of the other person, I would strongly recommend you do not eliminate the mutuality.

Christian A. Schwarz

SESSION #1: DEBRIEFING THE PARTNER'S PROFILE (FOCUS ON STRENGTHS)

- What do you expect, or hope for, as an outcome of the four sessions that we start today?
- When you received the results of your Empowerment Test, what did your eyes first look for? What does this initial reaction reveal about yourself?
- Was there anything you hoped to see? Did you see it?
- What did you fear most? What was your greatest surprise?
- What result do you hope for in your next survey? Why do you believe it will be different?
- Tell me about your respondents: Why did you select those people? In which contexts did they have a chance to experience you? With which group of respondents would you expect different results? Why?
- Did you share your profile with other people yet (for instance, with your respondents)? Why or why not?
- Look at your most developed wing trait (and in particular, the longer wing in that area). How has that strength shown itself in your life or ministry so far? Give two or three examples.
- Do the actions associated with your maximum wing trait come easy to you, or do they require considerable energy?
- What do you see as your greatest achievements so far (both personally and in ministry)? How far has your maximum factor contributed to those achievements?
- How could you increase your effectiveness by an even better balance between the two wings in your strongest area?

- When you look at the items in the list of the 8 Highest Responses (page 11 of Detailed Profile), which of these statements are you most proud of or happy about? Why?
- Which of the prompt questions mentioned on page 11 of the Detailed Profile do you find most helpful? What are your thoughts on them?
- How could you live out some of the strengths revealed by the 8 Highest Responses better than you do now? How could (many) more people benefit from those strengths?
- What hinders you from seeing that happen? What do you have to change to make it happen? How exactly? When?

Homework for your Empowerment Partner:

- Start a similar Empowerment Process with another person (ideally, one of the respondents to your Empowerment Test) whom you feel most comfortable with. Have him or her do the Empowerment Test and have a first debriefing session based primarily on the other person's strengths. Report about your experiences in the next meeting.
- Study the Spiritual Change Talk Questions for your minimum scale (page 11 of the Detailed Profile), and indicate those questions that you would like to discuss with me in our next meeting. Which additional questions related to your minimum scale would you like to discuss?

SESSION #2: DEBRIEFING THE PARTNER'S PROFILE (FOCUS ON MINIMUM AREAS)

- Share about the debriefing session that you had with the other person, as per your homework. *(If the time span between the two meetings was not sufficient, you should come back to this topic at a later stage in the process.)*
- Tell me the questions related to your minimum wing trait that you would like to discuss with me today. *(You can decide whether you discuss these questions right away or at another point during this session, when it best fits.)*
- Do you agree with the results of the profile (i.e. that the lowest wing trait identified is actually your present minimum factor)? Why or why not? Give examples that illustrate how a weakness in that area has displayed itself in your life.
- Can you imagine that your present minimum factor may become your maximum factor within the next six months? What would be circumstances in which that may happen? What would your life look like if the minimum factor became your maximum factor? Would you enjoy it? Or rather, fear it? Explain.
- *(If you have studied the Spiritual Change Talk section in The 3 Colors of Leadership, you may wish to ask the "miracle question" described on pages 106-107:) "Let's assume over night your minimum factor had become your maximum factor, but you don't know that this miracle has actually happened. How would you first notice it? At what time? In which context?"*
- *(After having explored the miracle question, look for signs (precursors) of the anticipated future in the life of your Empowerment Partner, that he or she already experienced in the past.)* When have you previously acted similar to what you described as the "day after the miracle?" How could you strengthen those patterns of behavior?
- When investing energy on your minimum factor, do you fear that this may somehow undermine your strengths? Why or why not?

- What do you expect your score in the area of your minimum factor to be in six months from now?
- What have you tried so far in that area? What worked best? What did not work? How can you expand the very things that worked best?
- In the Detailed Analysis, have a look at the lower scores in the area of your least developed wing trait. Do you think that these responses are a fair description of you?
- Look at the 8 Lowest Responses (page 12 of the Detailed Profile). Are there responses by which you feel hurt? Which ones irritate you most?
- Which of the prompt questions mentioned on page 12 of the Detailed Profile do you find most helpful? What are your thoughts on them?
- What could you immediately do in order to improve in the area of some of the Lowest Responses? Speak as specifically as possible about that topic.
- How can your strengths (not just the number 1 strength!) contribute to increasing your minimum factor? How could my strengths help you increase your minimum factor?
- How can you improve in your minimum area not by taking over new/more/expanded responsibilities, but by filling your present responsibilities differently?
- If a friend asked you about the greatest benefit of our meeting today, what would be your answer?

Homework for your Empowerment Partner:

- Think about one concrete thing that you can put into practice immediately in order to grow in the area of your minimum factor (ideally, dealing with one of the 8 Lowest Responses). Look for opportunities to implement it immediately. Report in our next meeting about your experiences.
- Prepare a debriefing session for me, either on the basis of the debriefing method that you have experienced in the first two sessions, or by applying a different procedure of your choice.

SESSION #3: DEBRIEFING YOUR OWN PROFILE (BOTH STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES)

- *(Start with sharing about the one practical thing your partner has applied.)* Did it come easy to you? How could that be improved or expanded in the future?
- *Then it is your partner's turn to ask you questions that help you debrief your profile. The purpose of this session is (a) to give your partner the opportunity to immediately apply what he or she has learned, and (b) to give you a chance to learn and to grow.*
- *As mentioned before, this session can be expanded to two sessions, in which you may follow the exact outline as suggested for sessions #1 and #2, just with reversed roles.*

Homework for your Empowerment Partner:

- Continue the Debriefing Sessions with another person, or select a different person for a Debriefing Session. Report about your experiences in the next meeting.
- *(Send the 10 Questions of the next session to your partner beforehand with the following assignment:)* Re-order the questions according to priorities (i.e. the most important question will get the number 1, the least important one the number 10). In the next session, the focus will be on the questions with the highest priority.

SESSION #4: RELATING CURRENT MINISTRY TOPICS TO THE TEST RESULTS

Discuss in the beginning which of the following 10 questions you would like to focus on:

1. How does your personal profile relate to the strengths and weaknesses of your ministry?
2. How do you sense that my profile (strengths and weaknesses) relates to strengths and weaknesses of my ministry?
3. If you compare our two profiles, what could be a potential danger in our interaction? What could be an opportunity?
4. What kind of activities should you eliminate (or at least, reduce) in the future in order to grow or to become more fruitful?
5. Based on our two profiles, in what ways could I be the best-possible source of support to you? How?
6. When will you schedule your follow-up survey? What are your goals for the follow-up survey? Will you ask a different group of people next time? If so, what kind of people?
7. What are your plans for multiplying Empowerment Processes in your area of responsibility?
8. What did you learn about me in our process that you were not aware of before? In which areas do you think I have already changed compared to how you had experienced me in the past?
9. Did our process help you perceive resources within you that you were not aware of before? Which ones?
10. What has already improved in your life since the time we started the Empowerment process?

Homework for your Empowerment Partner and yourself:

- Part of your tasks described in the Profile has been a commitment to a minimum of 6 of 10 suggested steps (page 15 in the Detailed Profile). Check if you have already put into practice all of those steps. What could be the most fruitful "step 7" for you?
- *After a given time (for instance, 6 months), both you and your Empowerment Partner should do a follow-up test to monitor the progress. You may wish to schedule another (mutual) debriefing session once the follow-up tests have been completed.*