

All-Win Think Tanks

What they are, how they work and how you can organize one.

Introduction

An All-Win Think Tank consists of a group of “ordinary” people who meet (regularly) to practice the art of all-win relating. They look at conflicts in their personal or professional lives or items from the news, any conflicted situation which sparks the interest of the group. Their goal: to transform this situation into one in which all parties feel they have won and secure in the outcome, because they know that all parties are satisfied with the outcome.

All-win Think Tanks differ from other think tanks in that they take the feeling level of all parties into consideration.

The All-Win Principle

The All-Win Principle is based on the premise that all and everything is interconnected, including within the body of humanity; that each person knows from within how best to relate to this whole in an all-win way and that solutions to conflicts are durable to the extent parties feel secure in the knowledge that all parties are content with the outcome.

How Do All-Win Think Tanks Work?

(some general pointers)

The group meets regularly, chooses a problem and finds an all-win solution.

Here are some steps you can take:

1. Create an atmosphere of connection and peaceful reflection, using music or a brief period of quiet to enable the group to think intelligently together. Suggest that all retain the atmosphere of inner quiet whenever they speak. This makes it possible to be in touch with even violent emotions without being overpowered by them.
2. Choose a problem/conflict to work on.
3. Each shares what s/he knows about the chosen topic.
4. Creep into the experience of every party to the conflict in turn. Once you sense you might be able to feel what they could be experiencing, you can ask the following questions:
 - a. How do I experience the conflict from within this party's experience?
 - b. What hurts? What am I, as this person, specifically afraid of?
 - c. What from within this person's experience gives me a sense of pleasure?
 - d. What from within this person's experience do I need or wish to gain from this situation?
 - e. What can I from within her or his experience contribute to an all-win solution?
 - f. Which concessions can I from within her or his experience afford to make toward an all-win solution?
5. Continue this process of empathizing after all have shared their insights, creeping into the experience of each party to the conflict until all-win solutions present themselves.
6. Write down the issue the group has dealt with together with the solution(s) found
7. Send this to the All-Win Network to be passed on (in anonymous form) to others (including where appropriate to Governments at the UN) to inspire them and clarify the All-Win Principle.
8. Send another copy to the parties to the conflict if appropriate, explain the think tank concept and invite them to use your findings if they are useful.

Objectives of All-Win Think Tanks

- Gain valuable practice in all-win relating
- Making all-win solutions available to those who can use them
- Supporting government at all levels, including the UN to develop all-win solutions

All-Win Think Tanks: Steps in More Detail

1. **Organize regular meetings** with people who want to perfect the art of all-win relating. Think tanks can be organized in participants' homes, say, once a month. Groups can consist of friends, family members, colleagues, neighbors, who seek to create an atmosphere of good neighborliness, people connected to the governance of your organization, town or country. Or you can set up a think tank to think along with the UN's 191 Member Nations to seek durable solutions to global problems. The more participants get to know one another, the easier it is to draw on intuitive insights and empathy, which are necessary for valid all-win solutions. Home meetings, music, candlelight, sharing food, can all contribute to the necessary relaxation and feelings of goodwill.
2. **Agree on procedures to be followed.** Who will facilitate? Fluctuating membership of the group can inhibit bonding among participants. How will you decide a topic? Clear agreements about who, what, when and where are important.
3. **Determine a topic to work on.** Most conflicts risk harming one or more parties to the conflict. Topics can range from family or work problems to world problems as they express themselves locally, nationally or internationally.
4. **The Process**
 - a. **First pool all information** you have on the chosen topic within the whole group. Whether the topic is a complicated global problem or a conflict within a family, it is unlikely that the members of the think tank will know all the details to be able to come up with a comprehensive solution at the practical level.

Most frequently the value of the think tank is to iron out the emotional motivations which fuel the conflict. In this respect, we are dealing with emotions which are common to all human beings and the value of the think tank will be in resolving this level which is common to all human beings and which involves the following step:

- b. **Creep inside of the experience of each of the parties to the conflict in turn.** Then, either the group as a whole can look at the problem from the felt experience of each party in turn. Or else participants can each do so alone from a position of quiet contemplation, write down their findings and later pool their insights with the rest of the group. Continue this process until one or more all-win solutions emerge. The **feeling level** is essential at this stage, for it is often the (unconscious) pleasure and pain (fear) that we experience with regard to an issue which propels us into action, even if we are out of touch with our feelings. Here are two useful ways to touch into the underlying emotional level of another person:

- either from a place of quiet reverie,
- or by visualizing each of the parties in turn and imagining you are physically creeping inside their skin and adopting their shape, body posture and facial expressions. Our muscles can be likened to the strings of a musical instrument, which when they vibrate create a chord. The tensions in the muscles tend to determine the emotional tone through which we experience our relationships. By in imagination creeping into a party's skin, we actually can feel the rich complexity of emotions through which she or he experiences reality. Beware of situations where the parties come from different cultures. To be able to understand them from within it is necessary to have people from those cultures in the think tank. Cultural clashes can only be resolved when one understands the culture from within.

c. Once all participants have the feeling that they can truly empathize with all of the parties, **all-win solutions tend to surface.**

5. **Submit a description of the situation you have dealt with and the solution found to the relevant parties.** Also submit it to the All-Win Network so that it can then anonymously be made available to all who can use it via the All-Win Network web site www.allwinnetwork.org and/or via the All-Win Network Newsletter. Submitted examples of all-win problem solving will also be used to demonstrate to Governments at the UN how the all-win principle works. The All-Win Network plans to lobby Governments at the UN to introduce the all-win principle as a human right and responsibility, comparable to the other rights enumerated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They will also suggest that all-win problem solving be introduced into the formal and informal educational systems worldwide as a skill, like reading and writing, to be universally learned.