

Role Relief from Leadership Roles a brief answer by Ann E. Hale, M.A., TEP

The desire for role relief can be caused by an increase in neutral and negative responses to a role which had once held excitement and potential. The expectations to maintain a certain pace and commitment from oneself and others becomes heavier. There are also times when a person experiences too much isolation in the role, or the opposite, too much involvement from people making suggestions and requiring meetings or interventions. A group's inability to identify someone able to assume the leadership or prepare a replacement can also be felt as being "trapped" in role. Make some notes to yourself about what circumstances may be prompting your need for role relief. Choose someone from your coterie of friends and let that person know that you are exploring this issue. Set up some time to discuss with them what you may discover as you explore the situation using pen and paper sociometry devices.

The exploration

(1) Identify the names of all the groups (a collective social atom) in which you are an identified leader or have a major role in the functioning of that group. Prioritize the list of groups: leadership is most burdensome in these groups to leadership is least burdensome in these groups..

(2) Draw a Diamond of Opposites for each group, using the following criterion:

"What is the strength of my pull to vacate the leadership role I have in this group" and "What is the strength of my pull not to vacate the leadership role I have in this group?"

(3) Choose a group to begin exploring the social atom of that group. Place yourself in a position on the social atom target and use nearness and distance to place each other person in the group in relation to you as you experience the connection you have to him/her here and now. Next, choose another social atom target for the same group, and plot a future projection based on your perception of the changes which might occur in those connections were you to resign your current leadership role.

a. Compare the two social atoms, and identify the relationship (s) on which you most want to focus for further exploration.

b. Examine the membership of the group and identify any persons who may be asked or who would volunteer to take over the leadership functions you currently have in the group.

c. Make a list of the group members and order the list from the persons you most want to succeed you to the persons you least want to have succeed you.

d. Identify the roles you would most like to have in each group.

Proceed to other groups and follow the same procedure. Be sure to connect to your friend and share what you are learning and the impact

changes are likely to have on you.

Citations:

1 Hale, Ann E. (1985) Conducting Clinical Sociometric Explorations Roanoke, VA, Royal Publishing Co., p.21.

2 Carlson-Sabelli, Linnea, Hector Sabelli and Ann E. Hale, “Sociometry and sociodynamics” IN Psychodrama Since Moreno (1994) London, Routledge, p. 150-154.

3. Hale, Ann E. (1985) p. 27.

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