

A COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIP APPROACH TO EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

Long-term learning, especially learning that involves behavioral skill sets, requires both the acquisition and retention of whole person learning skill sets. The processing of whole person behavioral skill sets is most readily accomplished in experiential learning settings. For long-term learning to occur, an experientially inclined educator needs to have an educational agency model that inspires students to carry forward their learning program outcomes on multiple whole person learning fronts and over a period of time that is meaningful to the student's goal(s). This paper addresses some of the tensions attendant to such "inspired learning" processes, taking the position that the forging of covenantal learning agreements is superior to reliance on contractual agreements. Contractual educational relationships, sourced in institutional frameworks, end when time relevant performance parameters are met (or not met). Most often, these performance parameters are sourced and defined by institutional forces rather than student learning outcomes. In contrast, covenantal agreements, based on relationship dynamics and interpersonal processes in the learning environment, are enhanced by and last beyond the instructor-student relationship. Experiential learning is enhanced when covenantal learning relationships, both with the instructor and with self, are made explicit.

INTRODUCTION

This paper was inspired by the idea of the application of a covenant in experiential learning and simulation settings by ABSEL scholars Boscia and Turner (2008). Boscia and Turner (2008:1) asserted that "Students by themselves do not naturally develop constructive interaction patterns". As a means to address this inherent shortcoming, those ABSEL scholars proposed the use of team covenants as a means establishing and maintaining desirable interaction patterns. In this paper, we focus on the decision of the individual to engage in experiential learning directed towards behavioral skill acquisition in the context of long-term learning outcomes. Parallel to Boscia and Turner, we propose the construction and utilization of covenantal relationships to produce this desired outcome.

For long-term learning to occur, an experientially inclined educator needs to have an educational agency model that inspires students to carry forward their learning program outcomes on multiple whole person learning fronts and over a period of time that is meaningful to the student's goal(s). Educational interventions that simply cause students to feel good about themselves in the moment or in the short-term only are really not educational interventions at all, but rather a form of entertainment, consumed in the moment and then too readily forgotten. This is not to say that "education as entertainment" practices are not popular. However, unfortunately, such educational programs too often fail to bring about real change (Hoover, 1999).

These "non-change" programs are popular because they neglect the fact that real change is often whole person transformational change, an often uncomfortable and unsettling set of experiences. Whole person change can come from direct experience (Hoover, Giambatista, Sorenson & Bommer, 2010; Kolb, 1984). It can also come from vicarious observational learning (Hoover, Giambatista & Belkin, 2012; Bandura, 1977). This means that an experiential learning strategy does not affect only those who are directly involved. It can also be transmitted through observational processes.

However, irrespective of the source, true transformational change (Mezirow, 2000; Mezirow, 1995) is often uncomfortable to the individual and potentially disruptive to the system. Since human beings have an inherent distaste for those things that make them uncomfortable (for examples see the literature on cognitive dissonance --- Festinger, 1957; Harmon-Jones & Mills, 1999), less impactful and more entertaining educational interventions, with shallow or short-term only impacts and lacking whole person transformational change, remain popular.

At some point in time the experiential educator has to "pass the torch" to the student who will carry the acquired skill forward, or to those who remain as part of the system (Dyer, 1987). In this manner, we will use the term "change agent" to refer to the instigator or locus of change, and the term "client" will be used to describe the person, persons or entity that is the setting for the change program or the "target of change". We use general terms to allow for a more comprehensive explanation of the covenantal

and contractual dynamics inherent in any system, including educational systems.

In this sense, a change agent (educator) needs to have a change agency model that spawns the change program targets (students) to carry forward the program on multiple fronts and over a period of time that is meaningful to the change goal(s) selected for the educational intervention. This paper addresses the tensions attendant to the “spawning” processes that cause an educational change effort to sustain itself in the target learner over a period of time longer than the experiential learning moment of the experience. We take the position that the forging of educational covenantal agreements is superior to reliance on contractual agreements.

Many of the elements of educational systems are contractual and sourced in institutional elements of the educational system itself. For example, a course may be defined as 40 contact hours, and a student’s percentage of attendance during those 40 hours may determine student grades or even a student getting or not getting credit for the course. Note that these elements are not only easily measured (for purposes of institutional justification), they are also impersonal and cold --- measuring the quantity of the experience and not addressing the quality of the learning experience itself. Just because a student is observed attending a class does not mean the student was intellectually, emotionally or behaviorally involved in the learning experiences offered by the class (Hoover, Giambatista, Sorenson & Bommer, 2010).

In many universities, the course syllabus is viewed as a contractual document. The course elements, as set for by the instructor within the parameters dictated by the university, are thus seen as binding on the parties to the agreement. By choosing to stay in a class, a student is accepting the contract as binding. By adhering to the university’s policies and practices criteria, the instructor is likewise obligated. This may have little, however, to say about the potential or realized quality of the educational experience in the educational institution. A covenantal educational relationship is an alternative to such a potentially limiting situation.

A “cold” contract is a level one agreement, and is focused on ideas and obligations. In contrast, a covenant is a level two agreement, including potentially “warm” relationship components in addition to ideas and obligations. In a contract dispute, or in the throes of addressing contract complications, the focus is on legally binding compromise and trade-offs that are often unsatisfactory to both parties. In a covenant dispute, or in the throes of addressing covenant complications, the focus is not on compromise, but on congruence. This gives covenants win/win potentials that contracts with potentials for win/lose or lose/lose do not have. Thus, covenants benefit from the potential to realize shared superordinate goals (Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood & Sherif, 1961).

Whereas contractual relationships tend to end when time relevant performance parameters are met (or not met) by the parties involved, covenantal agreements, based on relationship dynamics and processes, are enhanced by and last beyond the instructor-student relationship. Whereas a contractual perspective focuses on performance criteria that are essentially quantitative, a covenantal perspective focuses on aspects of human relations that are essentially qualitative.

“Evert minute of every hour of every day, you are making the world, and you might as well do it with generosity and kindness and style” ... Rebecca Solnit

A model of educational change agent covenantal agreement processes (Cornelis, Van Hiel & Cremer, 2006; Elazar, 1999) is developed, focusing on both covenant derived relationships and task components of change programs. A covenant driven goal attainment model is developed that is combined with covenant driven change agent and change target behaviors. The model utilized here as an example of covenantal relationships focused on learning are taken from a document all students in an Organizational Behavior course are required to complete as an experiential learning exercise on the second day of class. The document is entitled “*Negotiated Covenant for Openness to Learning without Biases or Inappropriate Emotions.*” Selected excerpts from this document will be used to illustrate how a covenant with self and with the instructor can be formed, as well as showing how whole person experiential learning can be implemented. When sections of the Negotiated Covenant document are presented they will be

In a separate paragraph and put in italics.

THE DYNAMICS OF CONTRACTUAL VERSUS COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIPS

A change agent often has a formalized, usually written, contractual understanding with their client(s). However, these contractual understandings do not have to be in writing. They can be implied by position or rank (e.g. a new manager arriving in an organization or a professor entering a classroom) or they can be understood as a psychological contract (Rousseau, 2004) between two parties to a change effort.

What are the Differences between a Contract and a Covenant?

1. A contract is generally understood to have the following elements: 1) it is a legal agreement, enforceable by the laws of the land, 2) it can be oral, but is usually in written form (this is recommended in most circumstances), and, 3) it contains the specifics of the rights of each party to the contract as well as the duties of the parties to the contract. The relationship between the parties is *impersonal*, and only revolves around the rights and duties of the parties. As such, a contract could be characterized as a “cold” agreement without relationship factors as ‘part of the deal’.

2. In contrast, a covenant is a “warm” agreement, or at least a potentially “warm” agreement, since a covenant can include all of the elements of a contract, if so desired, but also encompasses the relationship between the parties to the covenant. The properties and conditions of a Negotiated Covenant described next in this paper identifies these properties and conditions.

Definition and Explication of a Covenant

A covenant is defined as a compact (1) built upon valid information (2) with a free choice to participate in a situation characterized by a sense of freedom and autonomy (3), consisting of entities having an interdependent relationship (4), exchanging mutually potentially beneficial promises to perform (5), built upon foundations of open and honest communications (6), mutual respect (7), and actions that protect the dignity, integrity, and identity of the entities participating (8).

Explication:

1. An agreement between two or more parties is a compact. This includes both contracts and covenants.
2. To the extent a compact is based on invalid, inaccurate or misleading information, it is impossible to build a foundation for sound decision-making or to enhance the probability of desired outcomes.
3. That which we experience as freedom is actually the feeling of an absence of control. Twenty first century citizens demand a reasonable degree of autonomy in order to make the decision to produce meaningful levels of engagement and commitment to selected goals.
4. A truly independent relationship is actually no relationship. Therefore, all relationships of significant import are interdependent relationships. When interdependence becomes unhealthy, relationships can devolve to conditions of dependence and/or co-dependence.
5. The covenantal model is based on the premise of the benefits of mutuality and the possibility to produce win/win as opposed to win/lose or lose/lose outcomes --- the covenantal model is planted in the rich soil of collaboration.
6. Openness and honesty in a relationship requires continuing investments in the relationship, maintained over time.
7. Mutual respect requires mutual understanding based on reciprocal exchanges of empathy. The decision to agree or disagree is a separate decision from the decision to engage in empathy. That said, decisions made without significant empathy plateaus could be based on invalid or incomplete information (see # 2 above).
8. Relationships are not enhanced, but are diminished, by a lack of dignity exhibited by the parties, by a lack of integrity in the relationship (integrity functions like honesty and trust), and by the absence of behaviors honoring the identity, values and spirit of a person --- all the while remembering that empathy is not agreement.

Classroom Roles -- The Concept of a Learning Partnership: *The teacher-student relationship is one of power differentiation. Not only is the person in the teacher role assumed an expert on the topic at hand, but that teacher also has reward and punishment powers that come from the assignment of grades all the way up to the granting of course credit. This power balance puts the student in what is labelled a resource dependent condition. At the same time, the student is the controlling agent who allocates the effort given to learning. Learning and personal growth are also resource dependent, but the student is the resource.*

This paper takes the position that a covenantal relationship model has an inherent capacity to not only overcome the instructor/student power imbalance, but also to harness the energies inherent to such an imbalance. As Gregoire (2015:60) states “Others thinking, convictions, and reactions influence our own thinking, depending on the quality of our relationship with them”. If the instructor acting as a potential change agent takes a contractual perspective, then he/she also must take the position that the contract is enforceable --- illustrating power over resource allocations. This emphasis on the content of the agreement produces an inherent tendency to minimize, ignore or even not address process. Covenants have more room for process considerations since covenants can map out and focus on the relationship between the parties as well as the content of the agreement. (Hoover, Mitchell & Wu, 2012; Hoover, Giambatista & Klinker, 2012; Hoover, 2008; Schein, 1987). However, similar to contracts, covenants can also establish performance criteria, set goals, assign tasks, set deadlines and define assessment criteria.

In the course negotiated covenant document, the student is encouraged and coached to take on the challenge of making a covenant with self in addition to a covenant with the instructor:

A Covenant as a Self-sent Role: *If the above underlined properties and conditions of a negotiated covenant are in place, then choosing to be in a covenantal relationship is not something that is done to a person or forced upon someone by another party. Rather, it is something that a person is choosing to do to themselves and for himself/herself. This is the difference between other-sent roles fueled by extrinsic rewards that channel my behaviors into obedience or compliance, and self-sent roles fueled by intrinsic rewards and that come from my internally sourced motivations. In this context, it is possible to make a covenant with myself.*

A Negotiated Covenant with Self: *This learning exercise takes the position that it is possible to form a covenant with myself, with no outside party required. In a self-covenant, I simply ask myself where I would like to be or the conditions that I would like to exist at some point in the future. The negotiation that occurs revolves around what my present self is willing to commit to (see*

all of the elements and required conditions of the Negotiated Covenant description above) in the present, and also what I am willing to sustain over the time period selected, in order to create the future state I desire to exist for the benefit of my future self. If I am not willing and/or if I am not able, there is no constructive covenant with myself; if I am willing and able, what do my future focus capabilities tell me is possible?

Of course, not all challenges that face a course designer or experientially inclined instructor call for forging covenantal relationships (FCR). A choice of a cold, contractual relationship may be appropriate in some situations. However, if an instructor taking on a change agent role makes such a choice, he/she must accept the fact that foregoing FCR will abandon the potential benefits of a warm, covenantal relationship. For example, what if there comes a future time when the change agent desires the client to be helpful and kind? To be open to new ideas and to be driven by intellectual curiosity? To be considerate of others while also being interested in personalized individual outcomes? Or, doing what it takes to achieve whole person experiential learning?

The cultural universal of the norm of reciprocity taps into the human drive to repay in kind (Becker, 1986; Gouldner, 1960). Forging covenantal relationships will yield a richer and more bountiful return if the “paybacks” are sourced in a covenantal setting (Buck, 2004; Cialdini, 2001). Furthermore, the dynamics inherent in the manifestation of the norm of reciprocity are not only more probable in a covenantal relationship, but also carry more short-run and long run power. In order to Forge Covenantal Relationships, the change agent and the client must be both able and willing. In an experiential educational system, the instructor has to be both willing and able to perform his/her side of the course-learning covenant, and the student has to be both willing and able to accept personal responsibility for his/her learning, up to and including a covenant with self.

ON THE ISSUE OF BEING ABLE AND WILLING

“I have been impressed with the urgency of doing. Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Being willing is not enough; we must do” ... Leonardo da Vinci

On the Issue of “Able to”

If a change agent is “not able” on a particular skill, and if the capacity exists to acquire it, then a readily identifiable remedy comes to hand---engaging in skill development, in this case the skills needed to Forge Covenantal Relationships. Change agent or teaching behaviors that cause systems, teams or individuals to become “able to” --- this is where change agents (also educators, trainers, learning facilitators, professors and the like) earn their societal keep. However, the change agent has to be cognizant of the power imbalances previously mentioned. It is also appropriate to point out that the change agent has to be “able to” as well; we will usually assume this but a bigger concern is whether the change agent is “willing to” engage in FCR.

This area of making folks “able to” is the source of the prescriptive behaviors perhaps too often observed in change agents (and educators as well, e.g. perhaps the pontification sometimes observed coming from teachers and professors). This is due to the fact that a change agent, if sufficiently motivated, has the desire to share the gifts of knowledge, perspective and capacity he or she possesses with the client and with others. The stronger the change agent’s devotion to the cause, the stronger is this motivation. This perspective can be undermined, however, when the change agent loses perspective on the most desirable set of dynamics inherent in the processes of potentially found in covenantal relationships. A change agent cannot force systemic change, cannot compel a team to seek team development, and cannot “make” a person grow and develop. For example, individual growth and personal development are sourced intrinsically, and can only come from internally generated motivation (Pink, 2009; Deci, 1995).

To examine this potential political pitfall (one of the reasons to engage in FCR), let us substitute the word “teacher” for the term “change agent”. At one level, there is a desire in the teacher to share perspective and to engage with meaning-making with motivated learners. However, having the mind-set of “teacher” can also devolve into viewing students (and clients) as lacking so much perspective that they need to be “talked down to” and need to be controlled in order “to be taught”. This attitude essentially creates a parent/child relationship (Berne, 1968). This methodology in education is called pedagogy, including the prefix “peda” meaning child. If the potential learner being channeled into a child state detects this attitude, the most probable outcome in a power-differentiated system is to passively submit. This is because many students (and clients) have been pedagogically conditioned to adopt a passive/receptive learning posture when a person of power enacts the role of “teacher”. Passivity, however, often effects unintended consequences such as a lack of learner engagement and outright indifference. Moreover, over time, when this parent to child attitude of power agents is detected, it leads to resentment and further disengagement for those to whom the “student” and “child” roles are assigned (Berne, 1968).

However, encouraging news can be found. In education, the alternative to parent/child pedagogy is adult-based learning, or andragogy (Forest & Peterson, 2006; Brookfield, 1995). In change management, the alternative presented in this paper, especially appropriate for application in the 21st century, is the andragogy-based Forging of Covenantal Relationships. Furthermore, if both parties to the change program challenges come to the process from an inherently healthy covenantal perspective, it is possible to accomplish enlightenment and perspective transfer from change agent to client (or teacher to learner), without the change target person having to feel judged or as having been deemed inadequate in the process. This transforms the dynamics of “teaching to” and “talking down” and “controlling” into processes of “talking with”, “coaching with”, “mentoring with” and “collaborating with”. This is the source of the dynamic that can fuel “spawning” of the motivational factors needed to carry a change program forward, with or without the presence of the change agent.

ABLE ↑	High on A, Low on W	High on A, High on W
	<i>Result = Systemic change potential exists, but nil on meaningful educational results if low W stays in play</i>	<i>Result = The formula for change program success and meaningful educational goal accomplishment</i>
	Low on A, Low on W	Low on A, High on W
	<i>Result = Lack of engagement, Lack of sustained effort, failure</i>	<i>Result = Need to engage in system elevation and/or personal growth; if not, possibility of ongoing frustration</i>
	WILLING →	

THE ABLE VS. WILLING GRID

The grid below is a graphical illustration of the possible combinations of “Able to Change” and “Willing to Change”. The vertical axis is “able to”, and the horizontal axis is “willing to.”

These combinations of “able to” and “willing to” are self-explanatory. The upper half of the grid, the area of “High on Able”, is the domain of the skilled change agent and the foundation for successful change programs. The left half of the grid, the area of “Low on Willing”, reflects lack of commitment to processes of change or system development. This produces low levels of engagement and minimal change program accomplishments. The right half of the grid is home to “High on Willing”. This paper takes the position that Forging Covenantal Relationships (FCR) fosters the movement towards the High Able, High Willing combination.

The High Able, High Willing Combination. This *High-High combination* provides the energy potential and the motivational drive needed to pull off change agent program successes and meaningful educational goal accomplishment. High/High scenarios work in a covenantal relationship because they are the source of mutual passions --- the things the change agent and the client most care about. In a covenantal learning partnership, the passion of the instructor and the passion of the potential learner are shared. Passion is a combination of a sense of competence and a sense of personal control on the part of both parties. This is essentially the empowering sense of freedom and choice that comes from being in a state of relative individual autonomy while also immersed in an interdependent and mutually beneficial relationship.

The Low Able, Low Willing Combination. *The lower left Low-Low quadrant* can come from lack of engagement due to lack of awareness. Low-Low choices can also happen when a change target entity drops out of the change program process. For example, in educational settings this occurs when a person removes himself or herself physically from a learning system, or more subtly, when a person removes himself or herself psychologically from a learning system, even if still physically present. This was the point that was alluded to earlier in the discussion of the “cold” psychological contract, a “settling for less” scenario, and learning situations characterized by a lack of learner engagement. This combination is also reminiscent of the Dunning-Kruger (1999) effect, whereby some learners are ignorant of their lack of ability, fail to see a need for change and growth, and the ability and motivation pieces form a vicious, self-reinforcing cycle.

Apathy is Okay Sometimes. It is impossible to be 100% “gung-ho” all of the time. Choosing to be disengaged (purposeful disengagement) can be a valid choice to make in many situations. The opposite of engagement is apathy. Disengagement can be a logical choice. However, those who disengage should not expect rewards or even support from the organization, relationship or system from which they have disengaged.

The High Able, Low Willing Combination. *A life of High Able and Low Willing combinations* can become a life of unrealized potential. Doing nothing is a behavior, a behavior with consequences. Today’s moments, when they pass, lead to the pathways of tomorrows. The perils of procrastination are real. Moreover, educational opportunities occur in the moment of most propitious learning, and cannot be recovered if lost in time.

The Low Able, High Willing Combination. *Low Able and High Willing* leads down two possible paths. If a minimal capacity to grow or to acquire the desired skillset exists, the High Willing player works on their Low Able state of being, and produces the required growth or development. However, another path for this quadrant, sometimes observable, occurs when a change program target has the High Willing necessary to put forth the effort, but cannot even minimally encompass the target skill. Such a scenario can be very frustrating for both the change agent and the client.

On the Issue of Being “Willing to”

As illustrated above, the question of “able to” has many facets. However, as previously stated, being “able to”, while a necessary condition for successful goal accomplishment, is not in and of itself a sufficient condition for goal accomplishment. This

necessary but not sufficient condition has to be combined with an attitude of “willing to”. Furthermore, the attitudinal trait of “willing to” has to be combined with the behavioral traits inherent in following through --- implementation, actualization, and completion. Motivational forces yielding “willing to” are sourced both internally and externally. Many behaviors are driven by both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators (Pink, 2009).

“The difference between a successful person and others is not a lack of strength, not a lack of knowledge, but rather a lack of will” ... Legendary coach Vince Lombardi

The most productive and persistent source comes from intrinsic motivation, “willing to” energizers that come from internally driven accomplishment objectives (Deci, 1995). A powerful model illustrating this approach is competition with a self-imposed standard of excellence. A self-imposed standard of excellence is intrinsic, is sourced within, and has no set limits or predetermined end. This allows for a continuing elevation of competence and a continuing and self-reinforcing pursuit of mastery. The mindset of a competition with a self-imposed standard of excellence is a personality trait that many high achievers have. While high achievers may criticize themselves more harshly and more consistently than any “outside source” might do, they experience the greatest levels of satisfaction when they reach their self-sourced lofty goals. This is the special joy of a feeling of winning. In a covenantal relationship, both parties have the potential to experience this joy of winning.

Finally, extrinsic motivation, externally derived recognition, is also, of course, an energizing force for “willing to.” This is the component in the formula that observes the rewards coming from others that perceive that you have, in fact, “pulled it off”. External rewards are often tied to things that are observable and quantifiable, such as measures of productivity, sales levels attained, income level achieved, etc. Less tangible, but just as significant is individual recognition and expressions of gratitude that are externally sourced. For example, job success is a more or less short-term measure of extrinsic rewards, while career success might be more of a long-term measure.

So, yes, externally sourced rewards appeal to extrinsic motivation variables. However, as our understanding of human motivational processes has continued to evolve, we have learned that the recipients of these rewards can perceive extrinsic rewards in many ways (Deci, 1995). This makes the implementation of extrinsically sourced reward systems trickier than it might seem at first blush. For example, how do you use money to motivate a person who has passed the threshold of caring about money as the most desirable reward possible? How do you motivate a graduating senior who seems comfortable just passing time until the semester ends?

On the Issue of Being “Able to”

The basic key to getting the “able to” question answered begins with increased awareness leading to a heightened sense of efficacy. The more the change agent understands his or her strengths and weaknesses through increased self-awareness, the better armed that change agent is able to focus on both potentialities as well as possible limitations. Of course, in a covenantal relationship, the potentialities and possible limitations of the other party come into play. Regardless, the key to “able to” is a relationship-focused identification of that which *both parties* are capable of executing. If one party has more power, more knowledge, more expertise and covenantal sharing does not occur, the relationship can devolve into the parent role person talking down to the child role person scenario discussed previously.

The qualitative aspect of a covenant, hopefully expressed as a “warm” covenant between the two parties, explores the dimension of “willing to.” This is found in the degree to which a sense of efficacy and self-direction, driven by both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, manifests in each of the parties to a covenantal relationship, both as separate entities and as a co-joined endeavor.

COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIP GOAL ATTAINMENT: FOUR KEY ELEMENTS

- a) In a contractual relationship, the rhetoric is all about deadlines, timetables and performance criteria. While a covenantal relationship can have these performance criteria, it also requires being realistic about the human and emotional components of the relationship. For example, if a person is consumed with grief or is overwhelmed in the moment with anger and a desire for revenge, timetable adherence may tend to fall to the wayside. In a temporary or short-term contractual setting, these human factors may be overlooked, or more commonly, treated as if they were not really happening. “What do you mean? I do not see an elephant in this room!” Since covenantal relationships desire to maintain relationships over a period of time, such moments of intense humanness should be addressed as they emerge.
- b) Since covenantal relationships only flourish with mutual SMART (Doran, 1981) goal setting, it is important to get goal consensus among all parties before implementation is attempted.
- c) A covenantal relationship is maintained over time only if the parties in the relationship garner intrinsic motivation satisfaction over time. To accomplish this objective, empathy and effective communication are vital.
- d) A gift has not been truly received until the recipient of the gift knows that they have received it. Therefore, communication, both sending and receiving, is important to let those in the external environment (the source of extrinsic rewards) know what has happened.

<p>HELPFUL (serves the needs of a task)</p>	<p>High on content generation and valid informational aspects</p> <p><i>(One) Content/informational Facilitation</i> <i>(Two) Results/performance measurements</i></p>	<p>High on the cognitive/intellectual dimension, thus facilitating the location of extrinsic rewards in the external environment</p> <p><i>(Five) Cognitive/intellectual dimension</i> <i>(Six) Facilitates extrinsic motivational elements</i></p>
<p>KIND (serves the needs of a person)</p>	<p>High on interpersonal aspects and quality of relationships</p> <p><i>(Three) Interpersonal Processes</i> <i>(Four) Impact on quality of relationship measurements</i></p>	<p>High on the emotional/affective dimension, thus facilitating the location of intrinsic rewards sourced internally</p> <p><i>(Seven) Emotional/affective dimension</i> <i>(Eight) Facilitates intrinsic motivational elements</i></p>

**SUMMARY CONCEPTUAL EXAMPLE:
FORGING COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIPS (FCR) BY BEING HELPFUL AND KIND**

The paper does not conclude with a traditional Summary section. Rather, the paper concludes with strategic choices that a change agent can make on a daily basis utilizing the straight-forward and simple schema of being Helpful and Kind. Helpful and Kind are used as exemplars because they are good examples of covenantal relationships contributions. It is important to note that being Helpful (or not) and/or being Kind (or not) --- these are strategic choices that change agents make every day and in all most all situations. A change agent must choose covenantal relationship building blocks wisely in order to maximize the potential of Forging Covenantal Relationships (FCR).

EIGHT DIMENSIONS THAT FORGE COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIPS

Helpful serves the needs of a *Task*, directing attention and focus towards the accomplishment of the goals of the change program. Kind serves the need of a *Person, or persons*, and is directed towards the enhancement and enrichment of relationships. In summary, the Helpful or Kind decision is a strategic choice a change agent must make in order to Forge Covenantal Relationships. Not being Helpful allows change program goals to flounder, to atrophy or even to perish. Not being kind diminishes or damages relationships. Note: since Forging Covenantal Relationships is based on processes of collaboration and empathy from the perspective of all stakeholders, the definition of Helpful and Kind is not found just in the change agent, but also must be found in the perceptions and experiences of other stakeholders.

Helpful facilitates *Content (dimension one)*, acquiring and emphasizing information. Data analysis and helping to identify and clarify frameworks are also part of helpful content in the form of establishing context (Hoover, Mitchell & Wu, 2012). It should be noted that for information processing to be constructive, the information must be valid and accurate information, free of bias and misinformation (Argyris, 1970). Kind facilitates *Process (dimension three)* as kindness functions to enhance interpersonal ties that already exist and to create grounds for creating new interpersonal ties. The enhancement of interpersonal process makes it possible for phenomena such as trust and open communication to evolve over time.

Helpful uses *Results Measurements (dimension two)* that are focused on *performance* and data sourced in and targeted towards the external environment. The external environment is the focus of dimension two because the environment is the source of the extrinsic resources and rewards that individuals, teams and organizations desire. The change agent that helps people find the road to performance-based results is welcome to travel that road as well. Kind uses *Impact Measurements (dimension four)* that are focused on *quality of relationships*, and is sourced in and directed towards the person or persons targeted in the change program. Again, in a covenantal setting the definition of a positive impact resides in the eyes and emotive satisfaction of the receiver.

Helpful works in the *intellectual dimension (dimension five)*, offering clarity and perspective to the learnings and insights generated by the change program. Kind works in the *emotional dimension (dimension seven)*, and yields the level of affective involvement that occur with phenomena such as the decision to engage and the decision to make a commitment.

Helpful feeds *extrinsic motivational components (dimension six)*, and facilitates meeting the extrinsic motivational elements that are operative for the targets of change. Kind feeds *intrinsic motivational elements (dimension eight)*, on the other hand, that meet the internally generated intrinsic needs. Note: intrinsic satisfaction has become more important for 21st century organizational members (Pink, 2009). The ideal scenario, of course, would be to Forge Covenantal Relationships that combine both extrinsic and intrinsic motivational forces. This would produce a potential for the ideal results of a covenantal strategy for change agents --- for targets of change to be doing the right thing, at the right time, for the right reasons, and having established a rich covenantal environment --- knowing the difference.

In order to Forge Covenantal Relationships, a change agent has to successfully address both the task and the interpersonal/relationship factors necessary to accomplish that task. In other words, under the covenantal banner, a change agent has to be both

consistently helpful and consistently kind, keeping in mind the values and behavioral follow-through aspect requisite to Forging Covenantal Relationships. In other words, being helpful and kind will only work in the end if the covenant driven change agent is sincere in the myriad applications attendant to these behaviors, and is both able and willing to execute them.

IN CLOSING

In educational settings, there are many psychological contract elements that are implicit and are not addressed explicitly. For example, many syllabi contain a section on student dishonesty and cheating, while sections on instructor dishonesty are omitted. It is assumed that the textbook selected by the instructor contains course relevant information. It is assumed that the testing and examination procedures adopted of the class are a valid measure of relevant course learning. Moreover, while these psychological contract aspects of the course do not have to be made explicit or put in writing (Rousseau, 2004), it is taken for granted that they operate nonetheless. However, in the case of a covenantal agreement, since it involves a commitment from all parties to the covenantal relationship, power and relevance is added to the covenantal agreement when it is made explicit.

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