

## MSOD 620 Reflection Paper – China, May 2018 – Jeff Hottinger

The key takeaways I'm currently holding from my exceptional experiences in China involve a growing understanding and competence with overlapping group dynamics. I have a realization that I have carried forward my learnings from prior sessions scaling up from individual, group, organization, and so on. Reentering the non-MSOD world, I feel both more grounded in my sense of self and more aware of the variables and opportunity to intervene in the other levels of interaction I have with people and groups I touch. Once again, my experience and perspective on life has been profoundly impacted through relationship with others.

I'm usually at least moderately proud of how I show up at MSOD sessions, but near the start of this one I committed publicly to share as much of myself as I could. My personal sense and that of some feedback I received was that I met that goal. Happily, I feel that I did so without thinking about it too much; I was able to be my full and true self by just getting out of the way instead of thinking about it a lot. My first important take away is the experience I had of full presence combined with selflessness, and I really want to find ways to hold on to that back in my normal reality. In China I unexpectedly made a new best friend and was able to explicitly try out some new ways of being in that relationship that I struggle with in several of my close personal and professional relationships back home. It wasn't effortless, but it did come easy to again not spend that much time worrying or thinking about protecting myself and just jumping in to being myself in relation to others. I deeply hope I can find ways to sustain this. As I think about it more, the importance is only increasing from what I already assigned a lot of importance to. The ways in which my interpersonal issues, values, and emotions were raised through my interactions with close connections continued to inform my sense of self and propel me towards others. I remember having a moment of profound loneliness while sitting on the bus next to a perfectly

decent person whom I like but don't have an especially deep connection with. I could see 8 or 10 people in front of me I'd consider some of my closest friends and I just realized that shutting myself off or even not directly pursuing those relationships was crippling a part of my personality and heart. That's not how I would normally reach out to friends as I can be quite insular. I think this evident growth will help me in life and in work as relationships

The next area that I demonstrated a both higher and deeper level of understanding, much to my delight, was in group dynamics as experienced in my client team. I had a particularly amazing personal experience with my client team in Lyon, but there were some issues of in-group/out-group exclusion that were perhaps suboptimal. In my China client team, I had an unparalleled group experience I would place amongst my top three best team experiences of all time. There were sub-group dynamics, but we addressed them and used them to make our team stronger. We took the processes that emerged and systemically addressed them to decide if they should stay or go. We examined our behavior to determine what our emergent values were and then used those as principles to work through future decisions. We were brave at surfacing our interpersonal issues as they became present and those dialogs were wonderful to behold. I'm getting excited again just remembering the details. I don't think we completely discovered what all of the contributions were that made our team dynamic so great, but we did continue to invest in team-building as new experiences came up. For instance, three interactions with authority became points of reflection for the team over the three days of our intervention. My proudest moment for our team was when we decided to decline to take up an indirect suggestion by Dr. Chesley during the last day of our intervention and instead stick with a commitment we had collectively made the night before. I'm sure we missed a possibility in our intervention, but we also confirmed a possibility for team performance, change, and growth that I find thrilling.