

THE WALK IN THE WOODS

A GUIDE FOR META-LEADERS

Leonard J. Marcus, Ph.D., Barry C. Dorn, M.D., M.H.C.M.,
Eric McNulty, M.A. and Joseph M. Henderson, M.A.,



Key Themes and Points of Reference

WHOLE IMAGE NEGOTIATION

Inter-dependent achievement. Negotiate a “fit” among stakeholders based on a big picture, imaginative, interest-based strategy. A mutually beneficial “W.I.N.” the parties can share.

THE WALK IN THE WOODS

Four step process to structure and motivate INTEREST-BASED NEGOTIATION among diverse stakeholders. Named for classic story of international peacemaking. Designed to build confidence.

THE FOUR STEPS OF THE WALK IN THE WOODS

1. **SELF-INTERESTS:** Identify and express the breadth of interests, clearly articulating your self-interests and actively hearing those of others. Distinguish legitimate “self” from “selfish” interests.
2. **ENLARGED INTERESTS:** Identify points of agreement and points of disagreement among stakeholders in order to shape a multi-dimensional view of the problem. Reframe. Build the foundation for subsequent creative problem solving.
3. **ENLIGHTENED INTERESTS:** Imagine, explore, brainstorm, and invent options. Then assess which options generate potential agreement. Prioritize. Focus on solutions that could generate agreement.
4. **ALIGNED INTERESTS:** Seek mutually beneficial solutions: “If I succeed, you succeed. And if you succeed, I succeed. So let’s commit to options that advance mutual success.” Generate agreement with buy-in. Resolve. Agree. Commit. Move forward.

MULTI-DIMENSIONAL PROBLEM SOLVING

In contrast to uni-dimensional problem solving (for me) and two-dimensional problem solving (me against you), multi-dimensional problem solving is “us together.” INTEGRATE key perspectives and interests to accomplish a leveraged, collaborative solution.

GOING TO THE “BASEMENT”

During a high stress or crisis situation, the survival circuits of the brain take over?an “amygdala hijack.” Under such circumstances, the meta-leader guides people and their actions toward the routine circuits or “tool box” of pre-determined policies and protocols, and having done so, is then able to see a broader purview and direct a wider strategy and direction of activity using the executive circuits.

META- LEADERSHIP

INFLUENCE beyond authority. Capacity to generate integrated CONNECTIVITY of action across a wide spectrum of people and interests. A LEADER OF LEADERS.

Problem Statement

Stated as clearly as possible: What do (or would) stakeholders who are party to the problem agree is at the core of the presenting problem?

Who is taking this walk? List names and affiliations:

As you go through the steps of the Walk in the Woods, keep in mind the dimensions of the Meta-Leadership:

- The Person
- The Situation
- Connectivity

1. Self-Interests

Identify and express the breadth of interests, clearly articulating your self-interests and actively hearing those of others.
Distinguish legitimate “self” from “selfish” interests.

Stakeholders	Self- Interests

Have all relevant interests been expressed and have they been heard?

Do all parties have better clarity about what is being negotiated and/or what is the critical problem that brought these parties together?

2. Enlarged Interests

Identify points of agreement and points of disagreement among stakeholders in order to shape a multi-dimensional view of the problem. Reframe. Build the foundation for subsequent creative problem solving.

Agreement	Disagreement

Is there an appreciation for what are both the commonalties as well as the differences among the parties?

Have the problems or the dispute been reframed in this process?
If so, how?

3. Enlightened Interests

Imagine, explore, brainstorm, and invent options.
Then assess which options generate potential agreement.
Prioritize. Focus on solutions that could generate agreement.
Create a “NO COMMITMENT ZONE” to encourage
unencumbered creative exploration.

Brain Storm Imaginative Ideas	List Exercise: “1” “2” “3”

Do the parties have a new and creative perspective on the problem
and potential solutions?

Think time frame: what can be done in the short term, medium term,
and long term?

4. Aligned Interests

“If I succeed, you succeed. If you succeed, I succeed.
So let’s commit to options that advance mutual success.”
Generate agreement with buy-in. Resolve. Agree. Commit.
Move forward.

Points of Agreement	Steps or Action to Implementation

What is each stakeholder willing to “give” to reach agreement?
What do they expect to “get” in return?

Has “buy-in” for the collaborative solution been achieved?

Solution Statement

Stated as clearly as possible: Upon what points do the stakeholders who are party to the problem agree?

Are there any lingering issues that remain unresolved?

What is the plan of implementation for the agreed upon solution

Should disputes arise in the future, how will they be resolved?
Can you commit to engaging a follow-up Walk in the Woods?