

Worldwork – Transformation in Organizations, Communities, Business, and the Public Space

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What is Worldwork?

Worldwork is a new paradigm for working with change within the complete spectrum of organizational and communal life. Its process-oriented view introduces new universal categories to describe and work with change and flow in organizations and the collective at large. It sees everyone as being simultaneously observers, participants, facilitators, followers and leaders; although at times, we might be identified with only one or a few of these roles. Worldwork allows analysis and facilitation of groups on a variety of different scales, from global processes to local events, and in the public space as well as in various organizational forms such as businesses, non-profit organizations, government agencies, religious communities, etc.

In these pages, we hope to demonstrate how diversity, deep democracy, complex system theory, quantum thinking, and the study of consciousness are intrinsically linked, forming a new paradigm - a paradigm that is not only rational, but also poetic. It embodies accuracy in its scientific theory, as well as the beating heart of the community spirit, and it includes a deep respect for the various self-realization processes of the individual members and the bottom line needs of organizations. It is this combination that allows the facilitation of the creative, unpredictable, often intense process of organizational emergence – to the rhythm provided by the conductor of a universal symphony.

Thank you for your interest in Worldwork. I hope you enjoy surfing these pages in which I summarize my understanding of the theory and practice of Worldwork, and attempt to illustrate, by means of some examples of projects I am currently involved in, what Worldwork is all about.

Measurable and Non-Measurable Aspects of Reality

Developed by Arnold and Amy Mindell and their teams, Worldwork values equally both non-measurable and measurable aspects of reality, enabling a more complete and comprehensive picture of an organization.

The application of this seemingly simple concept extends in fact over a vast range of situations. The measurable and non-measurable categories are similar to visible and invisible, or tangible and intangible. For example when we work on diversity issues, we value “measurable” components such as gender, race, age, class, sexual orientation, etc, as well as non-measurable components such as hopes, dreams, feelings, ideas, and talents, etc. By the same token, power that is related to one’s specific position in the hierarchy, or to one’s general socio-economic rank, is often measurable; while aspects of power such as “wisdom of an elder”, “strength of moral conviction”, or “street power”, are less measurable but equally important in the calculation of the power balance. In another realm, for example in a business environment, the equality of measurable and non-measurable aspects can mean that the factual information of the value chain and the numeric aspects of the financial management are inseparable from the hopes, fears, attitudes and conflicts that exist among the members or departments of the organization, and that all of these facets together can be seen as an indivisible reality. Singling out certain parts as being more important than others will inevitably create trouble zones coming from those aspects that were marginalized. In this context, Democracy and Diversity are seen as principles that go far beyond social justice, political correctness or numerical equality, like, for example, representation of equal numbers of women and men in a committee. We rather encourage respecting all individuals, organizational trends, experiences, and states of consciousness. We view this as indispensable for the mathematics of finding and using all the information within a given system.

In this sense, the Worldwork paradigm bridges science with the humanities by introducing a framework that encompasses and enhances both. At the center of Worldwork’s philosophical framework are awareness and the study of consciousness. From this center, Worldwork makes fresh connections to three main areas:

- **It establishes a link with the findings of quantum mechanics, chaos theory, and network theory.**
- **It integrates and uses postmodern concepts from sociology, political science, psychology, and anthropology.**
- **It encompasses many of the concepts and the wisdom of indigenous and shamanic cultures and their understanding of the importance of community life and relationships.**

Worldwork theory demonstrates how the study of the consciousness unifies these approaches.

You can find more details about how these theories connect by displaying the paradigm menu on the top of this page.

Where is Worldwork used?

Although in many circles Worldwork is best known for transcending the principle of majority rule and the political correctness by introducing the concept of Deep Democracy into diversity work, its range of applications is virtually limitless. Deep Democracy is a new awareness style, which respects all individuals, trends, and states of consciousness. It includes the awareness that the world can only partially be understood and that everyone and every state of consciousness is needed to represent reality. On a personal level, it requires educating ourselves to notice all our inner experiences while dealing with the outer world, holding an awareness in a given moment of feelings, dreaming, and social power. That has many consequences organizational development, group life, politics, and personal development.

Here are some of the areas in which we apply Worldwork. In each of these areas, Worldwork brings a completely new approach. To wet your appetite, I include in each area one example of an innovation that it brings. When you surf the various pages, you will see that these selected examples are only a very small part of what is a fundamentally different way of viewing and working with each of these areas.

- **Process-oriented Organizational Transformation: Organizational development and transformation programs for groups, businesses, non-profit organizations, networks and grassroots initiatives.** *Example of an innovation: we show how even the greatest difficulties contain their own built-in multiple solutions, which are accessible to the group for sustainable change from within.*
- **Open forum facilitation for groups of up to a 1000 people in town meetings on various issues of public concern.** *Example of an innovation → we address and unpack the most volatile issues which are most often avoided and show their value for community building.*
- **Open forum facilitation in organizational settings, such as board-management relationship interactions and management-shareholder relationship interactions.** *Example of an innovation → we facilitate awareness and conscious use of rank and power which resolves hidden long term chronic personal and departmental standoffs.*

- **Process-oriented strategy development and implementation on all organizational levels, using a multi-level and diversity-oriented approach.** *Example of innovation*→ We have a visioning process which includes all organizational levels and helps to discover the core organizational myth: the individual and timeless character of an organization, which is its biggest potential and source of power.
- **Individual and collective leadership development programs as well as leadership coaching in the areas of business, politics, government, non-profit organizations, socio-economic reform initiatives, and youth groups, etc.** *Example of innovation* → We link awareness and the parallel worlds concept from physics to allow leaders understand complex situations and deal with them fluidly.
- **Teambuilding and team facilitation.** *Example of innovation*→ We have a methodology that allows members to experience the self-balancing aspects of crises, and to use it to reach a new level of co-operation.
- **Urban planning.** *Example of innovation*→ We use measurable and non-measurable aspects of public space to facilitate new relationships between city administrations, businesses, political forces and marginalized communities. An example of this is the project of “Citywork - Therapy for the City”.
- **Socio-economic change programs.** *Example of innovation*→ We make the individual hidden talents, which emerge during personal crises, visible, and use it as a key concept in “Leaders of Tomorrow,” a leadership development program for unemployed and/or homeless people.
- **Conflict resolution on various levels in conflict areas like the Middle East, the Balkans, Ireland.** *Example of innovation*→ We understand that conflict and even war are often a first step in improving relationships between groups and we can meet with all the parties involved with an initial supportive attitude.
- **Conflict resolution within organizations, including issues of merging organizations, inter-departmental conflicts, and industrial relations, etc.** *Example of innovation*→ We show how these conflicts are organized by the organizational “spirit”, or self-organizing field, and can be used for the purpose of expanding the participants’ views regarding the power and potential of the organization.
- **Health care models.** *Example of innovation*→ We show how multicultural aspects, patient - care person - health provider relationships, and diversity of medical models can be understood as being part of a

single reality, which needs input and participation from all the interested parties to create a sustainable future.

- **New participatory models for educational programs.** Example of innovation→ Teachers, learners and Facilitators are rotating roles that can be used for creating an educational program, in which community building, personal development and content driven learning are formulated as an integrated whole.
- **Conflict resolution in the workplace.** Example of innovation→ We show how individual relationship conflicts, in the workplace, are local between the people and non-local within the organization. This awareness can first be used to ease the tensions between the involved individuals, and second to support the future development of the organization as a whole. The conflicting parties can actively participate in this process on all levels.
- **New ideas about online facilitation and e-community building.** Example of innovation→ We show how network theory concepts like the small world phenomena or the concept of degrees of separation expand when you combine them with the three level approach, about which you will read more on the next page.
- **Perpetrator-victim mediation.** Example of innovation→ We unfold the processes behind revenge and guilt so we can use them as the driving forces for creating restorative justice solution.

The Pillars of the Worldwork Paradigm – a Perspective, a Methodology, and a Path of Personal Inspiration

The Worldwork Perspective

The Worldwork perspective looks at every person, group and event as equally important to the emerging future of the community and of the globe. It differentiates between three levels, which we think of as parallel worlds.

The first two levels are defined as the measurable and non-measurable aspects of groups and organizations. The measurable level creates a consensus reality, which has, for example, components like organizational facts, but also organizational structures, strategic goals, best practices to meet them, etc. The non-measurable aspects consist of creative tensions and impulses, such as excitement, jealousy, power struggles, and so on... On the third level, the Worldwork perspective includes an awareness of a sense of connectedness between everyone and everything, a non-dualistic common ground in which disturbing polarities no longer exist.

These three levels are seen as equally important perspectives. They are parallel worlds that only seem conflicting or irrational from a Newtonian viewpoint. The Quantum Mind, which is aware and open to the self-reflecting tendency of the universe, experiences them simultaneously, with shifting focus, and flows between them easily. This perspective, together with the methodology, can be used, for instance, to solve conflicts and create synergy between a rational, fact-oriented faction of the organization, and the feeling, relationship-oriented part of a group.

All three levels interact together and create a picture that shows a process which is ultimately creative and meaningful, pulled by the future as much as it is driven by the past. Unfolding this meaning allows us to co-create an emerging future, and to watch seemingly unrelated or even disturbing events fall into place, creating a bigger picture. From this perspective, we find that most problems contain their own built-in solutions.

The Worldwork Methodology

The Worldwork methodology includes concepts, methods, and interventions for facilitating emerging processes on these three levels, and for assisting organizations in consciously making changes for the co-creation of their own futures. Instead of working to overcome obstacles that stand between us and our

goals, we find and track the self-organizing streams that exist in groups and use them as wormholes¹ into the parallel universes.

Some of the Worldwork concepts, such as the idea of the field in physics, have their origins in modern science. It conceptualizes a phenomenon, where we notice the effect of a structuring force on reality, without the reality being in physical contact with the source. An example would be gravity, where a force field surrounding a body of finite mass will exert forces on other bodies without having to be in contact with them. The ancient Chinese concept of the Tao can be viewed as something similar. The Tao that cannot be said is considered to be an organizing principle of reality. Although it can not be seen or even expressed, it influences everything. Fields organize the life of organizations, giving us often the feeling, that we are powerless in influencing the groups that we are part of or even lead.

Other Worldwork concepts have been used for millennia in spiritual and indigenous traditions around the globe. For example, the concept of dreaming—as we use it in Worldwork—can also be found among the Australian Aboriginals. It refers to a process of creative imagination in which we perceive ourselves as being a part of, with or without our conscious intent. Or, to say it another way, it combines the notion of self-organizing tendencies of systems towards equilibrium with a sense of awareness and meaningful directedness.

The idea that we can look at the “dreaming” of an organization suggests that if we notice that the organization, at times, behaves as if it were autonomous; we should not think of it as an out-of-control driverless car but rather as an enchanted organism that follows its own intelligent, possibly non-linear, yet meaningful impulses—a recognition that is not always immediately accessible to the linear thinking of participants.

Another Worldwork concept: the “ghostrole,” differentiates the extent to which a group identifies itself with its participation in a particular event. For instance, some members of an organization might use the word “we” when referring to something that they identify with, but the words “the organization” when referring to something that they feel is not in their control. The statement, “We all worked hard, but the organization doesn’t value that,” shows a simple example of this phenomenon. In this case, “the organization” is presented as a kind of a ghostlike figure that does not seem to value everyone’s work—a non-local presence that seems to disturb some members. If we give a voice to these “ghosts,” groups can find their underlying creative potential and meaning. In this case, for example, members might play out the ghost of the organization in a role play, and, through this process, discover that they need to change the organization by valuing one another more.

Worldwork defines as **the edge** the point at which a group is challenged by its development to identify itself with an idea or experience that is new for them. In the above example, the edge for these participants is to identify themselves with actually being the organization that they consider themselves to be victimized by. In so doing, the organizational change can happen right then and there, in that session, among those present, through the valuing of one another.

Because the edge is the focal point that carries the greatest potential for change and is closest to the self-organizing stream of the organization, it is often perceived as an area in which things are getting out of control.

Worldwork contains a body of techniques and interventions that track the multi-level experiences of the interested parties. Because interventions are linked directly to the actual experiences of the participants, group members need not prescribe to the Worldwork paradigm. This notion is especially important in the area of conflict resolution.

Worldwork as a Path of Inspiration and Personal Development

A person's decision to lead, facilitate, and actively participate in organizations and in community life is founded upon a profound inspiration. The calling that initiates the outer decision to work in this arena organizes and facilitates a person's learning path and direction of personal development. Learning, in our view, is largely based upon connecting with this inner process, and discovering one's own personal myth in connection with the world at large, as well as with a given organization. Teaching is the facilitation of this connection between the learner and the learner's path. This inspirational path binds the paradigm, the methodology, and the personality of the facilitator/leader/elder into a seamless whole, and is the source of the attitudes and feelings that each of us brings to our work. By placing awareness in the center of our observations, research and personal interactions; we learn to believe in our actual innate potentials and can naturally develop the authenticity and emotional intelligence that ties methodology and perspective into a lived and felt human experience. The unique ways in which we work, facilitate and lead can not be separated from our individual core values about life, community, our role in it, and our role in the world at large.

History of Worldwork Development

Worldwork is a daughter paradigm of Processwork. Both paradigms are centered around the role of awareness in how we place value on the non-measurable and measurable aspects of reality. Processwork was developed by Arnold and Amy Mindell and their associates and has evolved over the last 30 years into a comprehensive paradigm which introduces cutting edge consciousness research

into the modern framework, bringing new impulses into physics, mathematics, medicine, psychology and the study of collective behavior.

Processwork is mostly known as a comprehensive psychotherapeutic model for personal development. However, it is applied in a large diversity of areas, such as work with body symptoms and coma-states, as well as in theatre, filmmaking, and creative performances.

Worldwork branched out of the Processwork model about 15 years ago, and has since been researched, written about, applied, tested and developed by Arnold and Amy Mindell and the Worldwork team. Both Processwork and Worldwork are emerging paradigms, subject to continuous debate and change. You are invited to take part in some of the e-discussion groups and to participate in their development.

More Information and Training

Enjoy surfing through these pages and, for a more inclusive view of Worldwork, follow the library and networking links to books and articles on the topic and to other websites — including the homepage of its founders — You can also connect to discussion groups that deal with Worldwork and Processwork. Links on the site will also lead you to a number of training programs and academic degree courses that include Worldwork throughout the world and to several e-discussion groups on topics that are related to this paradigm.