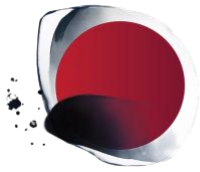


Holding the Gap



From Worry to Wisdom

The gap is a space of creative potential that will reveal itself through the experience of varying degrees of anxiety. It is an “about to” state out of which arises all new possibility.



Because of its anxiety producing precursor many individuals will defend against it and consequently disallow the creative potential it carries. It is often experienced as a “void” or dark place where internal images and feelings are missing. However, upon examination, we can also realize that this internal phenomenon holds within it a creative potential.

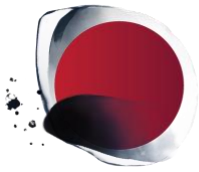
A drawing in of a potential that requires one to fill it

”Gaps can be very powerful tools. In one way, we can use gaps to leave things undone. We can put something out there to the client and give them just enough so that they have something to take home and think about. We can give them enough information, just enough, so that the next time we talk, they will want to know more. We can hint at something that will spark interest and keep them coming back again to get answers. We can leave the door open to see what can come out of the gaps that we are leaving. This is referred to a process in which we hold the gap, not expecting the client to do so, but rather inviting them to inquire, speculate, and go to depth — fueled by their curiosity or their need to understand.

On the other side of this, we must be careful not to leave too many gaps. We don't want to leave too many things “undone.” We want to be sure that we are addressing the issues that are important to the client. We must be aware of their needs and their expectations. We must calibrate our responses to serve their agenda and their process and not drive for results based on our need, insecurity, or fears.

At this stage, my personal feeling is that the best way to achieve meeting their expectations, is to ask if we are covering topics that are important to them. If we continue to check in with the clients and allow them to ask questions, we can try to get them to a point where they feel that we are or at least trying to meet their needs.”

— Chrissy, 2004, email communication



Holding the Gap: From Worry to Wisdom

*When you are unable to be in control of what is happening around you, change yourself.
You can control how you respond to what is happening.*

Introduction

This exercise is designed to open the field of consciousness so that you have a greater degree of choice in relationship to your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

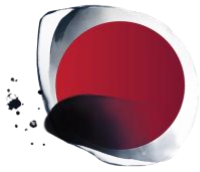
When we are upset or uncomfortable with our thoughts, we have a potential to be taken over with concerns that make it difficult to function as we normally do. “Fears that are allowed to spread, uninhibited, will eventually permeate our system and can create a kind of madness within our lives.” (Andrews, p.249)¹

Holding the Gap is a practice which brings us back to ourselves and efficiently helps manage unwanted thoughts or feelings, allowing you to determine a clear course of action and to make better decisions. Bring in “triggers” which tells you to return to the present moment you ensure continuity of your leadership, and you are sticking to plan. If you can’t return than your triggers may not be aligned with your ability to determine what is real.

The gap is a space of creative potential that will reveal itself through the experience of varying degrees of anxiety. It is an “about to” state out of which arises all new possibility. Because of its anxiety producing precursor, many individuals will defend against it and consequently disallow the creative potential it carries. It is often experienced a “void” or dark place where internal images and feelings are missing. The Tibetans point to this internal phenomenon as creative potential.

“If I do it properly – overcoming my familiar thoughts and emotions of my known past and future – then energetically, neurologically, biologically, chemically, hormonally, and genetically, that predictable future (as well as the familiar past I used to affirm it) no longer exists. If I’m no longer firing and no longer wiring those same old neural networks (by no longer thinking about those memories of the people or things at certain times and places), and I keep returning to the present moment, I am calling energy back to me.” (Dispenza, p. 60)

¹ Andrews, Ted. (1993). Animals speak: The spiritual and magical powers of creatures great and small. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn.



Value - Potential Outcomes

- Increased Capacity for Empathy
- Enhanced ability to self-reflect
- Supports a more accurate ability to witness and mirror others
- Cultivates a foundation for heartfulness and mindfulness
- Enhances the mind's ability to make discriminations between important and unimportant stimuli
- Leads to clarity of intention and perception
- Encourages an ability to determine the difference between an event and your reaction to the event, a thought and your reaction or a feeling and your reaction
- Investigates the possibility that your response could be causing you more suffering than your awareness of the problem

Recognizing Our Own Suffering and Knowing What to do With It.

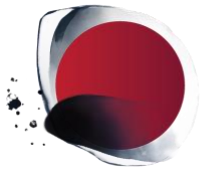
- During times of crisis or stress your mind can flood with disturbing images, thoughts and feelings. Sometimes it works to just push those unwanted feelings away. Other times, staying busy and focused allows the feelings to pass by.
- However, other times this is not so easy.
- In these times of uncertainty, we are being challenged to let go of the old and create the new.

Holding the Gap Exercise

- In conjunction with the 10 Breath exercise we begin with identifying the unwanted thought and then the feelings that go with them.
- Notice once you have done this, that there is a gap between the unwanted feeling and the recognition of that feeling.
- Notice the experience that comes from uncertainty and not knowing, from lingering where the mind keeps reaching outward.

Worry and The Space In-between

- Take a moment and allow 3 full breaths.
- All the way in and all the way out.
- What pulls you over the line?
- Now ask yourself, "what am I worrying about." Put a name to it: "feeling of not enough money to get through this, loss of income, ill of myself or loved one."



10 Breath Exercise

- Please bring the awareness to the breath and allow three full “clearing breaths.” - Simply breath and relax, while you are noticing the sensation of the breath and it enters and leaves your body.
- Now continue to bring your awareness to the sensation of your breathing as the breath comes in . . . and goes out - Gently tracking the sensation of your breathing.
- Now gently bring your awareness to the very bottom point of the out-breath. Notice there is a brief resting point before the next breath enters the body.
- After noticing this resting point for several breaths, label the next out breath as “1.”
- The next breath label as “2.” Continue to follow your breath up to the count of ten breaths.
- Once you have done this rest a moment, notice how you are feeling and repeat two more times.
- If you lose count as you mind or thinking drifts, simply start over.

Rational

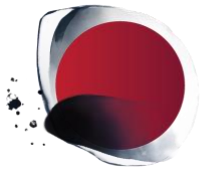
This concentration exercise is useful for stress reduction, focusing, and is the basis for cultivating qualities of mind such as mindfulness and compassion. It is also useful to establish a baseline for the development of “internal” awareness.

Summary

- It is useful to practice several times a day whenever you think about it.
- You may do this exercise with the eyes open or closed.
- This should be an effortless undertaking and perceived more as a gift than an obligation.

Relational Resources That Serve the Process of Holding Gaps

- Patience
- Active Listening
- Contemplative Reflection
- Silence
- Back Tracking
- Asking: How do we know what in life is undone?
- Living into the Question
- Awareness of the in-between space
- Suspending Disbelief
- Following the Three Rules of Agreements
- Ceremonial Awareness
- Holding
- Pointing-to Instruction



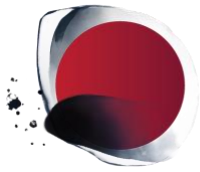
- Mutual Utilization
- Ceremonial Holding or Holding the Form
- Holding Confidence
- Allowing for Insecurity
- Holding a Smile
- Trusting Process and Staying Involved
- Welcoming the Uninvited Guest, i.e. emotion, thought, impulse.
- Holding the Tension
- Capacity for Ambivalence
- Soft Eyes
- Concentration
- Witnessing of Internal and External Process
- Surrendering
- Awareness
- Mindfulness
- Concentration
- Awareness of the undone or unsaid.
- Acknowledging

Team Reflections

- “I had no choice but to write about the tool that I selected out of the bag as it passed around the room- it was my own that I had written down earlier in the exercise. When we had the chance to pass the bag around the second time and choose another, my loyalty was to my first choice- it was chosen for me, or I was chosen for it. Much like the story told in the meeting- "Well, if you have to know why I am here in this grave- I am here because of you, and you are here because of me." I wrote as follows:

"Listening to within the 'other'- and in turn myself."

This came to me quickly as I stared across the room to the partner I had selected. After I got past the surface of the physical eye contact, I saw a caring, compassionate, sensitive person. This led me to think that often such traits can leave one vulnerable, and I thought of how I must be sure to be aware of these emotions and be protective if need be.



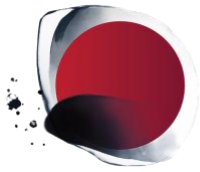
Quickly I spun this around and told myself that what I see in her is much of what makes me who I am. Not feeling the need to protect myself though, I simply acknowledged this, and was content with being aware of how I am.

Thinking back now on this and how it relates to our clients, there are a couple different ways to relate my feelings. First, be aware of what you are projecting on others. Whether I was projecting these emotions, or rather picking and choosing what I wanted/needed to see in them- I don't know, probably a little of both. Either way, these emotions were real for me.

Also, trying to see past surface issues and get to the heart of the matter is essential. Knowing the person as I do for this exercise, it was easy to get past the superficial. Working with new clients, this is not nearly as easy, but can be accomplished over time.

As I re-read what I have written above I think of the quote discussed in earlier sessions regarding listening and silence- something to the effect that this listening can allow the person you are listening to gain an understanding of themselves, often for the very first time. (How often do our new clients say that their previous broker would never listen to them?)”

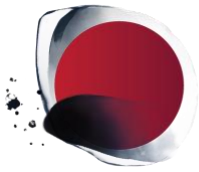
- “I picked “**awareness**” as the tool I am to comment on. To me, awareness is not really a tool, but more a state of mind that I aspire to. I see it more as a goal; tools are the means to achieve goals. I believe there are a number of tools that can be used increase my awareness, beginning with the senses. The two ones I use most often are listening and seeing.
- **Listening** - not only to words (client’s and my own) but to body language. I haven’t used Tim’s question;” Where are you feeling that in your body?” yet, but I am anxious to try it. Listening to client words is probably the greatest tool in becoming aware of any relationship, which invites the question of whether I am listening or only hearing. If I am only hearing, I am not developing true awareness. And of course, to really



listen, there has to be some silence (couldn't resist getting that in) that allows me to reflect on what is being said.

- **Seeing:** client's body language – how are they sitting? If I lean in, will they lean in? Are their arms crossed or open? Are mine? (I am increasingly aware of how I sit and when to change my body position). What is their expression when I say something? Are they glazing over or really interested? Are they relaxed and have we laughed? (I have to take the anxiousness of the meeting a help the client feel comfortable)
- But awareness goes beyond just seeing and hearing. It depends on **knowing the undone or the unsaid**. What haven't we talked about? Could there be a reason for avoiding a subject or did I just fail to ask?
- What is becoming obvious in writing this feedback is that probably the greatest tool in achieving awareness is the asking of questions. both to the client and of myself. If I ask the right questions, then listen to the answers, I improve my awareness and know what actions I then need to take. “
- **“Concentration:** Is a focused attention and the ability to pay attention to one single thought or subject. A better concentration helps understanding faster and improves the memory. Concentrating on my job makes me perform better, faster, and successfully. It helps me focus on my goals and achieve them more easily. Imagine what you can accomplish if you have better concentration.”
- “The tool I drew from the bag is silence. Since I got to talk about it during the session on Thursday, I'll just recap. I look at this tool in two ways: one is how I use it now and the other is how I think I could use it better.

I tend to use **silence** more in my personal communication than in meetings with clients. I find it comes up frequently in conversations that have the potential for getting out of hand, i.e. it becomes a tool for letting a moment or a thought pass

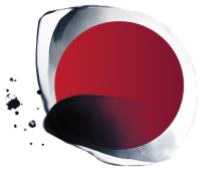


unaddressed at least as often as it allows something to develop and be brought into the open. Again, that seems more common in my personal life, where the relationships are complicated by years and layers of disfunction.

In client meetings, I use silence almost exclusively as a tool for checking in: I look at the client(s) to make sure they're still with me, I check my mental agenda to make sure I'm covering everything I wanted. I think it also gives the client space so they can bring up any issues I'm not covering - it prevents me from steamrolling right through.

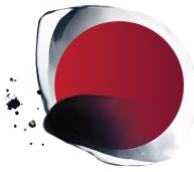
I have long been working on a self-improvement project to allow for more space in my communication. I tend to try to "fix" a problem - often even before I have a clear understanding of what the problem is. In my rush to resolve an issue, I don't allow the client to fully define it. I think I know what they're going to say, and, in my mind, that becomes the problem I need to solve. In leaving a period of silence after the client makes their statement, I would give myself the chance to really absorb what the client is saying and give the client the opportunity to finish the thought. Besides, it would certainly be more polite!"

- “**Shifting roles** is one of the most easily understood tools from a definitional viewpoint, however, extremely difficult in an operational sense. When I think of shifting roles I think of acting. But is that really what it is. Not really. It is more like treating every meeting as if it were sacred while at the same time not losing yourself. In other words, maintain integrity and be true to yourself. I think what I am trying to say is not only appear to be sincere, but actually be sincere, even if that sincerity hurts you in some way. At least you will be able to live with yourself by following your own convictions no matter what! Shifting roles is not being someone you are not but rather it is finding that different "person" you can be given a certain situation. I am not talking about split personalities so stop laughing. I am talking about digging into your internal space and looking for the substantive material which allows you to shift roles. Once you find this material, you can adapt to almost any situation confronting you, especially in a meeting with a client or potential client. But here is the difficult part of shifting roles. How in God's name do you do this. I may do this at times, but hopefully I can do this on demand. If I can accomplish this, I may



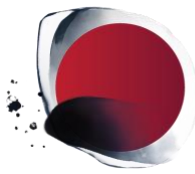
have just unlocked the key to dealing with all kinds of people in all kinds of situations. To be continued....actually, I have to think about this more but I am substantively bankrupt right now.”

- “I consider **acknowledging** to be a very important and powerful tool when building and maintaining rapport. I think that as advisors, or as people, it's to our advantage to make the other person feel good as we build and sustain the rapport that we're striving for. One way to do this is to hear them. Through active listening, we can communicate to the client that we are hearing and acknowledging what they're saying. This, in turn, relays to the client that they and their situation have been heard and understood by the advisor so that the appropriate recommendation or advise can be given. Without acknowledgement, the client will walk away from a meeting wondering if what they conveyed was heard, if the advisor was listening, and ultimately if they want to do business with a firm that is not responsive to their needs.”
- “The last meeting we had started out very uncomfortable due to our lack of direction. However, what I learned from this is more about how people communicate or act in certain situations. I find myself trying to anticipate or guess what someone will do or say. I try to observe the process and content of communication to clarify it to some degree. What you said about the speed of process and content as they relate to communication started to make some sense to me. You stated that the process of communication is quicker than the content of communication. I equate this in some sort of quirky way to hitting a golf ball. If you try to hit it straight by "eyeing the ball" it is virtually impossible to do, however, if you just feel it, you are more likely to hit the ball straight. Basically, your eyes cannot keep up with your hands. In our discussion about the process and content of communication, the eyes would be the content and the hands the process. Am I making any sense at all? Does this analogy confirm to you that I am missing the point? I do not know where this came from, but it is exactly how I interpreted it. This is why process is difficult and content is easy.”
- “The story about the two monks was very clear to me [see Sanctuary/Reflection/Two Monks]. As I said in the meeting, I am the second monk

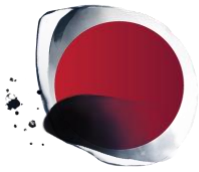


or at least that is how I would probably respond. However, is it really a story about leaving things incomplete or carrying them with you? Maybe the second monk just cares a little more or has stronger beliefs. I do not know...it was just a thought. Where the problem lies in communicating with clients is trying to figure out what monk the client represents. As I see it, I meet people every day where some are the first monk and some the second monk. The second monk is the client that would be more difficult to close and maybe more difficult to satisfy. The second monk is the client where any gap in communication can be disastrous.”

- I want to talk briefly about one tool that I did not pick. That tool was the one we addressed the other day. **Silence**. As much as I think this can be a very effective way to communicate, we cannot ignore the fact that it can also be ineffective or at least somewhat awkward. Let me explain. If I were using silence as a tool with someone that KNEW me personally, it may not work well. Anyone who knows me would conclude that if I were silent at any time in their presence it would mean something could be wrong. If they perceive this to be the case, then communication may breakdown due to this silence. However, if the person didn't know me, then silence can be extremely effective. But maybe I am looking at it as if it should be a "feel good" situation. In fact, the more I think about it, silence can be very effective with someone who knows me if I am using it to manipulate the situation, like trying to make a point about something. I guess I am now thinking more along the lines that silence doesn't have to feel comfortable all the time to be effective, whatever that means. When we use the word "effective" it is very subjective.
- “The last thing I wanted to mention was more of a statement than a question. It has to do with the monkey story. At first, I didn't believe it and didn't give it too much thought. However, the only way to analyze it is to treat it like religion. If you break down religion to a science and to what we believe are the physics of the universe, then none of it makes sense. That is why you must have faith. If you have faith, scientific explanations in the world we live in have zero credibility. Therefore, I have "faith" in the monkey story and would like to address it later.”



- **“Silence is certainly not always golden.** Sometimes it's more like lead. The longer an uncomfortable silence goes on, the harder one scrambles to figure out how to get out from underneath this weight which is getting heavier by the second. Invariably whatever lifeline one throws themselves to escape the uncomfortable silence is never "true". Usually, it's just something...anything said to break the wall down to rebuild rapport. Compare this with welcomed silence. The silence of a couple or perhaps a group of people secure enough in their relationship with each other to allow silence to comfort like a blanket, only peeking out from the covers to relate something truly relevant. This is the most wonderful silence. However, this silence is achieved only with a truly "co-created" relationship that encompasses trust between the participants. With clients I have rarely found this type of silence. Usually, the silence with clients is more of an obvious tool to let ideas and concepts "sink in" with myself as the breaker of the silence when it seems necessary. I remember one time in a car with a client I tried to not force conversation with a relocation client as I toured him around areas of the state. We genuinely liked each other, so I did not want to risk "insulting" him with pre-fabbed conversational topics, so I let the silence enter the car. After about 10 minutes of silence, I felt I should break it (though it was refreshing) and as I looked over to him to remark on the water view out of his window, I realized he had fallen asleep! Not many easy answers to this question!”
- “It is difficult to ascertain what's left undone when a client may not be responding for some reason. Perhaps it sometimes is a situation in which the client doesn't even know how to articulate his needs. To him the whole financial planning process with all its intricacies must seem like rocket science. He doesn't even know where to begin or what to ask. Like a stray animal he may want you to simply take him in and care for him--really a supreme act of trust. I think we must assume the role of educator in these circumstances. With sensitivity and understanding we need to clarify that what's undone is basic instruction. Maybe it could be phrased: "Would you like me to explain how a 401k rollover works and why we recommend it?" In my own mind I would put myself in the position of being responsible for doing something that I don't know how to do and how I would feel. Doesn't it seem that all of our discussions really lead back or involve the “Golden Rule.”
- “Feedback on "working" this tool on Thursday:



I enjoyed the process. It was a little exciting and a little nerve-wracking to blindly volunteer for it, but I wasn't particularly worried. I felt comfortable with the group, that I wasn't risking ridicule, because that isn't how the group operates. I was glad that there were four other people immediately involved in the work. That relieved the pressure of figuring out all by myself what I was doing. During the conversation, I learned more about how I use silence because the interaction forced me to define it more clearly. After it was over, I realized that all the muscles in my legs were tense, I had been leaning forward, concentrating so hard on what was happening.”

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The Tim Dukes Method provides an opportunity for self-reflective individuals to cultivate the capacity to receive into consciousness hidden aspects of the self, claiming your unique gifts – ensuring that today's brilliance successfully transitions into tomorrow's wisdom. The Tim Dukes Method is designed and implemented by Dr. Timothy Dukes for determined creatives to ensure long-term viability — as a continuing investment in the well-being of yourself, family, organizations, culture, society, and the Earth itself.