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*EVERY MONTH **ATTRACTORS** SHARES TIPS AND TOOLS FROM HUMAN SYSTEMS DYNAMICS. IN THIS MONTH'S EDITION, GLENDA EOYANG TALKS ABOUT TURNING POWERFUL QUESTIONS INTO PRODUCTS.*

A client recently said to me, "HSD consulting isn't like any other. You don't give us answers. You ask questions to help us unfold our own answers."

This particular client had asked us for a program of teambuilding for their senior leadership team. Rather than focusing on the team and shaping relationships among team members, we turned their attention to shared issues. We helped them build team capacity as they established communication norms to counteract negative attitudes among staff, developed an efficient planning process for multiple change initiatives that were just over the horizon, and committed to shared expectations about meeting participation and management. We asked them, "What do you need to do together?" and, "How might you do that work more effectively?"

We didn't tell them how to be a team. We asked the questions that required them to think and act like a team. As they built their capacity, they began to ask themselves and each other the questions that led them along to greater performance. The client got results they expected and more. That is the way we work.

Another leadership team asked for help in developing strategies and priorities to shape the work of a newly merged department. In the course of the work, we recognized friction among members of the team, so our questions turned to their internal communications and expectations.

When we begin to work with a client, we see patterns. Sometimes the patterns we see are quite distinct from the ones the client describes during our early conversations. As we see the pattern, we also explore how the client might want the pattern to shift. These two pieces of information—current pattern and desired pattern—sets up the questions and options for action that will begin to move the pattern away from the past and toward the future.

Every organization and each point in time is unique. We do not assume that any two clients are going to need the same intervention. We may ask similar questions as we move from one engagement to another, but the answers are always different.

We don't have a finite set of tools and techniques. Each of us has a diverse toolkit and ways to see and interpret patterns that help us know which tool to use when.

As organizational issues get more difficult and as people hear about HSD approaches, the demand for our services expands. We began as a small circle of practitioner-researchers who were developing radically new tools and techniques for every project. Through certification training and on-going mentoring and shadow consulting, we have expanded the small band to include approximately thirty people around the world and across multiple disciplines who are using HSD principles to help their clients and organizations

see and influence patterns in their human systems. Those Associates continue to develop tools and methods that generate important questions to shape individual and collective action.

Within the next year, we will take another step to share our approaches with others. A group of Associates is building a line of products to provide solutions to challenges faced by organizations and communities in today's complex world. At this point, we are early in the product development lifecycle, as we try to discern which of our solutions will be most useful for practitioners as they see and influence patterns in teams, organizations, and communities. In the meantime, we continue to teach clients and colleagues the power of asking questions that shift patterns of thought, talk, and action.

The summer of 2006 will bring another Human Systems Dynamics Professional (HSDP) Certification Class. When you complete the course, you become a life-long Associate of the HSD Institute. This ten-day program will be held on June 14-16, July 12-15, and August 16-18. For more information about the class, contact Julia Wolter at jwolter@hsdinstitute.org or register online at http://www.hsdinstitute.org/events_learning.asp

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