

THREE PARADIGMS FOR DIVERSITY CHANGE LEADERS
REFLECTING ON POTENTIAL CLASHES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUILDING COALITIONS

WHO IS RIGHT	HOW TO PROCEED	COALITION BUILDING
<p>Of course each paradigm assumes that it is correct.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The "Golden Rule" believes they are already sensitive and unprejudiced. ◆ Right the Wrong confronts Golden Rule on their lack of awareness and are horrified by the "global" scope of Valuing all the Differences and feels that Golden Rule is ethnocentric in attempting to do unto others...and that Right the Wrongs are serving the needs of a few at the expense of many. ◆ Golden Rule thinks there is no difference in how they and Value all the Differences sees things and can't understand why Value all the Differences are impatient with them. 	<p>Develop a thorough understanding of all parties involved and their understanding as well. Don't forget the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Don't assume! ◆ Paradigm I gravitates to trouble spots within teams or between individuals, providing remedial or anticipatory action to smooth out friction. ◆ Paradigm II is singularly focused on the Target Group, viewing anything else as watering down the sources. ◆ Paradigm III prefers methods that demonstrate in deed as well as word that "valuing diversity" covers a broad range of differences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Have frank discussions of assumptions, goals, and expectations (paradigms) among Change Leaders valuing all viewpoints and not forcing people to subvert their views "for the good of the cause." ◆ Rely on negotiation, politics and community action skills. ◆ Carefully define the areas where alignment exists and where paradigms differ. ◆ Define common goals and clarify the "boundaries" between what people agree on and what they don't. ◆ Avoid squashing people into uneasy, over-generalized statements of "what everybody wants." ◆ Share goals completely. ◆ Make decisions and handle areas of non-agreement. ◆ Don't be tempted to judge "who's right?" ◆ Learn how to accommodate the different priorities - what to do first, and why? What's next? ◆ Work to understand in detail the other favored paradigms. ◆ Work toward allowing the coalition to produce new approaches that incorporate and go beyond everything that was known before. ◆ Work with each other with great respect, patience, and an effort to understand what's behind the statement.

All three paradigms want to create a high performance, smoothly running organization where members are neither penalized nor advantaged by the "type" of person they are perceived to be. Understanding what is going on will prevent becoming trapped in "Paradigm Clash." Whose paradigm is right? And How to proceed are the critical issues that will assist individuals and organizations in becoming more culturally competent (mature).

The coalition process is, in itself, diversity in action. Like blind people feeling the elephant; each of us has a close-up, personal experience of a portion of the whole, and we need other's different views in order to create the future world we strive for.

Adapted by The Koi Group © 2001 from an original article written by Judith D. Palmer, *Three Paradigms for Diversity Change Leaders*