

## Facilitating a Self-Critique

### Conversation:

Member: I think we wasted time in the session.

Facilitator: Can you say specifically what you mean by “wasted time”? For example, are you saying that these topics were not important to discuss in this group? Are you saying that the group could have discussed the topics more efficiently? Or are you saying something else?

Member: The topics were important to discuss, but I just feel that the discussion should not have taken so long.

Facilitator: Can you give the group a specific example of when you think it was taking too long? I’m asking because I think that will help the group and me better understand what you’re saying.

Member: When we were discussing when to begin the pilot project. I thought we took too long to reach what was a simple decision.

Facilitator: Is there anything the group or I could have done in that situation to use the time more effectively?

Member: No, not beyond the few small things that others mentioned. I can’t think of anything. Everything we talked about was important.

Facilitator: Given that you think the group could not have done anything else aside from the small things mentioned, I’m wondering if you’re feeling frustrated because a process you think is important takes such a long time to solve the group’s problems. Are you frustrated about this?

Member: Yeah, I am. At this rate, it will take weeks to solve all our problems. That’s a long time.

Facilitator: I agree that it may take weeks. Whether several weeks is a long time depends on how you look at the situation. I would agree that compared to how the group normally works, it’s a long time to spend in problem-solving meetings. However, compared to the three years that the group has tried without success to solve these problems, several weeks seems like a relatively short period of time. Do you see it differently?

Member: I agree with everything you’ve said. I just don’t know whether we can afford all that time in meetings.

Facilitator: That’s an important question for the group to decide. Do you want to check with the group to see if they want to discuss this issue?

- Excerpted from The Skilled Facilitator, New & Revised by Roger Schwarz
- Published by Jossey-Bass, A Wiley Company, 2002
- Exhibit 11.4. Facilitating a Self-Critique