LEADING TRANSFORMATION #56:

CHALLENGES TO COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

1. LACK OF “LARGER-THAN-LIFE VISION”

It is the size of vision that causes people to think of collaborating with others. “Larger-than-life” visions bring a people to the place of acknowledging that they cannot go it alone. Until they get to that place, it usually seems easier to lead toward the vision by running operations that can be controlled with simpler organizational structures.

2. LACK OF TRANSPARENCY

Parties within collaborative relationships need to be transparent in their dealings with one another. When particular parties operate like “poker players;” holding cards to their chest that are not known other partners, with the aim of using them opportunistically and surprisingly to their advantage, there is erosion of trust.

3. UNFULFILLED EXPECTATIONS

It does happen often that projections in plans do not fully materialize. This can cause disappointment and loss of commitment to the partnership. Worst still, are the situations where the unfulfilled expectations are due to intentional inaccurate disclosures by particular parties in the relationship.

4. UNWILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT LOSSES

Collaborative relationships require parties to give up somethings that they hold dear. Unwillingness on the part of particular partners to accept any losses can threaten the relationship.

5. COMPETITIVE ATTITUDE

In the place of cooperation, parties may be too entrenched in the attitudes and skills of competitiveness. This makes collaboration too foreign a concept to embrace.

6. UNWILLINGNESS TO SHARE CREDIT

Some parties in collaborative relationships may have the “winner takes all mentality.” This mentality simply has no place for sharing gains or credits. The lack of acknowledgment and reward for the other parties can result in loss of interest and commitment to the relationship.

7. LACK OF SKILLS IN COLLABORATION

In some situations, the intellectual and emotional openness to collaboration may sincerely exist, but some parties may simply not have the required skills. This may simply be due to history and experience. But the socio-historical settings may not make it reasonable to accommodate the needed learning curve.

Collaborative Leadership is needed for effective execution of visions that cannot be accomplished by any one of the parties in a partnership. It however does not come easy. It requires the right attitudes and skills; and long-term thinking with corresponding commitment.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. What challenges are the potential threats to a Collaborative Leadership relationship that you are engaged in?

2. What do you need to do to eliminate or significantly minimize those threats?