

ROG out in the wild

Sally & I (Marie-Anne) have been developing ROG together for nearly 20 years now and recognise that any approach relies heavily on practical applications to bring it to life. ROG (Relational Organisational Gestalt) is no different in this respect. As a phenomenological and emergent method, 'real life' examples of praxis illuminate the theory; developing and informing it as practitioners and cases expand.

We are delighted therefore to bring you here nine illustrations of how the ROG approach has made a difference to individuals and organisations. These articles, vlogs and personal reflections come from a diverse mix of practitioners, some of whom are experienced leaders but new to ROG, while some are seasoned OD professionals. What the contributions all point to however, is the potency and importance of a relational and emergent approach in organisational work. These glimpses into the world of practitioners offer us a small taster of the impact of ROG but we believe are valuable in their breadth. Each of the contributions highlights a particular theory map or maps which we have highlighted in a brief opening header. With huge thanks to Maggie Marriott for her help in collating and editing these entries as well as being herself a contributor! Maggie, we wouldn't have got here without you.

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We hope you have enjoyed this short glimpse into the work of OD practitioners who are embracing a ROG approach in diverse organisations and geographical locations around the world. If you are using ROG in your work, and would like to report a case example, then we would welcome additional contributions from friends and colleagues in the ROG community. Please send these to Maggie Marriott at maggie@maggiemarriott.com. If you wish to read or explore further please visit our ROG Training page, (details of both Level 1 and Level 2 Trainings can be found here <http://www.relationalchange.org/rog-training.html>). You can also find a range of articles, podcasts and videos relating to ROG on our resources page <http://www.relationalchange.org/resources.html> .

This piece by Justin Denholm, a leader in the healthcare sector in Australia, illustrates how a brief introduction to ROG and the Self/Other/Situation (SOS) model transformed his approach to the tuberculosis programme during COVID. The key theory maps are SOS and the turn away from a constrained egological approach to a more emergent ecological way of being.

Justin Denholm: The SOS model and tuberculosis programmatic change in the COVID pandemic

By way of background, I am an infectious diseases physician and the Medical Director of the Victorian Tuberculosis Program, based in Melbourne, Australia. I don't have any prior experience as a coach or therapist but was fortunate enough to attend a Relational Organisational Gestalt workshop series in September/October 2020, in which I was introduced to these concepts for the first time. This short piece arose from my reflections on that time, but any awkwardly applied terminology and ROG philosophy are entirely mine!

In recent years, there's been a major global focus for tuberculosis services on moving beyond simply treating people when they become unwell, to expand our programs for early detection and TB prevention. Ultimately these approaches, aimed at community screening to find 'latent' TB (LTBI), are intended to allow treatment to prevent the disease from developing, and eventually support the elimination of TB as a public health problem. In Australia, we have state and national TB strategic plans, both of which have major elements of expanding this type of community-based LTBI testing and treatment. In 2020, the arrival of the COVID pandemic created significant challenges for implementing these plans, though, for reasons that include diversion of funding and human resources to direct COVID responses; public health restrictions on community movement and gatherings; community concerns about visiting healthcare sites; and deprioritising of non-COVID healthcare work. Over the first 9 months of the pandemic, we responded in a variety of ways, including developing a video-conference based model of care, refocusing work priorities and restructuring program activities for staff and community safety¹. We found, though, that maintaining planned activities was increasingly difficult, particularly given increased social and economic pressures on the communities with which we are engaged, and uncertainty about how long these impacts might persist.

When I was introduced to the SOS model, I immediately recognised my own approach had been essentially egological. I had come into the COVID pandemic with a clear vision for expanding LTBI treatment programs, and my fundamental concern continued to be how to go on accomplishing this under changed conditions. Reflecting on the SOS model, I could see that I'd paid attention to each of the domains from this perspective. I had recognised, for example, my own need for increased self-care to ensure that I retained the energy and capacity for ongoing promotion ("Self"), and the need to support and resource program staff and healthcare workers ("Other") so that they could preserve their capacity to implement change in the environment ("Situation"). This approach had been largely intuitive but being introduced to the SOS model was resonant with me and was a good fit as a conceptual framework for the approach that I'd taken. It also helped me to articulate more clearly what some of the limitations to this strategy had been, including difficulties engaging with stakeholders, and a sense of some growing internal conflict and disengagement that I'd noticed.

¹ Watts, K., McKeown, A., Denholm, J., & Baker, A. M. (2020). Responding to COVID-19: adjusting TB services in a low-burden setting. *The International Journal of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease: the Official Journal of the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease*, 24(8), 866-869.

While the SOS framework offered me a useful interpretive lens for understanding my approach, what was more impactful was a paradigm shift that arose on being introduced to the possibility of an ecological approach to engagement. I found myself curious about what might emerge if I were to let go of my existing plans, reflect on the situation we found ourselves in, and how we might be shaped by it instead. Rather than seeking to influence others in order to alter our situation, what might emerge from sitting with the reality of our situation, and being open to how we might be changed by it?

Quite soon after encountering the SOS model, there was a striking opportunity to explore it in practice. I met with a key external stakeholder to discuss a budget proposal, intended to be about increasing our funding to support expanding the LTBI program in the context of COVID. Instead, without a clear alternative, I found myself suggesting that we put the proposal aside, and talk instead about the situation that we, and the communities we serve, found ourselves in. What emerged first was an acknowledgment that, however important LTBI programs might be in the long run, they weren't an immediate priority for the communities we needed to engage with at this time. Individuals and communities affected most by TB are often economically vulnerable, and the people we were meeting with were experiencing high rates of unemployment, food and housing insecurity and uncertainty. We acknowledged that these factors were much more pressing, and also that we needed a new approach to listening to community priorities; and suddenly, what emerged from the discussion was a very different proposal – to instead establish a training scheme with these funds, where young women from culturally and linguistically diverse communities impacted by TB and COVID would be employed to train and run peer-support groups for community health. While the program itself would provide employment and training, it would also provide continuous opportunities for better listening to community needs and priorities as they shifted over time, so that public health services like ours could be better tailored and more responsive to change.

It's still very early days for this particular program, and how effective it might be for improving engagement and peer-support remains to be seen. However, I wanted to share this as an example of tangible change in organisational approach that came about directly as a result of being introduced to the SOS model. It's a model that I think public health services in Australia and beyond could benefit from greater awareness of, so I'm keen to also take some opportunities to share it more widely in professional contexts and see how it might influence practice.

Justin Denholm



A/Prof Justin Denholm (BMed, MBioethics, MPH+TM, PhD, FRACP) is an infectious diseases physician based at the Royal Melbourne Hospital, and the Medical Director of the Victorian Tuberculosis Program. His work includes clinical and public health management of tuberculosis and other infectious diseases, as well as research relating to ethics, epidemiology, clinical medicine and public health. Justin has a particular interest in public health strategies towards the elimination of tuberculosis, and he especially loves making a practical difference through collaborative projects that bring together a wide range of skills and disciplines. He has experience with healthcare and not-for-profit organisational leadership and board membership and is enthusiastic about translating organisational theory into practice!

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This piece by Jessica Löwenhielm & Niklas Lindhardt illustrates a ROG consulting approach in organisational settings in Sweden. The key theory maps are the Wave model and the Gestalt OD cycle of engagement.

Jessica Löwenhielm and Niklas Lindhardt: Applying Relational Organizational Gestalt using a 5D Appreciative Inquiry process for team and organizational development

This article addresses the need for finding new ways of working with an emergent and relational facilitation approach within a short time frame and in an online setting. The pandemic has disrupted our old ways of working, and the need for dialogue, collaboration and addressing change within organisations has escalated as a cause of it. We found it important to respond to these shifts and find new frameworks and processes.

Hypothesis: Combining a validated, preformulated, directive OD-process with an emergent, relational facilitation framework would enhance the energetic field and engage the participants on a deeper level, thereby enabling emergence and securing attending to “the most pressing need”. We anticipated this resulting in a co-created plan for change, toward a collectively defined direction.

We, as facilitators, wanted to explore our own facilitation development after going through the ROG certification. “Who are we becoming as facilitators now? How can we bring about freedom and authenticity when holding space, allowing ourselves to be more ourselves yet holding a strong facilitation between us?” These inquiries were alive in us as we decided to create this case study.

This article is based on two cases where the Appreciative Inquiry 5D Process is applied in a relatively short time frame in an on-line setting. We explore how we implicitly and explicitly relate to the unified field, (Parlett, 1997), the “wave model” of ego, id and personality, and the Gestalt OD cycle of engagement throughout the process, (Chidiac, M.A, (2017), Gestalt as a relational approach to OD; British Gestalt Journal 2017, Vol. 26, No.1, 48–56). The article also reflects on the need for a relational, co-emergent approach to team and organizational development and the importance of mutuality in the relationship between the client and the consultant.

Cases and general approach

Case A: a large industry OEM and their supplier, running a 5D process to enhance collaboration across the two organizations to strengthen the mutual development efforts of the OEM-product, following a time of increasing conflict and detachment from a collaborative view.

Case B: a market data provider company and 6 of its most important clients running a 5D process to enhance collaboration and develop new strategies of how to work in a mutually strengthening way.

In both cases, we emphasised the importance of creating an open and safe container to meet the human need to feel seen and heard and to engage on a personal level as a prerequisite for an emergent, collaborative process to unfold. Facilitation of the entire process was done using ROG-methodology, something that is not usually done in a 5D-process.

We also made it a point to intervene relationally with participants of the process in the pre-stage (before the workshop), within the actual workshop, and in the closure and end of it. This

was done through individual emailing, answering of preparation forms and securing that all voices were continually heard through the process.

The application of the 5D process in brief

Define – co-define the challenges at hand and co-define the boundaries to work within. Needs and challenges are collected individually, to let the most pressing need emerge, revealing waves - (ego), challenging a collaborative stance in the business partnership.

The explicit documentation of the “ego” also initiated questioning into sea depth currents and flows - (id).

Discover - deepen the co-diagnosis, inquiring into what currently works well, identifying strengths and capabilities that may be used to address the identified challenge(s).

This step identifies strengthening waves - ego, and also sea depth currents and flows – id. It also starts to open the perspective of the seabed - personality

Focusing the dialogue on the “we/partnership” presenting in the field, we direct the participants to take a less dualistic stance.

Dream - collaboratively depict a “future perfect state” a dream for the challenge(s).

Visiting the perspective of “what is made possible when the dream comes true: for self and organization,” tangible sensations of the dream coming true were created. This in turn creates an experience of the future dream as liberating, anchoring the dream in each individual.

By also visiting the “worst possible case, if nothing is done” a larger field of sensing and awareness is shaped, sparking energy to mobilize action in the further stages of the process.

Design – Co-identify and co-initiate possible paths toward the dream.

By utilizing the collective field of sensing and intelligence, areas for action emerge. These areas shape a co-created map of possible paths forward.

In this stage, the groups widen the awareness from the initially articulated “waves” to also cover the levels beneath.

Deploy - Co-define and formulate first steps toward the dream and co-create a plan how to navigate and re-calibrate the chosen interventions along the way.

This step concretizes how the group wants the waves, sea depth and seabed to evolve from the current moment into the future. In so doing we are opening up for sensing the field as it emerges in the deployment of the activities.

A joint review and celebration of the results form a first evaluation of the process and serve as an early Entry/Contracting for the start of implementation of the actions.

Process Results

We were intrigued and positively surprised by the outcome of the workshop. A strong felt sense of deep connection both between the facilitators and with the whole group had been accomplished.

Both processes resulted in greater mutual trust and collaborative strategies to reach a closer partnership. The process also created vital insights into each other’s needs and challenges.

Not only did the concrete output exceed expectations; in the check-out dialogue and evaluation survey to all participants after the workshops the process was described as “surprisingly uplifting”, “creative & efficient”, “fun and playful”.

Client quotes:

“The output of this process widely exceeded my expectations, both in activity output and building trust and connection.”

“I now see how limited I’ve been in viewing the other suppliers in the market as competitors, now I see we have common challenges and opportunities and by working together we can achieve more!”.

Discussion and Conclusion

We find this a new way to facilitate a group for greater emergence and a stronger felt sense of openness and authenticity. By learning to trust emergence and facilitate from the ROG-certification we can contribute more and deeper to bringing about change.

Applying relational, emergent facilitation within a validated, directive 5D-process opens the co-creational field to enable deeper connection between participants. This in turn shapes a sense of trust, to stay in collective sensing long enough to co-shape a deeper understanding of ego, id and personality of, and between, groups and organizations. As facilitators we felt more at ease, open and less directive than usual when bringing a strong ROG-methodology. After learning how to trust emergence and staying with it, deeper needs were revealed. This opens up for solutions that not only tend to the most obvious visible needs and behaviours, but also to the deeper underlying reasons for detachment from a collaborative view. It also opens a more fluid, greater container that gives freedom to manoeuvre and to use self as an instrument in the process.

Strengthening of relations in the process also set a foundation for continuance of the co-created plan, making the ROG-framed 5D process a starting point of a new way of collaborating. With this case study the authors have become even more confident in trusting emergence and daring to hold a deeper space in the service and benefit of self, other and the system.

Jessica Löwenhielm



Jessica is Co-Active Coach (CPCC), Relational Organisational Gestalt Practitioner and Vertical development strategist, coach and trainer as well as organisational consultant. She is the co-founder of IntoTheNew who develop individuals, leaders and their organisations vertically using a combination of vertical and relational coaching, facilitating and OD methodologies. Jessica is an experienced leader with over 15 years working with leadership, business operations and transformations within international and Nordic organisations. She has a background in and holds a master’s degree in business administration. You can contact Jessica at jessica@wholly.se

Niklas Lindhardt



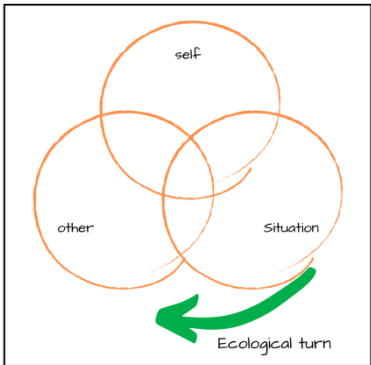
After a traditional management career in the software industry Niklas founded a self-organizing, employee-driven, agile organisation IntoTheNew, which focuses on concepts such as self-leadership, dynamic structures, complex systems, leading self and each other. He immersed himself in the subject of self organisation, and has certifications in developmental psychology, coaching, network organization, sustainable social change, and value-driven organization. He offers vertical development of human consciousness at individual, leader and organisational level. He believes a greater consciousness serves us better, as individuals, as organisations and as world. You can contact Niklas at niklas.lindhardt@gmail.com



This piece by Maggie Marriott illustrates a consulting application of ROG to organisations within the UK. The key theory maps are Self/Other/Situation (SOS) with a focus on the ecological turn, and field theory.

Maggie Marriott: The relief of the ecological turn

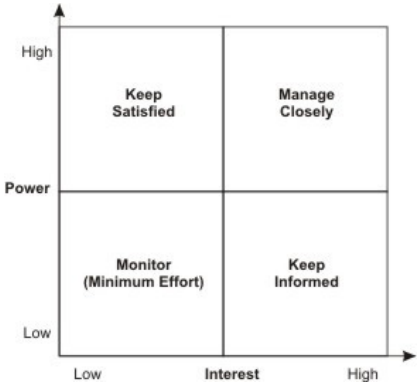
How has Relational Organisational Gestalt (ROG) impacted my work? Wow, that's a huge question! It has completely transformed my work because it transformed me. It is now 5 years since I completed ROG and it continues to influence and be the foundation of what I do and how I do it. In this article I will share with you how my understanding of field theory and the ecological turn has changed, and continues to influence, my work.



SOS model: S.Denham-Vaughan and M. Chidiac

Underneath the seeming simplicity of the Self/Other/Situation (SOS) model there is great depth, breadth, wisdom and power and a structure which I bring to all my work. I am especially drawn to the ecological turn and starting pieces of work by sensing into the whole situation and what this might illuminate about the organisational field. Whether I am working with a large organisation or an individual, the wider field always has a huge impact on what we do and how we do it, and yet it is so often omitted from the conversation.

When designing organisational change impact reports, I used to ask clients to fill in classic 4-box models, such as the one to the right. These were often dull, ego led activities that everyone wanted to finish quickly. They rarely looked at the wider field that was impacting them and/or their organisation, leading to many undocumented assumptions and invisible risks.



Now I tend to use a light touch constellation approach. I ask clients to physically show the wider field by placing stakeholders, risks, finance, etc. using items such as Lego, post-it notes, or stones in relation to themselves or the project/activity. I have found the physicality of placing items, moving around them and stepping into them to be incredibly powerful. This physicality raises awareness of the wider field that is in play and the relationships that exist. It makes visible what is missing, what assumptions are being made and what is figural. As

my clients create these models there is lively discussion, laughter, disagreements and finally, a version of the landscape they can all recognise. Of course, the information can then be captured in more classical risk and stakeholder tools but the visceral sense of them always remains and can be used in project reviews to bring the conversations to life once again.

I find this approach also works well with my coaching and supervision clients and creating the 'maps' together is always an energy filled experience.

The turn from working with the egos of people in organisations, (described in the ROG approach as explicit plans, agendas, aims and strategies), to working more ecologically, (a more emergent style of responding to "what is"), really excites me. It is about relationships and flows; about intersections and holistic connections. It's pretty messy and not easily confined to a process or a single approach. It offers a way to explore the complexity of how we can work in ways which replenish ourselves, our employees, other living beings and the planet. The use of field theory, generative dialogue and phenomenology, amongst others, offer a powerful way of raising awareness of the wider field, our place in it and our impact on it.

My ecological turn is just one part of the answer to how has ROG impacted my work and me; there are too many other impacts to share fully here but they include actively raising awareness of

- the complexity of the field,
- the assumptions we are making,
- the impact of our choices on our self, on others and on the Earth

I now work with companies and individuals as they move away from depleting themselves, others (including non-humans) and the planet towards increasing self-care, caring and connection to others. In this way, I hope we become more resilient, our interventions more sustainable and contribute towards replenishing the Earth.

Maggie Marriott



Maggie is an organisational change consultant, coach, trainer and supervisor with a background in senior leadership and organisational change in the UK. She is also an associate with Relational Change and a number of other consultancy companies. She is accredited as a Gestalt Practitioner in Organisations (GPO) through the European Association for Gestalt Therapy (EAGT). You can contact Maggie at maggie@maggiemarriott.com.



This piece by Cathie O'Brien an organisational consultant, psychotherapist and supervisor, illustrates the application of ROG to educational settings and children's services in the U.K. The key theory maps are Self/Other/Situation (SOS) with a focus on Self and ethical presence.

Cathie O'Brien: How do I use ROG in educational settings/children's services?

I work predominantly from a relational, embodied, attuned and non-verbal perspective, and promote this way of working to other professionals who work with vulnerable children and young people in educational settings and children's homes. This approach is not often favoured at a time when relational aspects of work are being disregarded in many organisations, favouring outcome measures, manualised interventions and robotic organisational functions. I found in ROG a real support for my way of working. Both the theory base (in particular the self/other/situation (SOS)), and the use of self as instrument were particularly illuminating.

Self/other/situation leading to presence could be described as both a complex and simple theoretical model. Any Gestalt practitioner reading this may understand it at a complex level, involving the three cornerstones of gestalt - phenomenology, dialogue, and field theory. They may also understand each of these at a deeper level, with this process leading to contact. However, they may not necessarily understand how this process leads to a state of presence in self and potentially other. Some practitioners can mistake dissociation (lost in self, lost in other), for presence whilst the other could experience this as unavailable, distant, blank screen etc which could be anxiety provoking.

SOS however teaches disciplined awareness, a state of being ethically present, the ability to be in a state of self/other/situation simultaneously. As someone who has played top level team sport, I describe this as being in the zone, the ability for the mind and body to work simultaneously with the whole situation and team. Once you become technical your game goes out of the window. The technical aspects, which are called set pieces, are practiced during training, just the same as training in ROG or other courses. However, the skill is in integrating those technical set pieces with the whole body, relational and situational experience, something that is rarely taught in training, and being able to pass this on to others. Here lies the simplicity of SOS. When working with organisations this is a useful way of 'being' for the organisational practitioner. In children's services, working with extremely vulnerable and challenging families and young people, I also want teams to learn ethical and disciplined presence for themselves. However, the above gestalt language would potentially be too complex for them to understand and they would just switch off. The Self/other/situation is a model the layman can understand, it doesn't alienate nor sound elitist in any way shape or form, it's not frightening, and it makes sense. They are able to understand the technical set pieces (explicit), while also being with a gestalt practitioner who uses self as instrument (implicit) – working at both a technical and relational level. This is the aforementioned attunement, embodiment, sometimes non-verbal, other times feedback or validating aspects, eventually leading to presence - at this point they feel this naturally for themselves. In a sports environment this is when everything you have learnt comes together; it is integrated at a mind/ body/ environment/team level, once felt it is never forgotten. This is also called contact in gestalt and described as growth, change, integration, and assimilation. This can develop a feeling of self-support in individuals and groups as they carry this felt sense with them. They embody what they have learnt, and you can see this in their grounded confidence and calm energy. Again, people often notice this in athletes, they have a physical presence and confidence which others find hard to understand and mistakenly believe they

have little technical, left brain ability. This is because they make it look easy and natural, this is flow.

For individuals in children's services who work with very vulnerable children and families, this way of being is extremely helpful for both staff and young people. This groundedness, calm energy, self-awareness and ethical presence can help to calm the other, when working with families, multi-agency professionals or children and young people. Rather than being out of awareness and potentially mirroring the other's anxiety, fear, anger, and terror, potentially feeling frightened or frightening to the other, the individual can positively impact the other/environment through use of self. Their ethical and disciplined awareness of self/other/situation leading to a state of presence can finely attune to the relational dance at both an explicit and implicit level – leading to contact and potentially growth.

This is the art of gestalt and many who read gestalt can be put off by its complex language, however, I would encourage people to read gestalt from a place of presence and if you are unsure how to do this at this stage, just read without judgement to start with and allow it to flow. I also however believe it is useful to decode the richness of gestalt, and ROG does this while maintaining its integrity and artistry and making it accessible to all.

Cathie O'Brien



Cathie practices as a Gestalt Psychotherapist, Supervisor and ROG Practitioner. She has 35 years' experience working in the fields of social care and mental health, at both a senior leadership and practitioner level, within the NHS, Social Care, Education and Private sectors. She specialises in working with organisations who work with very vulnerable and challenging young people and adults and here she also integrates attachment, trauma, and the neurosciences with Gestalt. She describes her early life as living very much in the physical realm working with horses and teaching horse riding, followed by playing top level indoor volleyball, representing England, and coaching at a national league level. These days she still enjoys the earthy, mucky, outdoors, growing organic veg, walking and horse riding, all of which informs her work now, especially non-verbal communication, attunement, presence, and teamwork from the perspective of rhythm, flow, and team presence.

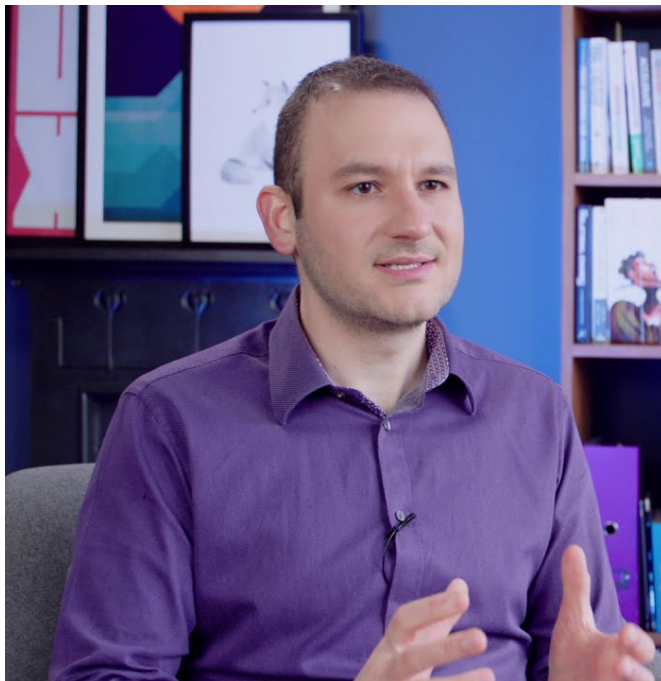
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This piece by Lazaro Wolf illustrates a ROG consulting and coaching application to organisational settings. The key theory maps are the SOS model, personal presence and the Wave model.

Lazaro Wolf: ROG and the change in my Self.

In my career as an Enterprise Agile Coach, I had the misfortune to witness the aftermath of usually 'top-down', badly planned, and even worse executed organisational transformations. My then strings to my bow seemed not enough to help organisations heal their wounds, as well as support their most important asset –people- to move forward. In this video, I share how my approach to change shifted from a methodical, analytical –yet lacking oomph and human touch... to a more effective, impactful and –more importantly– humane one. Thanks to ROG...



[Please click here to play the video in a new window](#)

Lazaro Wolf



Lazaro Wolf is an Enterprise Agile Coach and OD Practitioner with a twist. Although he's committed to help organisations overcome challenges and become more resilient, his approach focuses on people first –with their aspirations, talent and struggles. From startups to financial institutions and government bodies, he contributed to mission-critical engagements from various servant-leadership positions with an aim to reconcile personal and organisational goals, create safe workplaces and build creative capability. He often posts reflections on his journey of learning at <https://www.youtube.com/FLUXTube>. You can contact Lazaro at Lazaro@lazarowolf.com



This piece by Steven Goldstein illustrates a ROG coaching application in the U.K. financial markets sector. The main key theory map used is Self/Other/Situation (SOS) and raising awareness of these lenses through dialogue.

Steven Goldstein: How a ROG approach helps me, my coaching and my clients.

When asked if I could write an article which demonstrated some practical applications of the ROG approach, I tried to place myself in the shoes of someone curious about ROG. I pondered how best to demonstrate its validity and how it has helped me as a coach to be more effective with my clients.

The immersive experience of the ROG programme changed me and shifted my approach to working with clients. I began to see my coachees as part of a complex system and network of relationships, past, present and future, multi-dimensional, ever changing, ever evolving, ever emerging. I became more conscious of how these were part of them and how these were impacting the challenges they faced. I also became more aware of the client and their situation on myself, and how I could use this awareness to help them in our coaching work.

So how does this play out in real world examples and how does this differ from other coaching approaches?

Prior to my ROG experience, I aimed to help clients to clarify their goals and desired solutions, explore them and then work towards achieving them. Whilst this was helpful to the client, I often felt it was only partially so and was limited in what it could achieve. There is a metaphor in coaching, about coaching being like peeling back the layers of an onion. My old style of coaching worked on that person as just being one isolated onion. However, when coaching in a ROG approach, you find that the person has many onions that they are part of, and these onions are arranged multidimensionally and haphazardly. To support the client, you must not just peel back the layers on their 'self' onion but help them explore and discover the other 'onions' they are part of, or which impact them and their situation.

The ROG approach not only allows you to help the client see a picture of themselves close up, but it allows them to step into it, to come back out of it, to walk back from it, to see it from a distance, and to see it come to life. The ROG approach doesn't just help them work towards goals or solutions, it helps them clarify their situation, understand what needs to change, and works with them to support them as they make and embed meaningful change.

An example of this was recent work I did with a client who had become increasingly anxious and unsettled. Over time, this individual had become increasingly lost, his shoulders had become hunched, his head was down. He had become increasingly risk averse and was now someone who saw threats whereas previously he would see opportunity. He wanted to work with a coach to help him deal with and work past his anxiety. He got a lot more than that.

The individual was a senior manager at a large Investment firm who had been hired a few years ago to be one of the eventual successors to the co-CEOs. As we worked together, his world and perspective which had become closed-in and narrow focused began to change. He

started to zoom in and zoom out and as he did so, perceived an increasingly bigger and more complex picture. He started to become aware of the wider field in multi dimensions, of the different complex relationships within them and most crucially how these were impacting him. He not only saw with increasing clarity where he was, but also could recognise how he had got there, and most crucially where he could potentially go next.

As we went through this process, the client started to experience some quite dramatic shifts, and as he did so, I was then there to both support him and work with him to make these shifts sustainable. The client rediscovered his old ‘mojo’, his spark, his energy. The drive which was part of his former self, and which had helped him throughout his career, had returned. He started making changes, not just to himself but to the business he was a key part of. The business itself had been going through a bit of a slump, but he now started to effect it positively. The bounce was not just within him but was also now occurring in the business around him.

Previously, my coaching would have probably focused on just the client and what they could do to help themselves. But with the ROG approach, I engaged far more in a process of dialogue and discussion, exploring what is happening for my client and sharing with him what I was experiencing and noticing. This helped him become increasingly aware, and new avenues for exploration emerged. The conversation then expanded, and we explored these new avenues. This did mean that at times we needed to go to some uncomfortable places that provoked reflection and evoked strong feelings for the client. Handled carefully and with skill, these lead to powerful new insights, discoveries, and awareness. This is truly an emergent process.

I chose this example, because it illustrates the ROG approach in a concise and simple way. I have many examples similar to this I could have used. Examples where teams have come to life, or where the explorations have led to new insights and discoveries that were not part of the original aim of the coaching.

One word best sums up the ROG approach for me, ‘Power’. Power to effect positive change. Power to help others, to heal wounds, to drive people forward to effect change in themselves and others. It is the power of illumination that reveals what is hidden in the darkness and the shadows. It is the power of the human spirit which all are born with, but which can wither away over time. And for me as a coach, it is a power to empower others. That is the power of the ROG way.

Steven Goldstein



Steven is one of the Financial Market's leading Executive and Performance coaches. His work with trading, investment and risk businesses helps them to develop and cultivate performance improvements at the leadership, team and individual level. His specialty is helping people to improve their risk process and to achieve transformations which lead to greater effectiveness and productivity. Prior to becoming a coach, Steven worked in the Financial Markets as a trader for almost 25 years working at some of the world's leading Investment Banks. You can contact Steven at steven.goldstein@alpharcubed.com

This piece by Eva Deligiannis, an organisational consultant and coach, illustrates a consulting application of ROG to an Australian judicial system. The key theory maps are the 'wave model' and 'ethical presence'.

Eva Deligiannis: The Wave model and the Victorian Judicial System

As I sit here in front of my computer it is late December in Melbourne Australia. Christmas has come and gone and now I am trying to reclaim a semblance of order in my office again. I shuffle papers and cross off tasks from my list of things to do. During this busyness, I realise how much has happened over the last two years, particularly in 2020. No wonder I feel exhausted.

In 2019 I travelled to London to complete the certificate in Relational Organisational Gestalt (ROG). During my training, I connected with colleagues in my field of organisational work and what impacted me the most is the feeling of not being alone anymore. I found a Gestalt community for my organisational work. A community where I gained support for my struggles and where I could share my hope for a new way of approaching work in organisations. We all had a common belief that what is happening in organisations is no longer sustainable and that more humane ways of working in organisations was urgently needed.

A crucial concept in the ROG training for me is 'ethical presence'. I learnt that focusing and honing my presence and awareness of how I impact others is a key skill for a ROG practitioner in organisations. Ethical presence requires my focused intention to open a space and my availability for others to bring more of themselves into our dialogue. The small illustration that follows, has Gestalt fundamentals of phenomenology, dialogue and field theory (encased in the SOS model) directly into ways we can bring relationality to organisational life for teams, groups, and systems.

After I completed my training with Sally Denham-Vaughan and Marie-Anne Chidiac, I came back with renewed vigour to do things differently in my consulting work. My new awareness helped me connect with others more openly and directly about my implicit experience bringing more depth and richness to my consulting work.

The Wave model was immediately applicable and valuable in my change management work for a client of mine in Melbourne's judiciary system. It gave me a way to see organisational life through a multi-dimensional lens, viewing what is publicly acknowledged and the implicit culture and beliefs of organisational life as a tapestry of human interactions. I used the Wave model as a diagnostic tool to craft a stakeholder engagement strategy that allowed me to encode the ROG model and approach into my consulting work, I'll share an essence of this with you now.


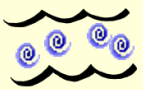
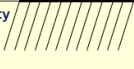
In 2019 I was engaged to develop a stakeholder engagement plan for the Victorian judicial system who were undertaking a large technology change. I was part of the small change management team and on our arrival, we were swept up into a series of formal meetings as part of our induction to meet relevant stakeholders in positions of authority and schooled in

the right way to address judicial officers. It felt very much like we are on show and being examined to get their approval.

Much of my early work was spent meeting various stakeholders who were all at different levels in the organisation and at various locations. It took time to find the right person to connect with and get approval to access other locations or people. A lot of what I thought would be easy to access such as telephone lists, job titles and locations was harder to find; ultimately what I uncovered was that much of what I needed was kept private. The more I learnt about who to talk to, where to find information, understood their rituals and language to use, the closer I felt to the client system. This knowledge and felt sense gave me a way to moderate or organise myself so that I was not too different or even offensive to those I needed to work with. The way the judicial system presented and organised its information and business made it very easy for newcomers to make mistakes and offend those we needed to build trust and collaborate with.

The Courts have previously had failed attempts with similar implementation to its disparate and dilapidated systems. These had left them with deeply held doubts and a lack of trust for any project team. All this rich experience helped me overlay the Wave model to target strategies at each level of the courts culture & system; for the ego function, id and personality function. One of the key strategies recommended in the stakeholder engagement plan was for the change team to promote and build capability with trusted internal (local) leaders who were publicly revered (ego function) within the juridical system to lead the change and build trust with their colleagues and other staff.

A Wave Metaphor - Example

<p>Wave as Ego Above the surface, visible, what we say we do</p> 	<p>Sea depth as Id Less visible, unacknowledged dynamics, connected to local currents and flows</p> 	<p>Seabed as Personality Sedimented but changing slowly with time. The culture and narrative</p> 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Analysis</th> <th>Interventions</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can do attitude Loyal to justice mission Change urgency Government backed Do small changes often </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build connection visibly with trusted leaders "heroes" Reinforce existing competency </td> </tr> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formality / protocols Connection diffuse /split Systems slow, some outdated Fear of mistakes Wellbeing – stress & social isolation (role clarity low) </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build trust & stay close Enable Local leaders with skills and tools so they "show the way" Coaching Change mgt skills Consulting team stay in background </td> </tr> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current System "old faithful" Previous failed attempts & skepticism about this attempt (unfinished business) Punitive, tuff to last </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build Belief = Create a spaces for stakeholders to work together build, test, practise new solution Time tension Vs project outcomes </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Analysis	Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can do attitude Loyal to justice mission Change urgency Government backed Do small changes often 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build connection visibly with trusted leaders "heroes" Reinforce existing competency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formality / protocols Connection diffuse /split Systems slow, some outdated Fear of mistakes Wellbeing – stress & social isolation (role clarity low) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build trust & stay close Enable Local leaders with skills and tools so they "show the way" Coaching Change mgt skills Consulting team stay in background 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current System "old faithful" Previous failed attempts & skepticism about this attempt (unfinished business) Punitive, tuff to last 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build Belief = Create a spaces for stakeholders to work together build, test, practise new solution Time tension Vs project outcomes
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Using the Wave model helped me see the organisational life as different functions and parts of the ocean which are all connected, each impacting the other's capacity to adapt, thrive and survive.

Since then, I helped establish a Special Interest Group for those interested in Gestalt in Organisations with the support of the Gestalt Centre in Melbourne. The interest and energy led to us to run a ROG Introduction training program with Sally Denham-Vaughan's help in Melbourne in 2020. This training reached almost 50 people across Australia and New Zealand which far exceeded our plans. I am definitely feeling more connected and not alone. Who knew that all this was possible in two years!

Eva Deligiannis



Eva, M.Gestalt Therapy, M.Org Dynamics, B.Bus, MPACFA, MGANZ works as an Organisational Consultant, Coach/ Supervisor for Change leaders and works with a diverse range of organisations across Australia. She has a background in change management with over 25 years of experience working with enterprise-wide solutions that transform culture and technology in Australia. Eva has completed Relational Organizational Gestalt (ROG) training in 2019 with Relational Change and has integrated the ROG practices into her consulting practice. Eva also works as a psychotherapist in private practice in Melbourne. You can contact Eva at eva@changemaking.com.au



This piece by James Woodeson illustrates a consulting/coaching/supervising application of ROG to Self and organisational clients in Switzerland. The key theory maps are Self/Other/ Situation (SOS) with a focus on Self as instrument.

James Woodeson: How ROG has impacted my work.

As I hover over my keyboard, I close my eyes and scan my whole self to see what I notice. I'm thinking of what to write and this fades as I notice a tension around my shoulders. I take a deep breath and realise I am happy! I'm smiling with curiosity as I hadn't noticed that. I relax as I recall that I woke at 04:30 due to some family stress, had my first call at 08:00, the second at 08:30 and then a whole team coaching session between 09:00 to 12:30. I then rushed to get the train. As I breathe into that I feel tired and calm.

I choose to take my hands away from my keyboard and enjoy a minute of stillness. In that moment, in the quite typical paradoxical rush of energy, excitement and spontaneity ... I know exactly what I would like to say about how ROG has impacted my life and work.

If I was to sum this up in one word it would be "completely", or in one sentence, perhaps "in ways I am discovering with excited delight when I'm least expecting it" and suddenly I feel I could write a book to honour Marie-Anne Chidiac and Sally Denham-Vaughan! Ha! Now that would be fun.

This can be captured quite simply by the experience of the past 48 hours. Getting ready ahead of our second session with a leadership team, I discovered with great surprise a strange sensation when my co-coach challenged us to be "less facilitators" and "more coaches". I was quite annoyed! I paused for reflection, inviting myself to sit with this annoyance. I even heard my inner-supervisor say "be more annoyed... what do you notice now?" and what emerged was a fantastic piece of personal awareness. There was a part of me still relating as 'student' to their experience. I took myself back fondly to my first ever piece of team coaching and how the same co-coach had supported me to develop my skills and repertoire. Their gentle challenge now, inviting me to step into the space and "coach", seems so simple and yet it was so powerful. The student had quite literally become the equal and in some ways, the teacher. We were now in our own, mutually beneficial dance together of respect and learning together.

In the co-creation of the planning, we noticed how our energy had felt flat and dull from our first encounter with the team. That we had been overly prescriptive and tied to our agenda

and our approach. It was noticing this energy which led to us bringing clarity to our own process. We wanted to amplify our coach-ness rather than our facilitator-ness.

We realised with great delight how energetic we felt to “not have an agenda”, to “let go of the facilitation notes”. This is something I believe I do with great skill in my 1:1 work, so what was it about my learning edge in the team work? As I reflected on this, I noticed my courage, strength and power colliding in a rush. I had been ready for this for longer than I gave myself credit.

The experience with the team today was just so... so.... Yes! Real. Spontaneous. In-the-moment work. I can see so much of the value of the process adopted on the ROG program. The co-emergent process writ large. Hugely complimented by my completion of the Relational Supervision program also offered by Relational Change. New depths of personal awareness around embodied presence, phenomenological enquiry and a simultaneous triple lens encompassing self, other and situation (SOS).

It sounds simple, SOS. This is why it's so powerful. I have no doubt that I could spend a lifetime appreciating only one of the three elements! What I've come to appreciate and love and engage with is the space and the dance between the three. That they are all, always in play. To enjoy and to fully experience the tension in the work, where the learning edges are.

To bring more of myself in as *the* intervention of greatest potency.

This has been greatly supported and inspired through the appreciation of Gestalt as a philosophy for life, as a modality and as a school of psychology. Clarifying and considering the skills required and experiencing them in both small and large groups. The parallel process of learning the theory and learning about myself in the ROG program is where the work comes most alive. I noticed this so suddenly in an experience of being triggered into a shame response on one module. Having the awareness and desire to un-pack this in Supervision, and then to bring my experience back to the group in a creative and spontaneous demonstration of intimate dialogue between two people. This work can be beautiful. Challenging. Frustrating! Ultimately, enormously fulfilling. So often it reflects what is going on in the teams we are working with. Experiencing these tensions for ourselves is so vital for working with others grappling with similar challenges.

Experiencing the process alongside other highly skilled practitioners, guided skilfully by *the* practitioners in the field (Sally and Marie-Anne), has been incredibly enriching. I feel this so deeply. So strongly. Why? As it has become part of my way of being in the world, and for this I am very grateful for the privilege to be able to participate.

It's a stance and a dance. An opportunity to bring a deeply relational approach, contact-full in so many ways, in a time where it seems the world is ready and demanding more awareness of what *is*, such that we might become more of who we are and can become. Shifting to a more present, compassionate and intimate caring of ourselves, others and the environments where we live, love and work.

James Woodson



A relational Gestalt practitioner, James brings an extensive range, creative spontaneity and deep compassion for being all of who we are and can become to his work. His clients span a variety of



This piece by Toni Clarkson illustrates a coaching application of ROG to herself and the organisations she works with. The key theory maps are Self/Other/Situation (SOS), including phenomenology.

Toni Clarkson: ROG – a homecoming

Before I came to Relational Gestalt, I was a homeless and angry coach. I've been a coach for years and have completed various qualifications etc. and during my time coaching I've developed my own views and philosophies around how coaching should be: I've resisted the GROW contingent, I've been cross at CBT, argumentative with Solution Focussed and suspicious of psychodynamic. I've never seen the need for specious goals and progress reports, or 'coach as expert' approaches. I've found that I've been wholly emergent during coaching and naturally worked on creating awareness; trusting the Other will change as a result of awareness rather than finding 'solutions'. I've believed in equality between coach and coachee and a non-directive approach. And until ROG this often put me at odds with fellow coaches, client sponsors, organisations, tutors, and prevailing 'wisdom'. I was in effect, a homeless coach – belonging nowhere yet looking through the windows of different modalities hoping to see and feel one that seemed like home. I've felt 'other' for a long time! I've spent time being drawn to philosophy, especially existentialism and have been guided by Irvin Yalom and his teachings. At heart, I'm an existentialist / relational / humanist / person-centred being. And my coaching has reflected this. But I had nowhere to place it.

I was half way through my Doctorate in Coaching and Mentoring when I came to the ROG two day introduction session. I was doing a quantitative study on the effectiveness of executive coaching and found myself very reluctant to start my experiment. I came to realise that my research question was 180 degrees away from my philosophical approach and I postponed study.

I attended ROG as a 'punt' – two days of my life to audition something else. I came with no expectations, just curiosity to look through yet another window. And then I had one of the most profound meetings of my life. I heard everything I'd come to believe coming back to me, and so very much more. I found phenomenology, a philosophy that fitted me more perfectly than anything I could have imagined. I found names for what I believed, found new things I immediately felt in my bones. And I fitted it. For the first time, something to belong to and be with – and still be myself. To say it was moving is an understatement. It didn't just attract my head, it attracted my heart and my soul! It's the Relational bit that captures my heart and head.

So how has it changed me and my practice?

How do I find myself now when coaching? Free, fluid, relaxed is the short answer... much more present. I have gained so much depth and assurance and trust in my Self and in the process – and, when I reflect, in the Other. I'm even more confident to work with the moment, what arrives in the between, with what's emergent; I have challenged my own practice time and time again to de-layer old, hitherto unrealised defences and to make my coaching as co-emergent as I can. I am bolder in my willingness to bring my embodied sensing into the dialogue and make meaning with my client and finally I am less inclined to look for patterns in past behaviour and more able to work with what is happening now. I use this for my own life and way of being too; this is too important to me to just use on others.

The Self, Other, Situation, (S.O.S), model has an amazing flexibility; it can be used for contracting, for self-reflection, for group work and in a way puts the clients at the centre of control by allowing a holistic perspective and an equal participation between client and coach/supervisor. With so many modalities – and in truth, coaching 'orthodoxy', the coach is

inevitably leading the client to some destination...looking back or ahead but not around. Phenomenology - the equal sharing, co-inquiry and co-creation of our experience - places the coach and client as equal. Holding and sharing our awareness of Self, Other and the Situation allows a truthful exploration of what is a true and deep alliance. And I just LOVE it! In some ways I wish I'd come to it earlier in my life, but in truth I think that I needed to experience what I have, to learn and be disappointed by other approaches, to become disenchanted and in particular, find my own values and views and ways of coaching in order to be receptive to Relational Gestalt and to both bring to, and get, the most from it. Has it changed me as a person? No. I am still who I always have been; but what it has brought to me personally is a greater ability to bring the inside out. I have always shielded this cautiously until I knew someone really well. I've become more able to look aspects of myself in the eye, and more resilient and resourceful in situations that are tough for me. I hold things less tightly. I still have several growing edges: I want to find flaws in Relational Gestalt – I have questions about how well it can work with those not inclined to self-awareness; questions about the limits of equality and the movement of those boundaries; the realness of bracketing and such like; but I view these questions with eagerness and interest, not as tests of credibility. I am more alive to my own growing edges: I know I need to work on confluence, which is figural for me right now and conjoined with some death anxiety. I need to find comfort with the continuum of diagnosis and bracketing in the moment and I need to work on my introjection and retroreflection when I'm with a client who is not returning a dialogic stance. But these will come; I am 'in flow' with Relational Gestalt. I think I need to stop now. I'm aware of many other thoughts coming into my head, but this is not a piece of several thousand words. I think it's enough.

Toni Clarkson



*Toni is an independent coach, coach developer and supervisor as well as a corporate escapee; she works closely with New Gestalt Voices to enable more creativity within the gestalt field and within herself. She loves mountains, gardens, chickens, solitude and quiet – the order changes sometimes but those loves never leave her.
You can contact Toni at toni@toniclarkson.co.uk*

In dialogue with chickens

