



Let's Change the Process

From Confrontation to Conversation

The transition to renewable sources of energy in the State of California is a given.

The state budget recently appropriated \$1.5 million for a study, commissioned by the California Environmental Protection Agency, that orchestrates a progressive reduction in fossil fuel demand and supply for the purpose of managing California's transition to a carbon-neutral economy by midcentury. That plan is in line with the state's climate change-fighting goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2045.



The oil industry understands that we are in this period of transition.

In a recent interview, Christina Sistrunk, president and CEO of Aera Energy, Sistrunk wondered what the roadmap for a possible wholesale transition to renewable energy might look like and who might be asked to the table to help chart it.

"I don't think anybody's got the full answer to how we need to navigate this," she said at the time. "I don't see a good blueprint out there anywhere in the world. So, that's exciting in that we have the opportunity to contribute to that conversation and be an example. But it will also stretch us in terms of our ability to really collaborate, listen and learn from each other and work to create that."

Note: Aera produces 25% of the State of California's oil and gas.



Ventura County's "Oil Wars"



In the ongoing battles between so called representatives of the environment and the economy, it's the third leg of the "sustainable stool" - Social Equity that is often ignored.



This is not a public process nor is it community dialogue.



What it is...



...and what it isn't.



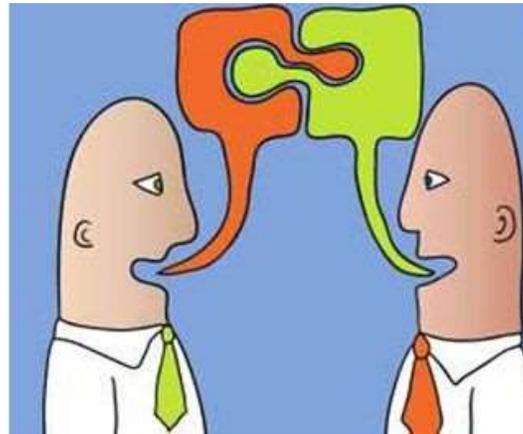
Dialogue isn't measured in seconds on the clock.



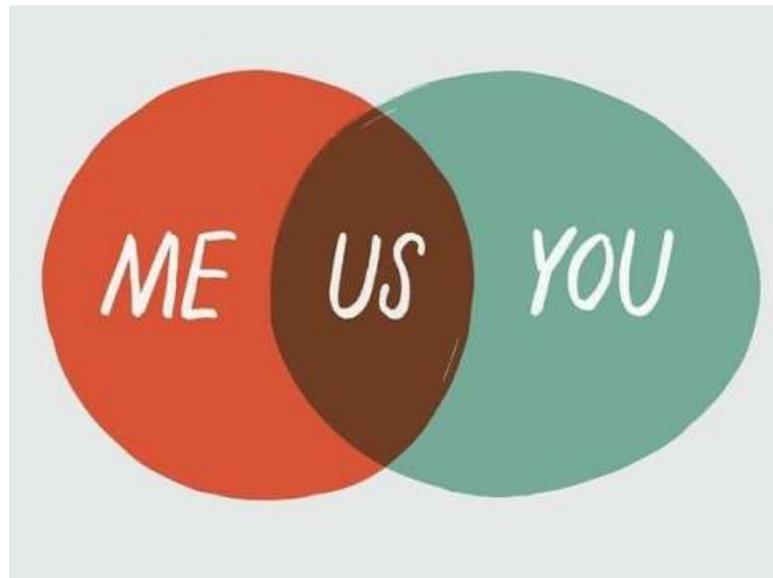
Leadership within a democracy is really a system for turning the work of the community back over to the community. Democracy is not primarily a political structure, but a shared set of attitudes by which the community itself takes responsibility for work rather than pushing the work onto the shoulders of its authorities.



Face-to-face democracy moves politics away from its adversarial norm, where interest groups square off in conflict and lobbyists speak for their constituents. Instead, the bonds of friendship and community are forged as neighbors look for common solutions to their problems.



Articulating and realizing the public interest is one of the primary reasons government exists. Public administrators should engage citizens with one another so that they come to understand each other's interests and ultimately adopt a longer-range and broader sense of community and societal interests.



Instigating deliberation on controversial issues may sometimes be the only way for a public manager to effect change. Public managers must understand that public debate and controversy over domains within their control are not necessarily to be avoided. It comes with the territory, and in fact they should be encouraged.



The continuing challenge for most governments is to foster - but not control - the kind of environment in which communities successfully attack the core cause of problems at the ground level.

The expert in public policy has to become an expert, not in providing answers, but in managing the dynamics of the group struggling with its work.





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