



nowhere circles

by two wisdom teachers

The founding partner of a venture capital company asked his people to attend a two-day retreat to look into their business practices and consider a deep issue that had remained unresolved for five years.

When the 12 partners and associates arrived at the five-star venue they were armed with golf clubs and cell phones for what they saw as a time for some fun on the golf course and some high-powered negotiating with potential investors. The founding partner, who had some experience with circle technology, asked us, 'How are we going to get this bunch to quieten their minds enough to come to grips with this issue?'

Our first step was to make the room our own by changing the space. We erected an 18'-diameter tipi in a large ballroom of the hotel, decorated it with beautiful blankets and created a simulated fire surrounded by stones and a circle of low chairs.

When the group entered the ballroom carrying their golf bags and cell phones, their reaction was a universal: 'What the hell is this?'

After entering the tipi, they were asked to listen as each one in turn spoke of where they were in relation to the two days ahead. This quickly set the tone and allowed them to drop into a very different space in themselves and with each other. Time seemed to slow down in this unusual atmosphere and they began to relax into the journey.

The founding partner set before them the issue that was confronting them. He asked each member of the group to sit quietly for a time reflecting inwardly on how that issue was affecting them. They were asked to share their thoughts and feelings honestly and to listen to each other openly without judging what they heard.

What followed was a deep and moving time that brought the group to a deep closeness they had never experienced before. They were able to listen more carefully and found themselves revealing deeper aspects of their thoughts and feelings. It was groundbreaking.

Then the group was asked to search for ways to bring this issue to a resolution. Different perspectives were offered as to how to look deeply into the issue and the group began to see ways to break through to a new level of understanding and decide on the necessary action.

After two days in this deep connection, interspersed with breaks for eating, sleeping and some recreation, they came to an ingenious collective decision about the issue and also had numerous insights about their future. The harmonious energy that had built between them then became an ongoing resource that sustained them going forward.

