

The Founding of True Democracy

The question is, will we cling fanatically to our decaying way of life and outmoded ideas or help the phoenix rise from the ashes?

William Ophuls, *Requiem for Modern Politics*

In the science fiction movie, *The Matrix*, the protagonist discovers that life as we know it is actually a computer generated illusion. He discovers that all of us unknowingly live *virtual* lives—going to work, taking vacations, and raising families inside a computer generated reality that is projected onto our minds by a machine in the twenty-second century. If this were true, all of society’s problems could easily and simply be solved through a slight programming adjustment to that machine.

In a sense it is true. But the virtual reality we share does not arise from a machine in the twenty-second century like the story of the movie. The computer that projects our reality is in the eighteenth century. It is the U.S. Constitution. It projects a “reality” that determines many of our attitudes, how we think, and even decisions

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we make. Collectively, for example, the U.S. Constitution orients us more toward competition than collaboration, debate instead of dialogue, judgment rather than creativity. It aims to control behaviors through laws rather than to facilitate people toward shared values. But with the addition of the Citizens Amendment, the U.S. Constitution would project a different reality. With it we would become more collaborative than competitive, more thoughtful than argumentative, and we would exercise our creativity in the service of all.

Let me give an illustration of how a small, simple addition to the structure of something can change our thinking. Consider the effect of the word “please” added to a sentence. Although technically it adds no new information, it can change the entire atmosphere and meaning of an interaction. If you say to your fifteen-year-old daughter, “Clean up your room!” you project a reality where you are trying to manage her behavior through a command. If a conversation arises, it will be a yes/no discussion, a power struggle. You and she will go back and forth about cleaning the room, arguing who is in charge. The final result will either be “yes,” “no,” or some compromise in between.

But just by adding the phrase, “would you please,” with an appropriate attitude, you project a different reality. You are still letting her know what you want, and she still may or may not comply, but this time you are not projecting control. You are respecting your daughter’s autonomy and accepting that the ultimate choice is hers. Whether she cleans her room or not is less important in this case than your relationship of respect for one another.

With the addition of “please,” you may learn more about each other. You may build your relationship, discover new options, and at the same time, both of you will grow as people. For instance, your daughter may become more sensitive to your needs. That’s creating a new option. Or, you may become less concerned about what she does in her room. This is yet another option. Or, you may design a new strategy that works for both of you. Adding the word “please” doesn’t

change *what* is being said, just *how* it is said. It changes the *dynamic* of thinking and talking.

Adding the Citizens Amendment to the Constitution is a similar reprogramming. It, too, changes the dynamic of thinking and talking, orienting us away from power and control, toward respect and creativity.

Three Structures/Three Cultures

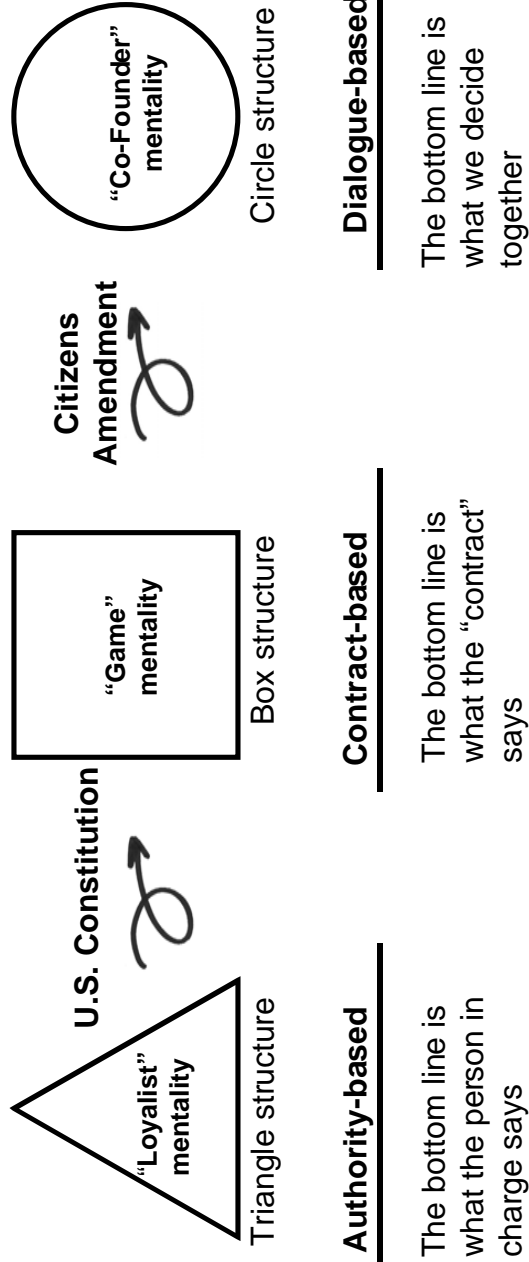
There are basically three ways to organize a large society. I've termed them the Triangle, Box, and Circle. The Triangle structure is authority-based, with a king, father, or some "Great Leader" making the ultimate decisions. The Box system is contract-based, with everyone agreeing to abide by a document, a set of rules, or agreements. The Circle system is dialogue-based, where the ultimate decisions arise from what I term a *Choice-creating* conversation.

There is a natural progression among these three systems—from dependence to independence to interdependence. For example, the Triangle system corresponds to the way young children relate to their parents. They are dependent on them and the parent makes most of the decisions. The child looks to the parent as being all-knowing and all-powerful. Later, in adolescence, there is more of a need to separate from the parents. Teens are provided with a range of choices and a measure of independence, corresponding to the Box system. As long as they stay inside the rules, they are free to do what they want. But basically, they are still under parental control. In adulthood, however, the parents are no longer in charge. Adults have freedom and responsibility. This represents the Circle system.

Our society is traveling along this developmental path. We took the crucial step from the authority-based Triangle structure to the contract-based Box structure when we enacted the U.S. Constitution. Now, we have outgrown our contract-based system. While we continue to manage ourselves through the Constitution, we no longer

Chart #1

Three Ways of Organizing



believe that anyone else, or their assumptions about us, should ultimately be in charge. We're ready for the Circle approach. Let me illustrate with a story about a friend of mine.

My friend lives in an intentional community. The man who organized it owned some land and found five families that were interested in living together. He gathered them so they could meet one another and examine the available lots.

To determine who would have which lot, someone in authority could have made the decision. This is the Triangle approach by which most societies have been organized. The man who owned the land could have simply appointed people to their lots. Or, in the Box approach, families could have decided ahead of time on a particular decision-making process—a lottery, pricing scheme, or vote. This would require that all stay committed to the agreement, no matter what results or situations eventually emerged.

But the families wanted something more. So they followed a third path, the Circle approach. Everyone met, talked about the lots, and sought to determine what was best for each family. Gradually over the course of a few meetings, the families grew to understand more about each other, the land, and what each one wanted and needed. Preferences changed and an overall design evolved that was endorsed by everyone.

They reached their decision through Choice-creating, an open-minded and open-hearted process where everyone seeks new options until a result occurs about which everyone feels good. While the distinction between Choice-creating and decision-making hasn't been explored fully yet, it is important to recognize that, with Choice-creating, the quality of conversation is as important as the quality of resulting decisions. Both the Triangle and Box systems are oriented to decision-making, while the Circle system orients to Choice-creating.

My friend's community has thrived for many years now. While all the families live and work independently, they meet for dinner every Sunday night in one of the homes. During these gatherings, the

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adults meet to talk about issues and, although they don't use the word, their quality of conversation is Choice-creating.

Not everything is decided this way. Sometimes, one person will take the lead in an activity, an authority-based structure. They also use contract-based structures. Everyone in my friend's community, for instance, has signed a legally binding document registered with the county. It says that official decisions of the community will be made by a vote of adults. This is not how they generally operate, but it provides a back-up process that would play an important role if the community were to ever disintegrate.

If my friend's community were to live according to the Box structure, they would find it far less satisfying. There would be no need for Sunday night dinners. Everyone would remain separate, just following the rules and focusing on their own lives. Group decisions would be made through voting or some other set procedure. Eventually, in deciding issues, true feelings and creative thought would be repressed. The contract-based approach supplants relationship and trust with procedure, bureaucracy, and adherence to the letter of the law.

The successful experience of this community illustrates that at least three elements are required for a Circle structure to work: (1) people must talk regularly about the important issues facing the community; (2) the talking must be held in the spirit of Choice-creating; and (3) there must exist an official, back-up contract in case the Circle breaks down.

Let's explore the three systems of organizing more fully.

The Triangle Culture: The Old Society

The traditional way to organize society is through positions of power. Because people identify with those positions, a pope, czar, or king can manage large numbers of people. For this kind of system to work, people must maintain a certain fascination with, submission to,

and loyalty to these office-holders. The Triangle system inculcates a “Loyalist” mentality in people.

Loyalists see the person in power as a “Great Leader.” He or she is imagined to be more capable than others, almost superhuman, caring deeply for the people in his or her charge. It is an emotional alignment where “subjects” anticipate or automatically follow commands and orient their lives toward the leader’s wishes.

In his book, *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, Ron Heifitz provides a powerful reminder of the deep roots of this attitude. He sees it in the behavior of chimpanzees—“the top male appears bigger than others while he struts and dominates center stage. Everyone else is inextricably linked to him and can hardly keep from gazing at his actions. Yet, once deposed, this male shrinks while another assumes the larger-than-life role.” Dr. Heifitz considers our capacity to form these authority relationships, even today, to be fundamental to organizational life and essential for human survival.

To those in the Loyalist mentality, the solutions to all problems and the answers to all questions come through a Great Leader or his teachings. Those with this perspective place supreme value on honoring him or his relics, and saying things like “Long live the King” or “Heil Hitler.” Because Great Leaders draw our attention so insistently, they disempower us. We place our own lives in their shadow. The Marquis De Custine said in his *Letters from Russia* in 1839, “The Czar, the place he inhabits, and the plans that ostensibly occupy his mind are the only subjects worth thinking about, for a thinking Russian. This imperial catechism suffices for life.”

Today, this phenomenon is readily apparent in many ways. When employees of corporations talk about their top leaders you can often hear the Loyalist fascination. When fans attend to the lives of their favorite movie stars or when crowds press in on presidential contenders, the Loyalist mentality is at work. The person who is the object of this fascination can easily think he or she really is that great. However, it is not so much the person, but the Triangle structure that

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promulgates this adulation. It generates a culture where people define their worth in terms of how loyal they are to this Great Leader, like being a loyal “subject” of the king. Those close to him don’t mix with the common folk—and vice versa.

For millennia, this way of being and of organizing was “common sense.” It was only after the scientific revolution, the Enlightenment, and the invention of the printing press that it was seriously called into question. During this period, scientists were realizing their own authority and not relying on the Church or the king for answers about how nature worked. When Galileo looked through his telescope and saw for himself the moons revolving around Jupiter, he accepted his own experience over the dictates of the Church. Thus, he became a threat to the “Great Authority” of the Church and to the Triangle paradigm itself.

Such scientific discoveries, plus the growing ability of people to read and learn about them on their own, powerfully undermined the old authority structure as a basis for society. A new organizing principle was evolving, the idea that there are inviolable laws of nature that anyone can discover and that everyone, even kings, must obey. But the pivot point for swinging mainstream society to this new organizing principle was the adoption of the U.S. Constitution. This was the necessary structural adjustment to transform the Triangle culture into the Box culture.

The Box Culture: Current Society

The second way of organizing society is the Box structure, where society is run by a set of agreements or rules, rather than a person. This generates a culture and way of thinking in which people are free to do what they want within the rules. It’s the “Game” mentality. Within a game, the rules must be followed and there is a way to keep score. It’s as though we are all in a competition for results. People are aimed, not to follow their intrinsic motivation, where they seek to

discover and follow their passion, but to be extrinsically driven, to pursue votes, status, recognition, money, promotions, grades in school, or other measurable factors. Ideally, this creates a meritocracy, where the best rise to the top.

The logic is, that if the rules are good and we compete effectively, the whole system will benefit. For example, it is assumed that governments get the best office-holders if candidates compete for the positions. But it is natural in such a system that candidates do whatever it takes to win, such as avoiding the big topics, adopting simplistic positions, talking in sound bites, and hurling criticisms at their opponents. These behaviors have been shown to work and politicians either learn to adopt them or lose. Yet these behaviors aren't the best for society.

The Box system requires blind adherence to the rules. For instance, in the extremely close presidential race between Al Gore and George W. Bush, there were allegations of voting fraud and miscounting in Florida. But the way our system works, the laws as interpreted by the courts are ultimately in charge. No one can say, "Hey, there's been some confusion so let's talk about what to do." In the Box system this would lead to chaos. We just follow the rules to see who won. To decide our important collective priorities, like allocating money among defense, health care, and environmental research, for example, we rely on a competition among special interests, and hope things will work out for the best.

The Box structure creates a competitive marketplace that promotes the Game mentality. It teaches us to compete, to buy more stuff, to earn more money, and to focus on results instead of process. At the same time, it atomizes our thinking, telling us to not worry about the larger issues in life because, if everyone follows the rules, things will take care of themselves. So we focus on our own interests and on our material well being, even when we might really want to help others. We invest our money to make more money rather than investing in what we might want to see take form in the world. We

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seek to reduce our taxes, even though we might really want to donate money to society.

Another crucial dimension to the Box structure is how it is established and managed. The Box system requires someone to set it up and put it in motion. Once in motion, this manager largely leaves it alone, but uses numbers to assess how well things are going and to make slight adjustments to the rules. The Box system teaches and encourages this kind of hands-off management style, valuing a numerical assessment of progress, rather than dialogue about how things are going, and top-down adjustments to the system.

So if you have ever been elected to a school board, or placed in charge of an organization, you have felt this pressure to manage this way, through the levers of power, like rules, policies, and measures. Certainly our political system is oriented this way, as are most corporations, which manage employees through incentives, recognition, reprimand, and coercion.

In the Box structure each of us assumes both roles at times—being a player within the rules and being a manager through the rules. This structure made perfect sense to the Founders in the eighteenth century because times were simpler then and because that is how the science of the day assumed God managed the universe. It was as though God designed it to have natural laws and then let go, leaving humans free within those constraints.

In the past there was a great deal of consistency and workability to this approach, but now it isn't working so well. The meritocracy has turned into what futurist and economist Hazel Henderson calls a "mediocracy." And today's science has a different story to tell about how the universe really works. The modern story of quantum mechanics, evolutionary biology, and cosmology is more consistent with the Circle structure than the Box. Things aren't as static and measurable as we once thought. The universe evolves forward without hard and fast laws, more like a conversation than a game.

The Circle Culture: The New Society

To establish the Circle structure is to take the next developmental step. It does not mean eliminating the Game. In fact, the rules can stay the same. It's just that the Game is no longer in charge of itself and us. We the People are in charge of it.

Through the Citizens Amendment, we structure dialogue outside the boundaries of the Game, empowering people to face the big issues and to be creative in solving them. This new structural piece generates a "Co-founder" mentality, where each of us actively co-creates our system together. There is more freedom and more responsibility. The Constitution and the rule of law are still there, but with them is a larger conversation that is actually in charge.

The movie, *The Legend of Bagger Vance*, illustrates this. A local boy is playing in an exhibition match against the two best golfers in the nation. Near the end he gains on the other two until he is only one stroke behind. Then our hero, while getting ready for a shot, removes an obstruction next to his ball, causing it to roll an inch. Technically, even though he gained no advantage from it, the rules say he must take a penalty of one stroke.

In the story, neither his competitors, nor anyone in the crowd, wants him to take the penalty. And certainly he doesn't want to. They invite him to say that the ball merely rolled in place and didn't move. But he declares that it did move and takes the penalty. The point is that the players and townspeople begin a larger conversation that transcends the rules of the game. They momentarily create a Circle system where people reach consensus on what should happen. But in the end, our hero chooses to adhere to the rules of the game anyway. With the Citizens Amendment in the Constitution, a similar national conversation is established where we would take ownership of the rules. With this in place, like the hero of the movie, we follow them not because we have to, but because it is right. We become

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empowered within our system to be “Co-founders,” with authority over the system of rules.

The Co-founder mentality is demonstrated by a statement from the People’s Earth Declaration (from the International Forum in Rio de Janeiro in 1992): “We wish to remind the world’s political and corporate leaders that the authority of the state and the powers of the private corporation are grants extended to these institutions by the sovereign people. It is the people’s right that governments and corporations remain accountable to the public will and interest.” This empowered viewpoint is how all of us should feel about our system. We created it and we granted these powers to various institutions.

Currently, this statement is hollow because there is no “we” to back it up. It is just a statement by a few in the name of all of what should be true. To make this statement true, We the People must become a real force.

To illustrate the difference between the Game attitude and the Co-founder attitude, I often ask audiences, “How many of you believe people should obey the law?” All hands go up. Then I ask, “How many of you believe people should ALWAYS obey the law?” I’m still waiting for someone to raise a hand. Of course, we should obey and enforce laws. But in the Circle system neither laws nor the Constitution are the *ultimate* source of right and wrong. In the end, we must look inside ourselves to know what is right.

After World War II, the world publicly recognized this truth in Nuremberg, Germany. There were no international laws by which to hold Nazi leaders accountable for their attempt at genocide. In fact, their defense was that they were following the laws of their country. Nevertheless, the people of the world were revolted by these clearly wrongful acts, and put them on trial anyway for “crimes against humanity.” The crime of the Nazis, in other words, was that they didn’t look within themselves to find the clear and deep knowing of right and wrong that we all share.

With the Co-founder mentality, each of us relies less on *extrinsic* standards and measures. We look deeply inside to determine what is right and to know what to do. Paradoxically, the result of this thoughtful, inner questioning is not increased selfishness or lawlessness, but the discovery of innate wisdom, virtue, and the motivation to serve others. In a quiet moment of reflection away from the Game, people find that what really drives them, what they really want in life, is to help others and to serve life.

The crucial ingredient in the Circle system is a Choice-creating dialogue, involving everyone, that supports all to find this inner wisdom and virtue. When we engage with others about difficult issues and stay creative, we experience our uniqueness and connectedness. It's a paradoxical combination of both increased autonomy and coherence with others.

The Circle Is the Solution

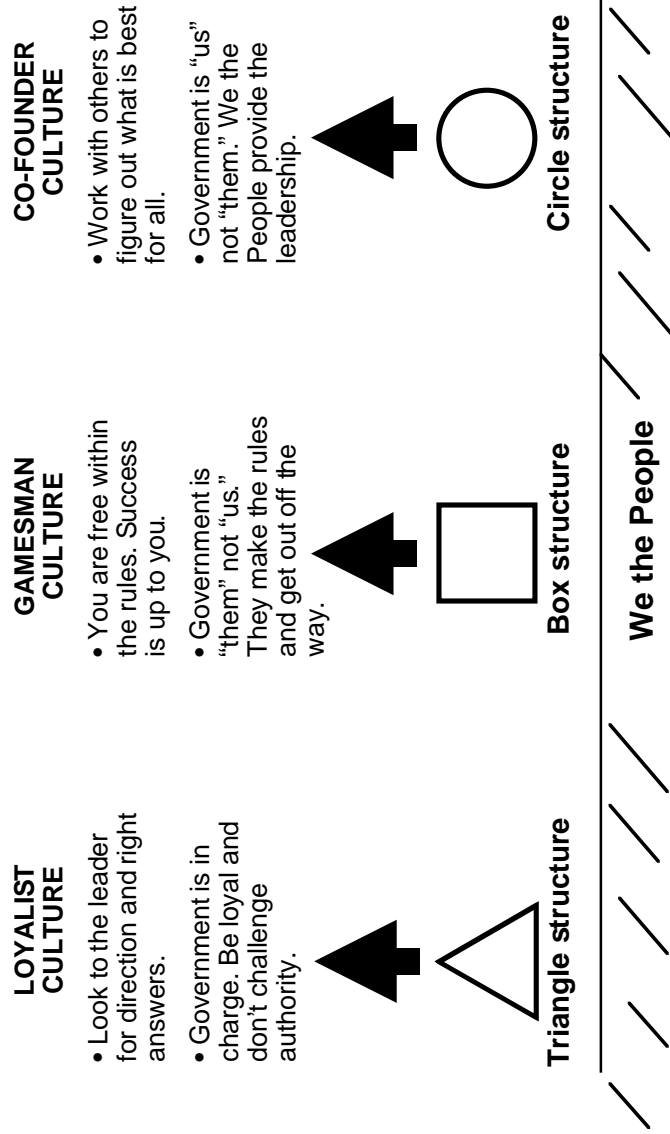
Because the proposed change is a Constitutional amendment, people often assume it is primarily intended to influence legislation or government. Although it will certainly affect legislation, this effect is minor in comparison to its overall effects on people and systems. Actually, it is a change to reality itself because it adjusts the eighteenth century computer that defines our reality. With it, you and I will see things differently and act differently. See Chart #2.

The reality-changing, system-changing effects of the Amendment will open new doors for progress on many issues. Interestingly, it may be that the most effective strategy for us to solve local issues, sometimes even personal issues, is to enact this amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

As an example, let's take a look at improving your local school. The most direct way, of course, is to assure that there are good

Chart #2

Structure Affects Culture



teachers in the classroom, that there are proper facilities and programs, and capable administrators. These are certainly important. But many schools already have these and more, and are still experiencing problems. They have bored kids, increased violence, poor test results, failed levies, burned out teachers, etc. School improvement programs appear one after the other to solve these problems, arriving with fanfare, then quickly losing steam and being discarded. What's going on?

The real problem is the overall system within which schools operate. The key to effective education is releasing the natural enthusiasm for learning in students and for teaching in teachers. When people are genuinely interested in the topics of study and they can facilitate the growth of one another, real learning happens. The Box system restricts this.

In the Box system, the ultimate client is not the student's passion for learning. It's the Game. The aim is for students to gain the right kind of knowledge, that which is measurable, so they can compete in the job market. Since trust, genius, passion, creativity, motivation, and deep learning cannot be measured, the system doesn't value these as much. Worse, because of the system, when the principal, school board, and state legislature start to "fix" the problems of education, they resort to more of what is causing the problem in the first place: measures and controls, standardized tests, rewards, union contracts, discipline policies, grades, etc. The heart of the problem is the extrinsically oriented system established by the Box structure. It diminishes intrinsic motivation and many human qualities, and also lessens the possibility of excellence in learning.

The movie, *Dead Poet's Society*, is a dramatic illustration. A true educator (played by Robin Williams) comes to a boys' school and evokes passion for learning. He enlivens student enthusiasm for poetry so that his students no longer follow the prescribed curriculum. They quest after the real spirit of poetry, following the muse where it may take them. To parents and administrators rooted in the Box

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system, these empowering changes to the students threaten a loss of control. Naturally, they act to reestablish the top-down order of things.

The movie accurately portrays the pain that students feel when control is re-imposed on our creativity and passion. One student cannot bear the thought of returning to his inside-the-box existence and commits suicide. The facilitative teacher is blamed, because if he hadn't awakened the passion, none of this would've happened. In the end, the deadening system is back in control and student creativity is muted and hidden from view.

I had a personal experience of how this feels recently while attending a class on consensus-building. As a demonstration, the teacher was managing the discussion of a controversial topic. At one point, I felt my interest in the subject rise and spoke to what was exciting me. Others in the class picked up on this and as soon as I finished speaking, many hands went up simultaneously. But the presenter saw this upsurge of energy as a threat. She reined us in because we were "getting off the topic." I felt reprimanded and found myself feeling guilt that I had not contained my excitement.

This guilt-inducing censorship of behavior is normal in the Box system. We treat passion as though it is a problem for students, teachers, and administrators. We medicate, train, counsel, manipulate, and reprimand it out of them, making problems worse. Only in a Circle culture do schools have a genuine opportunity to transform themselves. Then student genius and passion for learning will be valued more than test scores and behavior management.

In another brief example, even though the Amendment is not primarily about politics, let's consider the impact it would have on the tone of politics. Rex Weyler, co-author of the book, *Chop Wood Carry Water*, recently wrote an article, "Ten Things Wrong with Democracy," where he described the unsatisfactory ways politics now work. Because the Citizens Amendment would transform the

culture and create an inclusive dialogue about what is best for all, these problems would be eliminated or reduced. The ten are:

1. *Duality* — every issue gets split into two opposing views.
2. *Misdirection* — candidates spend most of their efforts positioning themselves for reelection rather than addressing the real issues.
3. *Simplification* — both problems and solutions are simplified by politicians and media for public consumption, eroding full understanding of the real issues.
4. *Separation* — issues are handled independently so that their interdependence is lost.
5. *Dumbing down* — campaigns do not appeal to excellence or intelligence, but to fears and prejudices of voters.
6. *Tyranny of the majority* — compromise is not sought, since the majority can dictate to the minority.
7. *Negativity* — those out of power criticize those in power.
8. *Aristocracy* — the poor are disenfranchised from political power while the wealthy rule.
9. *Immediate gratification* — long-term thinking is sacrificed to the most urgent biases and desires of voters.
10. *Human myopia* — the non-human world is not considered in our decision-making.

In the Circle culture, we dialogue to make joint decisions that work for all, instead of seeking only what's best for ourselves. Issues aren't dumbed down, glossed over, simplified, or framed into dualities. They are considered in their full complexity and *breakthrough solutions* are sought. It is a new type of political thinking process that builds community.

These two brief examples—local schools and the tone of politics—hint at some of the positive potential to be gained from enacting the Amendment.

From Impossible to Possible

Many people doubt whether true democracy is really possible, let alone whether it can be achieved via a single amendment to the Constitution. Often, political commentators assure us that it isn't possible. In the book, *The End of History and the Last Man*, Francis Fukuyama says, "Liberal democracy may constitute the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the final form of human government, and as such constitute(s) the end of history." He adds, "The ideal of liberal democracy [can] not be improved upon." Michael Ledeen of the American Enterprise Institute said on C-SPAN (August 18, 1996), "Democratic capitalism is certainly the most successful social system that anybody knows of at the moment. . . . There is not going to be a solution. We're not going to have solutions. Not in this life anyway."

Mr. Ledeen also quoted Gordon Wood, a noted historian. "In a diverse, pluralistic and truly popular society like that of the United States, Americans came to understand that there could be no general will, no embodiment of the single public good because there was no democratic way of discovering that general will and prioritizing that public good."

All transformations seem impossible at first. In the eighteenth century, the establishment of a republic was seen as impossible by most people. In *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787*, Gordon Wood describes why: "Politics, in other words, was still commonly viewed along a classic power spectrum that ranged from absolute power in the hands of one person on one end, to absolute power or liberty in the hands of the people at the other end. The spectrum met in full circle when, it was believed, the disorder of absolute liberty would inevitably lead to the tyranny of the dictator." The pattern of the time for how new societies formed went like this: The Great Leader of a country is overthrown by the people in the name of liberty. Chaos follows until order is regained under a new

Great Leader. In the seventeenth century, this was demonstrated clearly for Englishmen when King Charles I was overthrown in the English civil war and Oliver Cromwell took over with a different title. Other demonstrations of this cycle included the French revolution of 1789, where Louis XVI was overthrown amidst idealistic zeal and democratic writings. But from that period of chaos, Napoleon Bonaparte eventually crowned himself “emperor.” In the Russian revolution of 1917, the same thing happened. The Czar was overthrown amidst utopian, democratic zeal and a new Triangle structure was established around the leader of the Communist Party.

The American experience went differently because of the Constitutional Convention. The former colonists did the impossible and invented something entirely new. When they began the Revolution, they wanted to be separate from England, but didn’t necessarily want a new type of society. The key difference in their case was the convening of a big meeting to talk about it.

In 1787, the most respected leaders of the former colonies gathered for a whole summer. They debated with one another behind closed doors while Americans waited anxiously. They lived together in what was then the small town of Philadelphia, meeting in taverns and homes each night. One can imagine that much of the real work was done in these informal conversations.

The gathered leaders were thoughtful and built on their knowledge of history and on their familiarity with the experience of native Americans. At the end of their long convention, they prepared a nearly unanimous proposal and suggested that it be presented to the people in state conventions.

Then the real conversations began. Over the next two years, the ideas of the Constitution were debated and state conventions were held. Only by a narrow margin was the new Constitution adopted. Although most folk were no longer loyal to the King of England, they were still habitually drawn to the Triangle concept of the Great Leader, with George Washington the focus of this attention. But he

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did not play along. Instead, he helped people transfer their loyalties away from him to the U.S. Constitution itself.

This was a huge step. Yes, women, native Americans, slaves, and non-property holders were largely excluded, but it was an amazingly large step toward democracy, nonetheless. And it led to a new, entrepreneurial way of thinking throughout the world.

This shift of consciousness is our proudest contribution, an increase in individual liberty, justice, and power to the common person. Over and over again we have proven our willingness to sacrifice our lives to maintain this step forward in consciousness and to promote it in the world. The Revolutionary War, World War I, World War II, the Cold War, the Gulf War, and even the War on Terrorism have all been about ensuring that this evolutionary step, from the Triangle to the Box, remains firmly in place. King George III, the Kaiser, Hitler, Stalin, Saddam Hussein, and Osama bin Ladin have all tried to maintain or re-impose the old, authority-based structure and Loyalist paradigm, but Americans and others have remained true to their commitment to this new system, the rule of law.

Yet we must not allow enthusiasm for this great leap forward to limit our continued evolution. Now it is time to accomplish the impossible once again. The key to success in this next step, as well as the last, is to convene a healthy conversation.

From Box to Circle

Even without the Citizens Amendment, a transformation to the Circle culture is already underway. The book, *The Cultural Creatives: How 50 Million People are Changing the World*, by Paul Ray and Sherry Ruth Anderson describes how, through survey instruments and interviews, the authors have discovered the emergence of a new subculture. They describe this growing collection of people as "Cultural Creatives," people who hunger for deep change "in the direction of less stress, more health, lower consumption, more

spirituality, more respect for the earth and the diversity within and among the species . . .” These people are beginning to pull away from Box values and live according to Circle values on their own initiative.

The authors state that this subculture started sometime after World War II and has grown to about 50 million people. They suggest that, even though it is becoming populous, the people in it feel themselves to be alone because they have not yet figured out how to link into a coherent political force. The Box structure must change if this linkage is to happen. Without the Citizens Amendment or something like it, the Box structure will continue to enforce a mainstream Game mentality, and the Cultural Creatives will always be a backwater.

Similarly, before the Constitution was enacted, there was a growing Box subculture in Triangle times. People believed in natural laws and longed for personal liberty and the rule of law, but were not to achieve them until overthrowing the King and adopting a workable Constitution. The same is true today. We can have a supermajority of Cultural Creatives, but we still need a structure in place that supports the shift. This time the necessary structure is not a written, agreed-upon set of procedures, it is the convening of an ongoing Choice-creating conversation among all of us.

Let me give a flavor of how such a conversation can transform an organization. Many years ago, I worked in the Operations Improvement Department of Simpson Timber Company. All departments in our company were asked to develop mission statements and we prepared one like everyone else. While the other departments met for an hour or so to develop theirs, our manager, Paul Everett, called us into a three-day meeting to develop ours. Although I balked at this use of time, I was grateful later. This extended meeting not only created the necessary statement, but it also changed our system.

In the meeting, we bared our souls, trying to seek out what we all thought was needed, what we wanted from our jobs, and trying to find

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one statement that worked for everyone. Without knowing it, we were holding a Choice-creating meeting. Through the process, we did far more than communicate a statement of what we did. We also created a powerful community of people within the corporation. The statement we created served as a symbol of our deeply meaningful connection to one another.

Even though we worked in a top-down company, we had become a department that no longer had a boss. Instead, we were participants in an ongoing conversation that was setting strategic direction for ourselves, and in some ways, for the company, as well.

I didn't realize how much of a change the process had made on me until a few months later when, in a hectic moment, my boss wanted me to do something his way, even though I didn't agree. Because of the confidence I had gained from our meeting, I considered this as a "request" from him, and did not grant it. After all, I knew what he and I aspired to and that, on reflection, he would support me. Later, with gratitude, he did.

The Citizens Amendment invites each of us into a similar process for society. We, too, will create a shared mission, a different reality, and new symbols to empower ourselves.