

social events. Attacking the context allows us to move beyond the symptoms to root causes.

2 SUSPEND JUDGMENT

The frame creation process is aimed at opening new avenues and opportunities to get around an intractable situation. It circles the history and assumptions behind the rationalities that have led to the original problem formulation, as the problem-solving capacity of these rationalities has obviously been exhausted. While this is a critical process, it is certainly not intended to critique the stakeholders for lack of insight or to punish “bad” behavior. Within a frame creation process, the practices of the problem owner and the other stakeholders should just be taken as givens, which must be either worked with or worked around. To quote Aristotle: “thinking can start only once judgment is suspended.” The deferral of judgment and preservation of ambiguity are precious qualities of the frame creation process (and they are surprisingly hard to hold off—we are so used to criticizing). Only in the last phases of the frame creation process is judgment necessary again, but then it is aimed at the newly created frames, solution directions, and value propositions. To pick up the example quoted above, one could feel frustrated with the caregivers’ inability to grasp the difference between the patients’ needs when living in a controlled environment like an institution and their needs in creating a new life in apartments in the city. While the fact that the caregivers did not understand their own role in creating this situation of heartbreakingly loneliness is very relevant (as it is part of the problem situation, it will need to be dealt with), making judgments on their overprotectiveness will spark defensive or antagonistic responses that do not bring the solution closer in any way. Scapegoats are the last thing we need in frame creation. Actually, the fact that these caregivers think so strongly and implicitly in terms of control is an interesting observation in itself, worthy of deeper reflection. This notion that only complete control can lead to assured quality might be one of the key obstacles to be addressed in reforming the healthcare system in general, and possibly also other critical systems in our society. We will return to this idea later.

3 EMBRACE COMPLEXITY

Another key feature of the frame creation process is its drive to move beyond the simplifications that often underlie conventional problem-solving, and take on the complexity of the world as it is. This can feel quite counterintuitive: we