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**Spellbound**

**By Steve Davis**

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Spellbound

Recognize the power of the container, context, and expectations.

I received the following paragraph in an email the other day. Please read it first, then we'll talk about it...

According to rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn't mttar in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoetnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be at the rghit pclae. The rset can be a total mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit a porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe.

Interesting isn't it? What's it got to do with facilitation? Good question. My commitment to write and publish useful content on this subject every week is a strong inspiration for me to look for connections anywhere and everywhere. Fortunately, with everything in the universe ultimately connected, you can always find them. Here's what I see.

The paragraph I ask you to read above has three striking characteristics that I believe are connected to facilitation and how groups function.

1) Each word in the paragraph is contained in a consensual manner. By that I mean, the first and last letter of each word are "correct." By correct, I mean that each of us who can read the English language and can spell, agree on the the proper characters that begin and end each word. Without that agreement, the words would be unintelligible.

2) The words form a coherent paragraph that define a clear context. If the words were randomly joined without conveying something that made sense, it would become gibberish. Consider this sentence:

Wrod rset porbelm tihs taht iprmoetnt frist is ltteer be the wouthit mses huamn bcuseae lteter.

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This is a random selection of some of the same words in the above paragraph that aren't arranged to convey any meaning. Without the context of coherent speech, it's far more difficult to decipher the meaning of the individual words.

3) We all experience life through filters. Declaring expectations is like "tuning your filters" to my particular station. In this case, I set up an expectation that you might learn something from reading this paragraph. If you were to have found it in your email without an explanation in the midst of a seemingly normal message, you might not have given it enough consideration to figure out it's meaning.

For me, the above exercise underscores three important elements of facilitation:

1) Build a consensual container. Defining and agreeing upon which behaviors are "functional" is

"analogous to building a container" within which your groups will function. This container is made up largely of the groundrules and the external environment. If the container is comprehensive, relevant, and supported by the group, then they can pretty much do anything inside of it without sacrificing the meaning they seek. Just as the jumbled words in our paragraph still work within their functional boundaries.

2) Define a clear and relevant context for your work. If a group is clear about why they've come together, what they're there to accomplish, and engage in processes designed to get them what they want, then the "who," "what," and "how" of the group is congruent. They form and reinforce the context for their being together and will therefore present fewer barriers to getting what they want.

Again, just as our gibberish words were understandable when woven together into a cohesive paragraph with clear meaning, connecting people with agreed upon objectives and processes to get there will bring meaning and progress to their work.

3) Clarify and agree upon group expectations. When the early work in our groups entails exploration of individual and collective expectations, we can chart a much clearer course to realize them. Thus minimizing the many tangents, disagreements, and general confusion that often accompanies people working together toward an "uncommon" goal.

Evoking and managing expectations can help people remove blinders, barriers, and judgements, to better focus on the work at hand. This makes everyone's work easier and helps us chart a more direct course to our destination.

I hpoe you ejnyed tihs atrclie!

675 words.

About the Author:

Steve Davis, M.A., M.S., is an Facilitator's Coach, Infoprenuer, and free-lance human, helping facilitators, organizational leaders, educators, trainers, coaches and consultants present themselves confidently, access their creativity, empower their under-performing groups, enhance their facilitation

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## **The Alfred Hitchcock Locations Walks in London and New York**

**By Sandra Shevey**

### **The Alfred Hitchcock Locations Walks in London and New York by Sandra Shevey**

Sandra Shevey takes visitors to New York on a suspenseful excursion through Manhattan and Queens in the footsteps of director Alfred Hitchcock who immortalised some of New York City's most romantic neighborhoods in 9 of his New York-based films.

The walk which goes every Monday, Wednesday and Saturday throughout the year, lasts for 3 hours and departs at 11am. The cost is \$25 excl Metrocard.

The voyage takes us to such locales as midtown Manhattan, Greenwich Village, Jackson Heights, Forest Hills and Astoria.

Films profiled include `North by Northwest`, `The Wrong Man`, `Strangers on a Train`, `Topaz`, `Rear Window` and `Spellbound`.

Seeing the actual sites of Hitchcock's locations enables us to understand the distortions— ie the ways that his imagination transformed sites. The result allows us to penetrate the magic of this masterful genius.

All tours bookable in advance at [sandra\\_shevey@yahoo.com](mailto:sandra_shevey@yahoo.com)

Sandra Shevey has been profiling film since 1968 and interviewed the director Alfred Hitchcock in 1972. She has authored numerous articles and several books both and has also taught cinema at several universities in America. She became a permanent British resident in the eighties and as a member of the older unemployed devised the Alfred Hitchcock London Locations Walk.



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