



The Yo-One Process

YT, or the Yo-One Technique, is a tool to help groups generate and organize data. It is a process derived from KJ, a technique developed by the noted Japanese anthropologist, Jiro Kawakita. When YT is used in the visioning process, the data that is organized is each participant's view of the future. This data is generated in response to a question similar to:

"Given ideal circumstances, what will _____ look like / be like / be doing, in the year _____?" (It's important to spend time prior to the session making sure the group starts with the right question.)

The participants are given sticky notes to write their answers to the question. (One idea per sticky.) Each idea/sticky passes through the "Edit Circle". Participants read each sticky and can ask the author questions to clarify the meaning of the sticky. Ideas are not judged.

Next the participants group the stickies into categories of common themes and these categories are given titles. When the grouping and titling is completed there are usually five to nine categories.

The next steps are to sequence the categories (if applicable), to vote on the top three categories, and finally to develop a very high level vision statement encompassing all the ideas. This process moves the participants up the "Ladder of Abstraction", beginning with very specific ideas generated at the first step, to the more general category titles, to the most general vision summary statement.

The significance of Yo-One? The words themselves mean nothing. At certain points in the process the participants shout "Yo-One!" in unison. This symbolizes completion of a phase and that the group is moving forward.

The process takes four to five hours, but this depends on how well the participants know each other, and how much discussion there needs to be to make sure people understand each other's ideas. Completion time is shortened if a summary vision statement isn't needed.

The Yo-One Technique provides focus and direction for groups (and individuals). It is also very effective as a team building tool. Implementation of the vision developed by the YT process is not part of the session, however. Implementation requires a separate focus, process, and commitment.