



## Testimonials from people who attended the Community Building workshops during March 2010

*Peter Block's highly skillful modeling of his methodology and the way that he maintained its integrity throughout the two days in spite of pressure was impressive. His humility, fairness, trustworthiness, abundance and wisdom shone through. All of these things combined with the experiential learning and reflective process to shift my thinking and open new possibilities in relationships, that have been quite liberating. The workshop, through a repetitive process, sharpened awareness to the giftedness of all people. But there is a point at which the balance between knowledge and knowing is tipped. This is where Spirit can kick in and significant change can happen. The workshop opened this possibility for those who were ready.*

*The workshop confirmed the power of dialogue, and the need for passionate drivers. Thank you Louise and Symphonia for your commitment to healing and nation building in our beloved country.*

Freda Brock, ELRU

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*A few days late but the passing time has not diminished my appreciation for the wonderful workshop we had. I left the workshop with the understanding that one of the powerful tools for community building is being all the time conscious of giving positive feedback to each other, because this actually encourages and gives one a very warm feeling. Ever since the workshop I everyday ask myself "what intention do I have for the day" I can assure you that does contribute to my everyday performance.*

*With time, determination and dedication I'm sure through efforts such as these, one day, if not us our grand children will reap the benefits.*

*Once again thank you very much, could you kindly send me a copy of the poem that was recited at the beginning of the workshop? I'd appreciate it very much*

*Have a blessed evening*

Mmemogolo (Queen of the Bafokeng tribe)

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*The Peter Block Community Building workshop was an incredible opportunity to connect with fellow, like-minded, South Africans who are passionate about making a difference in South Africa.*

*This event allowed us to collaborate with each other through conversations and find a unique way to enroll others (whether in business or communities), so that we may 'walk together' and collectively impact this country. The sharing of this learning helped us co-create a platform where we can make an even greater shift in the communities we serve.*

*Thank you to both Peter and Louise for making this a possibility*

Theresa Kearley, Organisational Effectiveness Executive, Unlimited World

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*Being one of the founding members of Awesome SA I found that the two day workshop with Peter Block opened channels of discussion with people from all sectors of society.*

*Awesome SA is a movement to bring all South Africans together to become the change we want to see in our country. I believe that the methodology taught by Peter Block is the ideal tool to connect people, both in their private and public lives.*

*Now, well over a decade after its birth, our new democracy is starting to grow out of its infancy. We have tottered and fallen but also made great progress. Now is the time to unite, let go of fear and prejudice and treat our differences with respect to bring about social harmony.*

*By applying the principles taught by Peter Block in our interaction with others, I believe we can reconcile communities.*

Di Smith, Awesome SA

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*The Community Building workshop at St. Phil's in Durban was an outstanding event because it enabled me to connect, at a deeper level, with several of the participants.*

*We immediately began operating 'in community' rather than sitting in rows, listening to presentations! I have been exploring narrative in my post-grad studies and seeing it in action was refreshing and a definite confirmation of the narrative process. The next step would be to learn how to design curious questions that keep the conversation flowing. Thank you for this inspiring event! I shall most certainly continue the conversation on Facebook - what a wonderful idea.*

*Many blessings and keep on 'building community'!*

Jenny Sprong, Social Justice Coordinator, Diakonia Council of Churches

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*Thanks so much for a really great experience and for the opportunity to share in Peter Blocks ideas – it really was inspiring and has energized us to get involved in doing more work in schools.*

Sue Fontannaz, CEO, Argo

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*It was a privilege to be in a room with literally every possible culture in our rainbow nation. The sharing of thoughts, music and poetry were unique and the way we communicated was different to every conference I have attended.*

Liza Rossouw, WCCF

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*Well, Peter does things differently. I enjoyed the small groups tremendously. Greatest part was not to cure or give advice or judge but instead to give gifts. I thought so of my three boys aged 22, 17 and 14 whom I often take for granted, and don't appreciate their gifts. I went home that first day, thirsty, and bought me a red Grapetizer, and I bought three extras and gave it to them. Remember, it was hot that day. They said thank you dad. Simple as that. I was taught to appreciate the gift of my children, what a blessing they are to me. I see them every day but I take them for granted. They must just be there. Thank you Peter.*

*Then on my return to my school on Wed, at our morning 10 minute check-in session, I started to tell my teachers about that Tuesday's first small group interaction, and the tears came. That I could sit with a fellow black lady South African and a male white South African and we could hold each other in our pain and understanding was simply awesome. We do not do this enough in our communities, in South Africa, so we seem to drift past each other, being very critical of each other, yet we do not make the time to get to know each other, to tell one another about our gifts, to appreciate each other's gift, to look at the possibilities, focusing instead on the problems.*

*The lady who works at our school put a vase with freshly picked flowers in my office, and I could thank her for the gift of caring. I gave my one senior teacher a hug and thanked her for her gift of friendship. Awesome. I now want to pull her along to the next Peter Block conference because we are alike souls.*

*I have parents at school who classify themselves as unemployed. I am now going to invite them to school one Saturday morning so that we can chat about their gifts that they can share with us here at school. In addition recovery circles they talk about a Higher Power, a God of your own understanding. You are being used as a vehicle by such a power to bring about change and build communities in S. Africa using Peter's insight.*

*Thank God for Peter challenging you when you thought your kids were okay so you could be worried about other kids in the Western Cape but sit back and do nothing because they are not your kids. I am glad he made you think and shift from your comfort zone.*

Andre Pretorius, Principal, Heathfield Primary

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*I would like to thank you and Peter for facilitating this workshop. I found it quite inspirational. I have always seen myself as a community participant rather than a leader (a term which I think is grossly misused today).*

*In the company environment I work in there is a lot of comfort and stability in the corporate structure, and the role of the CEO is well established with clear expectations. I have always tried to keep the human face of the business alive and avoid the trappings of status and power, and hence the workshop caught my eye. As was mentioned a number of times in the workshop a community starts with two and ends with a whole planet and any permutation in between. Now more than ever we need to question what we define as our communities and what our commitment to them is.*

*What a simple universal tool to build, rebuild or strengthen the communities we operate in. The workshop just demonstrated the eagerness with which people want to engage when the environment is right. It does give hope and inspiration to our way forward. I cannot turn my company structure upside down but I will be changing some of the paradigms.*

Thomas Holtz, CEO, Multotec

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*I really appreciate the space created to engage as South Africans. I had an opportunity to have open and honest interaction with fellow citizens and people that I do not come across in my everyday life. What really struck me was the openness and the willingness to receive each other without putting up defenses and how we gracefully took responsibility of each other's pain I really felt a genuine effort to understand and be guided from every corner of the room. I went home with a light and open heart.*

*I am looking forward to participating in creating the kind of community that want to be part of and recognise that this responsibility is shared among all South Africans and people of the world.*

Weziwe Xameni, Simasonke Development Foundation

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*I found time spent in the presence of passionate & like minded people so inspiring & re energising. Peter really is remarkable, his message so simple & essentially human. I've often thought that Joburgers are detached their humanity... After Wednesday I think I should rethink my thinking.*

James Durno, Artist

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*Thank you so very much for the opportunity to take part in the community-building workshop. It was my first time to participate and I was thrilled. First of all, the workshop opens opportunities for networking. It also gave me an opportunity to introspect and deal with some deep rooted feelings. Ironically, opportunities for self healing abounded. I thank you for those opportunities. Africa is a place where community life was cherished, that seems to have gone with the overwhelming pressure put on many people to be materialistic and individualistic. The work you are doing is incredible as it puts Africa back on its way to re-embrace its values. The skills you impart will go a long way as they put people at ease to deal with most painful experiences they have had.*

Don Maximus, !Matters of the Heart are inexplicable!

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*Thanks Louise and Peter for creating an ideal opportunity for me to once again look closely at my own practice and to reaffirm my stand as a light-worker for change in south and Southern Africa. The events of the second day made me realize again how much work we still have to do!! Aluta continua – Kind regards ANNA*

Anna van Esch, Strategic Management Solutions

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*Thank you for everything. For me this was truly and personally transformational.*

Cailin Human, USB-ED

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*Thank for 2 awesome days. I left with a new sense of purpose and renewed hope for our country..*

Ridwan Samodien, Principal, Kannemeyer Primary

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*Firstly, sincere thanks to the Metropolitan Foundation for "sending" me to the workshop – one of the most enriching and heartwarming personal experiences, and one that has provided me with tools I can immediately use in many spheres of my life and community engagements. Peter is undoubtedly a blessing for all those who believe in change – no matter what it is, Peter's "work" makes it all possible and fulfilling. I am enthused and excited about being a possibility of "a new social language".*

Raymond Africa, Cover2Go, Metropolitan

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*Thank you so much for the opportunity to experience the community building workshop. It was transformational. It has left me with so many thoughts, ideas and questions and a confirmation that communities are nothing more or less than a conversation.*

Melanie Kiley

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*After today I need to thank you for so much. It's difficult to fully grasp what happened but I sense that in some way my life has changed (for the better). I need to thank you for your courage.*

*These are the events that help us grow and if you're not on the field playing you'll never have those experiences - but what sort of life would that be? And how would we all benefit from days like today? It's much easier to sit in the stands and criticise. I'm very glad you're on the field and playing with everything you have.*

Phil Eayres, Strategy Consultant

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*What an honor to be with a group of South Africans who care for the future of our beautiful country. Every conversation and connection was meaningful and helpful. The process and structure of the two day event is a wonderful practical tool to use and for each of us to continue to work on building our part of the puzzle. The music and edutainment was world class. The food was served with love and was most enjoyable. Thank you Louise for your vision and deep determination to make an impact on our nation. Thank you Peter for persevering and continuing the journey when every obstacle was placed in your way. I salute your dedication and commitment to helping us bring about change in South Africa.*

Lynda Smith, Refirement Network

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*I went into this workshop with preconceived ideas that were completely shattered by the workshop process. I went in thinking that we were there to learn about community development and about how we can help those "poor, disadvantaged" people out there. This workshop shifted my perception to another plain when I realized that to develop community I first have to realise that I am part of that community. The ensuing of questioning that evolved around self; made me realise the need to help myself first before focusing the other. I need to be a whole, healed individual before I reach out to others. Also community is where you are. It is the relationships you nurture. Your*

*workplace is one of your communities. One thing that stood out for me was the dialogue around gifts. Peter Block said that speaking about deficiencies does not aid healing instead we should focus on the gifts that people have. The end of each session that was marked by each member of the group sharing with each other what gifts they brought to the discussion was both difficult to accept but also eye-opening. It made me realise that I do have something special to offer the exchange and it is just so much harder to take positive feedback than it is to accept the negative. Gift-mindedness is core to community – I understand what that means now.*

Nadia V

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*The opportunity provided by the workshop to engage so freely with an enormously diverse range of individuals was exciting and stimulating. Peter's process also cuts through so much of the "noise" that prevents people from connecting profoundly with each other. Its challenging, but deeply satisfying.*

Dr Elsbeth Dixon, CEO, Common Purpose South Africa

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*What a privilege to have been at the workshop! It was a life changer! I struggle to explain how much it meant to me.*

Marita Oosthuizen

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*Thanks you for a great two days and the balance you created for me was very enjoyable!!! The self-awareness journey that the Block process puts you through is amazing and I have some new tools to work with. This will be very handy for myself as well as those that I interact with. Thank you for the opportunity.*

*In my current world I will use many of the thoughts and ideas the 2 day experience gave me – my focus therefore is the current world and less in the broader community although I do want to stay abreast of movements and initiatives.*

Philip Grobler, Deloitte Consulting

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*Just a note to thank you for a great experience over the last two days. The workshop was filled with fun activities, like minded community builders and a very interesting methodology indeed. The venue was great and the overall organization was superb. I certainly made good connections with number of people over the workshop period. Objective achieved!!!!*

Reginald Botha, Area Coordinator, Khulisa Crime Prevention Initiative

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