

Z Fantasy: Learning How to Haiku

Activity Summary

This creative/spiritual activity uses haiku writing as a way to tap into the participants' personal awareness of their day-to-day experiences.

Goals

- To practice awareness as a step toward blending management and spirituality.
- To provide an atmosphere to compose haiku, weaving intuition and logic together.

Group Size

6 to 30 participants.

Time Required

Approximately 2 hours.

Materials

- A copy of the Z Fantasy Lecturette for the facilitator.
- Copies of the Z Fantasy How to Haiku worksheet for each participant.
- Copies of the Z Fantasy Suggested Readings for each participant.
- Blank paper for each participant.
- Pens or pencils for participants.

- Flip chart easel with paper/newsprint.
- Colored felt-tipped markers.
- Masking tape.

Physical Setting

A room large enough to accommodate the group size, for individual as well as small group work, with small tables and chairs. Alternatively carpets and floor cushions may be used. Outdoors or a garden is an enriching option.

Facilitating Risk Rating

Low.

Process

1. Announce the goals of the activity. *(1 minute.)*
2. Open with the following story on the need to weave spirituality and management into an acceptable framework for organizations:

"The businessman rushed to the Zen master to get some techniques for giving his organization a competitive edge. He found the master amidst the flowers in the garden. Breathless to complete his task, for he had another urgent financial meeting to attend with his shareholders, he took a deep breath, and said: 'I understand that you have techniques for helping organizations reach their competitive advantage. Can you share some with me?' Unhurriedly, she invited him onto the porch and asked him to wait. After a few moments she emerged with an earthen teapot and a cup, which she set on the tiny table near him. She poured the steaming brew into the cup and went on pouring until it was overflowing. He could contain himself no longer, and exclaimed: 'Lady, what are you doing? The tea is spilling over! Let's just get on with the techniques.' She looked at him, and her eyes were piercingly gentle, as she said: 'You are like the cup, already full. How can anything be put in, unless you empty yourself?'"

(5 minutes.)

3. Explain the concept by giving the Z Fantasy Lecturette and answering any questions.
(10 minutes.)
4. Ask participants to sit comfortably with hands empty, eyes closed, and spine erect, as you lead them through an awareness exercise.

5. Use the following set of instructions, repeating them in a soft and soothing voice, with longer pauses between each repetition to give participants time to enter into their quietitude:

"Concentrate on your breathing. . . . Be aware of the air as it enters into your body and slowly moves out as you inhale deeply and exhale gently. . . . Relax your body. . . . Relax your mind. Do not cling to your thoughts, but let them move away like clouds wafting away in a summer breeze. . . . Continue to relax. . . . Feel your body loosening up. . . . Let the tensions from your neck and shoulders slowly and softly move out as you continue to breathe in and out. . . . Let your eyes relax, and your mouth and lips remain soft, as though you were about to smile. . . . Continue to breathe in and out slowly. . . . Relax and be rested. . . . Smile. . . . Continue to be aware of your breathing. . . ."

You may repeat the instructions if you wish.

(10 to 15 minutes.)

6. At the end of 10 to 12 minutes, depending on how much time you feel the group needs to relax, say: "After the next exhalation, slowly come back to this place and slowly open your eyes. . . . Wait for a few moments in silence."
7. Ask participants to share how they feel right now. Invite them to talk about the experience and what happened to their awareness.
(5 to 10 minutes.)
8. Distribute the Z Fantasy How to Haiku worksheet and pens or pencils. Tell participants to work individually, in silence, to complete it. Participants may wish to move around, or sit in silence as they haiku. Move among the participants and be available for clarification during this time.
(20 minutes.)
9. Ask participants to share their haiku. Encourage participants who share with applause and verbal reinforcement, emphasizing that we must honor the muse in each person.
(10 minutes.)
10. Now ask participants to get in touch with the reason why they chose to write the particular haiku they did and the insights they may have had in the process. Give them some silent time.
(5 minutes.)
11. Divide the participants into small groups. Ask them to share their haiku and insights in these groups. If participants wish to put up their haiku, make available the flip chart paper, marker pens, and masking tape.
(20 minutes.)

12. After all participants have had a chance to share within the small groups, reconvene the participants, and ask each group for common themes. Summarize major points from the entire group and post them on the flip chart.
(15 minutes.)

13. Debrief the experience by leading a discussion around the following questions:

- How could you do this type of activity on a regular basis?
- What are your plans to continue to enrich your life?
- How feasible is your plan?
- What barriers exist to your plan?
- Who else can you share this technique with?

(15 to 20 minutes.)

14. End with the following story:

"And so it was that a tired business executive, while traveling to one more marketing meeting, saw a man who had a deep whimsical smile. Curious, she watched him as they sat in the departure lounge. He came and sat by her and gently said, 'I would like to tell you a story about a person just like you.' Surprised, she nodded in assent.

"The Zen master spoke about a beautiful stream that moved through the forests and glades and was very successful in its movement. But one day, after many years, it flowed to the edge of a desert. Hesitantly, it tried to cross, but was swallowed up by the sand. It thought of how it had moved earlier and called to mind its past experiences, then tried once more, with determination and strategy, to cross, but again failed. In utter frustration, the stream stood still.

"And as it stood still, it heard the wind whisper, 'Let me take you up in my arms and put you down on the other side.' 'What?' asked the stream in amazement. 'To do that I would have to totally change my behavior and known patterns, and evaporate so you can carry me across, and I may lose myself in the process.' 'There is no other way,' the stream heard the wind say, 'if you want to cross the desert.' So the stream gave itself up into the wind and was wafted along, until it fell as rain on the other side of the desert and resumed its original essence.

"Quietly the Zen master said, 'Perhaps you need to be like the stream,' as the departure call was announced."

15. Silently hand out copies of the Z Fantasy Suggested Readings and close the workshop.

Variations

- This activity can be done across organizations, within one organization, or for management students.
- If the group size is small, each participant can be asked to compose two or three haiku in Step 8.
- After Step 10, participants can be encouraged to compose one more haiku on the same theme or to redraft their current one.
- If participants are from the same organization, the group may be asked to work on emergent themes.
- The entire group can compose one haiku for the end of the activity.

Submitted by Edwina Pio.

Edwina Pio, Ph.D., blends the intricacies of management, psychology, and spirituality in her teaching, writing, and consultancy. Her work takes her to Europe, India, the United States, and New Zealand, where she enjoys leading people to the threshold of their minds. She is passionate about yoga and meditation and incorporates them in her work. Currently she lives in New Zealand, where she teaches management at the Auckland University of Technology and works with women and children who are experiencing domestic violence.

Z Fantasy Lecturette

Z fantasy is the realm of divergent thinking, creativity, the weaving of intuition and logic. Organizations in this century must be able to come up with products, processes, and services that are niche, aesthetic, and earth-nourishing. No longer can humankind take from the treasures of the earth without giving back in stewardship of the universe, both for today's and for future generations. In the same vein, management must seek for ways to address the yearning of the human spirit for a more harmonious world. In the last few years, organizations have been actively searching for methodologies, procedures, and policies to blend spirit and management in an attempt to garner the commitment, competence, and creativity of their people.

Spirit is used here, not as in wearing a particular religious garb, but in the sense of energy, life force, breath of life (prana in Sanskrit, chi in Chinese, pneuma in Greek, spiritus in Latin). Hence, spirituality is tapping into this life force so that the individual and organization, in their reciprocal influence on each other, thrive in the business world and in the personal world.

Z fantasy seeks to ignite and rekindle individuals in the organization. A necessary prerequisite for this is awareness, or dhayana in Sanskrit, jhana in Pali, chan in Chinese, and Zen in Japanese. This meditative stance leads to the composition of haiku.

Haiku is a form of Japanese poetry, containing seventeen syllables, in three phrases of five-seven-five syllables, or just three short lines, although its modern form ranges from fifteen to twenty-five syllables. It usually presents a crystalline moment of heightened awareness in simple imagery, traditionally using an image from nature. It is a way of calling the spirit of the thing named, with the eternal and momentary juxtaposed. It is considered poetry of ahness, because it makes you say, "Aha, now I see it!" The last line is generally given a twist, a bit of satire and punch! It is also an awareness practice with healing power.

Among the famous Zen poets are Issa, Bahso, Buson, and Chiyo-ni. Some examples of their work are available in bookstores or online.

Haiku focuses on brevity, capturing the essence of the situation, and literally forcing organizational team members to get to the core of the problem, creating an Archimedean "eureka!" for themselves, and maybe for the organization as well. Some more recent haiku compositions with current themes are

Saying goodbye to layoffs
Learning continuously . . .
Not autumn, but spring.

Lands of burning oil
Extraction, fueling time.
Freedom sold for pennies.

Would that I could learn. . .
From hairy caterpillar
To colored butterfly.

Vision, mission, wow!
Goals, objectives, strategic planning.
But where is my soul?

Triple bottom line,
Earth nourishing, wonderful . . .
Spread like a virus.

Z fantasy is at the heart of our travels into spirituality at work. It addresses the need for organizations to stay alive and buoyant, to be passionate and profitable, with a sense of fun and laughter, to focus on the essence of the issue, and to have the ability to continuously create new ways of doing and being.

The Zen master would say: "Life is measured not by the moments we breathe, but the moments that take our breath away!"

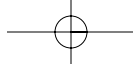
Z Fantasy How to Haiku

Instructions: Please complete the checklist below by placing a tick mark in the boxes that apply to you. You may add in your own elements in the blank boxes.

In this organization, my spirit feels:

- Harmonious
- Fragmented
- Tired
- Excited
- Peaceful
- Challenged
- Routinized
- Depressed
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

How would you like your spirit to feel within an organization? Write a few sentences about this in the space provided below:

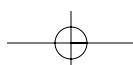
**Haiku happenings:**

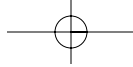
- Poetry of seventeen syllables
- Three lines of five-seven-five syllables
- Essence of the situation is portrayed
- Images from nature are used
- Transitory nature of life is presented
- Playfulness and humor are incorporated
- Both logic and intuition are ingredients

Now call to mind one issue or concern that you are dealing with in your life, and select the key theme. Keeping this theme as the focus, pick up one or two related elements, people, policies, strategies, products, or processes emanating from it. Please put these thoughts into your haiku draft below. Enjoy! Feel the freedom of serious play!

Draft 1

Draft 2



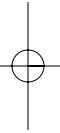
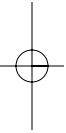


20

The 2004 Pfeiffer Annual: Consulting

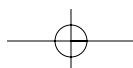
Draft 3

Version 1.0



Version 1.1

Remember, your haiku may be composed in the first draft. If you are getting stuck, unstick yourself. Take a few deep breaths. Go for a silent walk.



Z Fantasy Suggested Readings

- Ashmos, D.P., & Duchon, D. (2000). Spirituality at work: A conceptualisation and measure. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 9(2), 134–145.
- Donegan, P., & Ishibashi, Y. (1998). *Chiyo-ni: Woman haiku master*. Tokyo: Tuttle Publishing.
- Gunther, M. (2001). God business. *Fortune*, 144(1), 59–80.
- Hamill, S. (trns.) (1997). *The spring of my life*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.
- Handy, C. (2002). What's a business for? *Harvard Business Review*, 80(12).
- Higinson, W.J. (1996). *The haiku seasons*. Tokyo: Kodansha International.
- Kaican, J. (Ed.). (1996). *Snow on the water*. Winchester, VA: Red Moon Press.
- King, R.H. (2001). *Thomas Merton and Thich Nhat Hanh: Engaged spirituality in an age of globalisation*. New York: Continuum International Publishing.
- Kodama, M., & Yanagishima, H. (1999). *The Zen fool Ryokan*. Boston, MA: Charles E. Tuttle Co.
- Pio, E. (2003). *Z biz-The art of wealth: Stepping stones for spirituality in organizations*. Working paper.
- Warriner, W. (1991). *Corporate haiku*. London: HarperCollins.

