

## **Toolkit Title**

Manage tensions with polarity thinking

## **Purpose of Toolkit**

We seldom feel tension to choose between a good thing and a clearly bad thing. We feel most conflicted when it's a choice between 2 good things. Polarity Thinking challenges us to shift the way we look at 2 equally good things that appear to conflict with each other. The tool helps us to map out the opportunities and dilemmas. It also helps us to recognize that we are not in an "either/or" situation but a "both/and" situation

## **Toolkit Methodology and Application**

See toolkit appended/ below

## **Case Study or Example**

See toolkit appended/ below.

## **Acknowledgements and Sources**

See toolkit appended/ below

## **Toolkit Category**

Organisation Development

## **Keywords**

Organisation Development, Polarity Thinking

## **Name and Email of Project Contact Person(s)**

Name: Organisation Development Unit

Email: ttsh\_organisationdevelopment@ttsh.com.sg

# MANAGE TENSIONS WITH POLARITY THINKING

**#advanced #system**

We seldom feel tension to choose between a good thing and a clearly bad thing. We feel most conflicted when it's a choice between 2 good things. Polarity Thinking challenges us to shift the way we look at 2 equally good things that appear to conflict with each other. The tool helps us to map out the opportunities and dilemmas. It also helps us to recognize that we are not in an "either/or" situation but a "both/and" situation.

# POLARITY MAP

Action Steps to gain/maintain positive results

5

WHEN WE EXPERIENCE THE BEST OF BOTH:

3

Positive results from doing Good thing 1:

2

positive results from doing Good thing 2:

Action Steps to gain/maintain positive results

5



1



EARLY WARNING Signs that we must move from Good thing 1 to Good thing 2:

4

Negative results from Excessively staying in Good thing 1:

2

Negative results from Excessively staying in Good thing 2:

4



3

## MANAGE TENSIONS WITH POLARITY THINKING

When to use: When you are solving paradoxes, dilemmas and tensions that require a compromise and balance. E.g. High Tech Patient Care and High Touch Patient Care, Work Life and Home Life, Medical Care and Whole Person Care.

How to use:

1. **See:** Identify the tensions you experience in your life/work
2. **Map:** Fill the following in the Polarity Map:
  - The tension is between good equally “good things”.
  - Both these “good things” need to be named in a neutral manner. For example, High Tech Patient Care and High Touch Patient Care.
  - They have a direct (interdependent) relationship to each other.
  - Map out the positive and negative results of each of the polarity.
3. **Assess:**
  - Identify the outcome when you experience the best of both polarities, and the worst of both polarities.
4. **Leverage:**
  - Identify the early warning signs that tell us that we need to move from good thing 1 to good thing 2. Identify the action steps that can help us to gain and maintain the positive results of good things 1 and 2.