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21st June: a leap into another culture, about to leave for Fribourg, Switzerland

Posted by [rajni shah](#) on June 21, 2008 at 4:01am

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Many of us begin with this willingness to leap into other cultures, to be among people and to work in situations that surprise, challenge us. I try to commit to things when I don't yet know how I will become what I need to become in order to provide the space I have promised for that group of people. But more and more we're encouraged not to do this, to specialise, draw on our strengths, give what we are good at, sell what is desired by the buyer. And I wonder how much this translates across sectors, across ways of working, across corporate, group and individual decisions?

[...I know myself that I am swayed by compliments, support and friendliness to sometimes work in the same circles and with the same predictable feedback to work that is apparently risk-taking. But I am also often asked to work out so much in advance, and it is hard to find a way to say: I want to be responsive, to make the work in the place and with the people. And it's hard to trust that in oneself because it's a model that's so infrequently used or given value. So we develop a system of making frames. We show the person the frame they need to see and then once inside can paint it in the way we choose. And despite what you might think, the frame can be useful, it can highlight to the people who are inside it with you that it is a frame, and it can illuminate some of what they couldn't otherwise easily see in themselves and each other..]

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