

The Art of Hosting
Conversations That Matter:

Conversational Leadership --
Creating Wise Action and Change



June 6-9, 2010
Star of the North Retreat Centre
St. Albert, Alberta



*Whatever the challenge, community is the answer.
We prepare for an unknown future
by creating strong and sustainable relationships.*
The Berkana Institute



Table of Contents

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Welcome | 5 |
| Calling Team, Co-Hosts | 6 |
| About this Workbook | 7 |
| An Invitation for Learning | 8 |
| Why This Training Now? | 9 |
| It is Time | 10 |
| For What Purposes Do We Come Together? | 11 |
| The Art of Hosting Fellowship | 12 |
| The Art of Calling and Inviting | 13 |
| Engaging Our Limiting Beliefs | 14 |
| The Work of Byron Katie Caitlin Frost | 18 |
| The Art of the Authentic Call | 21 |
| Three Conditions for Deeper Conversation | 22 |
| The Challenge of Walking The Chaordic Path | 23 |
| The Chaordic Stepping Stones | 24 |
| Chaordic Design of Organizations | 27 |
| Reflections on Invitation | 30 |
| The Arts of Hosting and Harvesting | 31 |
| Living Systems: Organizing Life | 32 |
| Organizational Paradigms | 33 |
| Divergence and Convergence | 34 |
| The 5 'Breaths' of Design | 35 |
| Emergence: Taking Social Innovation to Scale | 36 |
| Theory U | 37 |
| What Makes a Powerful Question? | 38 |
| The Art of Harvesting | 39 |
| The Simplest Forms of Hosting | 43 |
| Circle | 50 |
| The Appreciative Approach | 52 |
| The World Café | 53 |
| Open Space Technology | 54 |
| Patterns Behind the Art of Hosting | 55 |
| Pro Action Café | 59 |
| Art of Hosting – A Glimpse of the Whole | 63 |
| Consensus Decision-Making | 66 |
| What Happens When You Don't Agree on a Decision-Making Process? | 67 |
| Inspiration for Stewarding Beauty | 69 |
| The Power of Questions | 70 |
| Lessons in Community Change | 71 |
| The VISA Story | 72 |
| Optimism and the Art of Dropping Balls | 75 |
| Energetically Repatterned | 77 |
| The Sense of Things | 78 |
| Books and Websites | 79 |
| Notes | 82 |

Welcome

Welcome to the Art of Hosting and Convening Conversations, a training and practice retreat for all who aspire to lead by engaging with interactive ways of working with groups and teams.

The Art of Hosting and Convening Meaningful Conversations has been offered in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, North America, and South America.



We are a growing community of practitioners, supporting each other to further our ability to facilitate co-creative learning and problem-solving.

Whether in formal roles or informal roles all of you are leaders. Leaders with a desire to create a different level of participation and more meaningful conversation with the people we live with and in the businesses and communities we support.

At this gathering we will explore together and act of these kinds of questions:

- What are our hopes for the future?
- How can we amplify individual and collective wisdom as we strengthen diversity and seek common ground?
- How can we deepen our partnership with (and between) business, government and community?
- How do we accelerate resilience in light of ongoing economic challenges?
- How do we move beyond the current narrative of fears that lives in groups, organizations and communities?
- How can we strategically offer each other support, partnership and inspiration to boldly move forward with our work?
- How do we take this community of practice to the next level?

Please enjoy yourselves in this learning, in this work, and with this group of inspiring people.

Your hosting and calling team,
Chantal, Chris, Corrina, Mary, Teresa, Tenneson

Calling Team, Co-Hosts

Corrina Chetley-Irwin
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Art of Hosting Stewards For This Gathering

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About this Workbook

The workbook is intended to be a reference for our learning days together and a touch stone for you to refer back to after the learning retreat is over. As such we have laid it out in a way that makes sense when you return to your daily world of working with clients and projects and real conversations that matter. The ideas, tools and resources are laid out in a way that supports a linear progression from the art of calling and inviting a conversation through the arts of hosting and harvesting the conversation to the art of stewarding the results of work.



*You must give birth to your images.
They are the future waiting to be born.
Fear not the strangeness you feel.
The future must enter you
Long before it happens.
Just wait for the birth, for the hour
of new clarity.*
Rainer Maria Rilke

An Invitation for Learning

*The way to heal a living system
is to connect it to more of itself.*
Humberto Maturana

We invite you to be a participant and a learner in this practice retreat. The object of this retreat is to help your own practice of hosting conversations that matter. Practice is simply something that we do over and over again with attention.



One of the essential skills for growing as a host is being aware of what is happening around you and not losing yourself in the drama of any given moment. In this retreat you are invited to practice this kind of awareness of what is happening in order to develop that ability. Please participate and ask yourself “what is going on here?” Develop sensitivity to the quality of the physical space, the process, the interactions between people and your own reactions to what is happening.

Finally, we invite you to let go into the learning opportunities in this retreat. We have designed these days for participation. The quality of your learning will increase alongside your quality of engagement. Every moment here is offered as a learning moment and a practice moment.

Why This Training Now?

More and more leaders—people who want to help—yearn to experience and practice a different kind of leadership. We sometimes need to focus on ourselves, sometimes on our teams, sometimes on our communities—sometimes all three simultaneously. We yearn for leadership that sets free ours and other people's creativity and intelligence. It is a leadership that is willing to let go of control in order to achieve the cooperation and results that our times call for.

Leadership has always been about wise action that lasts. Groups, communities, organizations and societies act together with as much intelligence as they can to produce sustainable futures. The leadership that is required in these times must act wisely and sustainably in a context that is full of complexity, change and connectivity on scales unknown in human history. And yet, the resources we have to deal with the challenges we face are available to us, because they are as old as we are. These include:

- conversation
- learning
- relationship
- community

This learning retreat will look at a number of ways in which these and other tools can help us take advantage of our resourcefulness to work with groups of people to do better work.

Through various practices of hosting, it has become clear—the challenges of these times call for involvement, collective intelligence, and co-creation of the solutions we need to find. Sustainable solutions that serve the community are born in the community.

The Art of Hosting is built on the assumption and experience that we need to find new solutions for the common good, whether in corporations, government, education, non-profits, social movements, communities, or families. The time is now.

It is common sense to bring more people together in conversation. It is the way we have done it in generations past, gathering round fires and sitting in circles. It is the way we occasionally taste now, building core relationships that invite real collaboration. Human beings that are involved and invited to work together take ownership and responsibility when ideas and solutions must be put into action.



It is Time

Toke Moeller, Denmark
Art of Hosting Steward

the training time is over
for those of us who can hear the call
of the heart and the times

my real soul work
has begun on the next level
for me at least

courage is
to do what calls me
but I may be afraid of

we need to work together
in a very deep sense
to open and hold spaces
fields
spheres of energy
in which our imagination
and other people's
transformation can occur

none of us can do it alone

the warriors of joy are gathering
to find each other
to train together
to do some good work
from the heart with no attachment
and throw it
in the river

no religion, no cult, no politics
just flow with life itself as it
unfolds in the now...

what is my Work?
what is our Work?

This poem from Toke Moeller is an invitation to you to consider where your practice of hosting conversations will take you and the people you work and live with.

For What Purposes Do We Come Together?

To give you some context about the work we are about to engage, here are three key purposes that inform our work and will inform our time together.

To Learn The Art of Hosting -- Hosting conversations that matter can be an art. Over the years, a community of practice has emerged around the question "What is the Art of Hosting." We have learned that our work is grounded in these unique principles:

- To go from fragmentation to connection
- To ground our actions in that which is meaningful
- To access and draw wisdom from all our collective intelligences
- To be able to listen and lead from the "field"
- To shift our patterns of organizing and interacting
- To connect and align our inner and outer worlds, remembering what we hold and having the courage to act wisely
- To learn, practice and apply skills and methodologies; plus create the necessary conditions and timing
- To host a level of consciousness where people can be together in an authentic way

To Practice Balancing Paradox -- We offer a view of work that is informed by many paradoxes and polarities. Rather than seeing these as opposites, we work to develop practitioners that balance these complimentary ideas in grounded practice. Some of these polarities include:

- Chaos and Order
- Content and Process
- Leading and Following
- "Warrior" and "Midwife"
- Small Group and Large Group
- Confusion and Clarity
- Fast and Slow
- Sacred and Irreverent



To Work As A Practitioner -- We are in a practice and learning retreat in which we will go deeply into unfamiliar territory. The language we use might seem strange, and the concepts new and unfamiliar. We invite you to stay with the newness, the discomfort and the excitement you might feel and to stay in inquiry and inquisitiveness about what you are learning.

And then we invite you to return to your familiar world and practice with simplicity and accessibility and beauty, using what you have learned over these days to develop or deepen a life practice of improving the way people work and live together.

The Art of Hosting Fellowship

All around the world there is a growing community of people from many walks of life that are learning, practicing and reflecting on the art of hosting conversations that matter. This community of practice is engaged in fascinating projects around the world including:

- Kufunda Village in Zimbabwe, a self-organizing rural learning village
- A large scale project to create sustainable and affordable health care in the city of Columbus, Ohio, USA
- Improving health and access to health services in an Oregon county rural health network
- Using conversational leadership to shift education and development in a large Canadian labor union
- Engaging community members, elders, youth and leaders to build an Aboriginal child welfare authority on Vancouver Island in Canada
- Introducing new models of participatory leadership within the European Union
- Developing new and unconventional models of youth work in Nova Scotia, Canada
- Revitalizing internal staff gatherings at Streetworks, a street youth outreach and shelter program in New York City
- Reframing an important national conference on Food and Society to grow a more participatory gathering for the good food movement in the United States
- Reinventing a large association of financial planners

All of the teachers for this learning retreat have been involved in one or more of these initiatives among many others. And this is a small taste of the work being done around the world by practitioners and members of the Art of Hosting community of practice. We invite you to join us.

You can continue to deepen your learning and connect with other practitioners through the website at <http://www.artofhosting.org>. There you will find links to projects, tools, resources and spaces for ongoing conversation including websites and email lists.

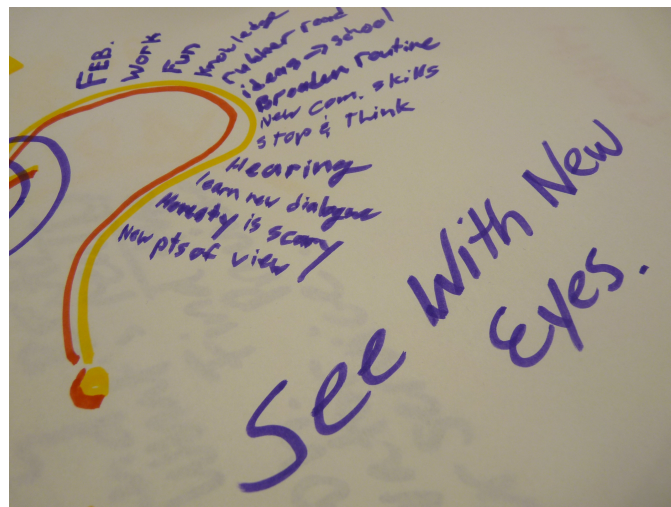
You are invited to join a web of practitioners connected across space and time in a high purpose of serving life, people, and the needs of our communities in the world now. We practice together and in our own lives to co-create and make good work in the wider world, wherever we are called by real need and from the heart. We are inspired by what happens when people meet with the purpose of learning and developing their own competencies together with others.

Please join us, share your stories and experiences and offer your questions and inquiries.



The Art of Calling and Inviting

Preparing yourself to host,
sensing a call,
working with chaos and order,
and creating a process of invitation through careful design.



Engaging Our Limiting Beliefs

Caitlin Frost

As human beings, facilitators, leaders, partners, and participants in work, community, relationship, change and life - we show up in the world, and experience the world through a filter made up of our personal and cultural beliefs, stories, assumptions and thoughts. Peter Block talks about it as our 'context' - "the set of beliefs, at times ones that we are unaware of, that dictate how we think, how we frame the world, what we pay attention to, and consequently how we behave."

Identifying and inquiring into our stressful and limiting beliefs is powerful as a practice of 'self hosting' - both to enable our own authentic participation and to deepen our ability to host others from a clear place.

Identifying and inquiring more deeply our limiting beliefs allows us to:

- hear and see other people more clearly;
- access our creativity, intelligence and wise action;
- work creatively and authentically with a wide range of people;
- create a shift in understanding our context that allows new ways of learning;
- build a future that is not based on the past;
- see more options;
- be fearless and available to the moment;
- access our energy;
- hold fearless space and possibility for groups and clients working through chaos, fear and complexity;
- experience peace;
- engage with our attachment to outcome.

How else could this freedom serve our work and our lives?

Limiting Beliefs and Stories:

Limiting stories are personal or communal versions of the past experienced as fact. They are stories about the conclusions we draw from events that happened to us which we use to define ourselves and others, and to predict our future. They are stories that induce fear, separation and blame. (Peter Block) They are often so much a part of our experience of life that we don't even know they are there. We experience them as 'reality'. When we are stuck - we tell stories of fear and fault as if we can keep ourselves safe by being afraid; as if by assigning blame we can somehow stop something from happening again. When we are angry and afraid, our availability to creative thought, possibility, wise action and human connection are noticeably limited. If we pay attention, we can often feel our minds and hearts closing when a limiting belief or thought arises.

Not all stories and beliefs are limiting. Many serve us. Peter Block says stories that are useful to us are the ones that are metaphors, signposts, parables and inspiration for the fullest expression of our humanity. They may be mythic stories or personal stories about our work or daily life. Stories that serve us are not experienced as frightening or stressful when they are held in a clear way - they inspire us, encourage and energize us, connect us with others, hold our minds and hearts open and help us find our voice. It is not the belief itself that limits us, but how we experience it. By



developing a deeper sense of how our beliefs and stories function, we are more able to identify our beliefs and to discern when they are limiting us.

The existence of limiting beliefs and thoughts is good news. It means that reality, as we experience it when we are stressed or angry or stuck, is more malleable than it often feels. It means that there is something we can work with that can change our experience of what is possible. It means that we don't need to wait for other people for things to change.

Identifying Limiting Beliefs and Stories:

*To create a new story,
first we need to come to terms with the current one.
This begins by naming it.*
Peter Block

Many of our limiting beliefs and stories are so much part of our experience that we do not see them as beliefs that are separate from reality or what else is possible. Many of these beliefs and stories have been with us for as long as we can remember; they are echoed through our workplace, our families and our culture. Our emotional responses as well as our friends and co-workers will often agree with us that they are true. Whether they are 'true' or not is not the most important factor in freeing ourselves and our minds from their limiting effect. What is most important is having an awareness that they exist; what they are; and a deeper understanding of how they function in our lives.

We also limit ourselves when we argue with reality. When something is happening and we tell the story that it shouldn't be happening we are stuck in a loop. "He should understand me." "They shouldn't disrupt the process." It is not that we condone any particular actions or conditions, it is just that war with reality generally leaves us limited in our ability to respond creatively or compassionately.

The first step in a healthy relationship with our limiting beliefs is identifying them. Simple and powerful questions can help us as individuals and groups to identify our beliefs and stories so that we can hold them with awareness and engage with them in a process of inquiry that will allow some shift to take place. Specific questions can be crafted to invite out beliefs and stories where there is a sense of stress, fear or blockage. On an individual basis it can also be as basic as noticing a feeling of closing down and asking oneself 'what am I thinking or believing' that triggers that reaction or emotion.

When identifying limiting beliefs with the intention of inquiry, it is not the concepts themselves that are necessary limiting, but our response to them. Limiting beliefs can sometimes sound benign or even kind ("people should treat each other with respect.") It is helpful to look for short, direct statements that sound like fact and come directly from our minds when we are feeling stuck, angry, afraid, sad or closed. It is not necessary to believe a thought all the time for it to limit us. We may be able to reason our way out of it in the moment, only to find it back again under duress. A process of deeper inquiry into the nature of each of our limiting beliefs changes our relationship to them and opens space for our goodness, clarity and wisdom to arise.

Questions (and open statements) can be crafted to focus on particular areas where a block is

experienced. The intention is to stimulate short clear belief statements - often a list will flow. Longer responses can be broken down into individual belief statements to work with.

Here are some examples:

- What is stopping me from having or inviting an important conversation in my work or life? What am I afraid will happen?
- What is stopping me from doing this work in my full integrity?
- What is stopping me from stepping into the next level of my leadership in my work or in my life?
- What am I unwilling to hear?
- This won't work because...

on attachment to outcome:

- Find the belief statement of what "needs to happen".
- Find the fear belief of "what will happen if the desired outcome does not occur."
- Identify an outcome that you didn't want and list statements of what that means (to you, to others, for what is possible.)

in my working relationships:

- who can't I work with and why?
- what advice do I have for 'them' (my clients, staff, boss, colleagues, leaders)
- What belief/thought is keeping me from connecting with ____ (someone specific) right now? (He/she should/shouldn't.... he/she is.... he/she always...)

What are some other questions that can uncover limiting beliefs in my work/life?

Fearlessness: Stepping Fully Into Our Lives, Ourselves, Our Work and Our Relationships.

*There is no greater illusion than fear.
No greater wrong than preparing to defend yourself.
No greater misfortune than having an enemy.
Whoever can see through all fear will always be safe.*
Tao te Ching

*This is not the time to live in fear
of who we are or how powerful we are.*
Tim Merry.

Fear is war embodied. Fearlessness is peace.

Fear is a very intense experience. It is also one of most powerful human emotions that can lead to shutting down our open minds - often with great speed and force. There is some biological explanation of this "fight or flight" response AND there is often great benefit in not reverting to this shut down of our creativity, connection, calm and broader intelligence. Cultivating a deeper understanding of our fearful thoughts and beliefs can allow us to stay in our clarity and power and to see options and consider ideas and actions that are not available to our closed and frightened minds. As fearless hosts and leaders, we can invite others into their own clarity and intelligence in times of chaos, discomfort and fear and hold open authentic space for wise action and peace.

A common underlying belief is often that our fear is keeping us safe, honest and motivated, so inquiry into a fearful belief can be a courageous act in itself. You are invited to test this belief about the usefulness of fear by looking deeply at how each fear belief really functions in your life, your work, and your relationships. In looking closer at our fearful thoughts and beliefs, it is helpful to remember that the process of inquiry is not asking us to let go of anything. It is not suggesting or condoning anything - it is simply an invitation to ourselves to take a closer look at what we hold in our minds and how that serves or doesn't serve. When we hold our beliefs in a tight grip it is very difficult to maintain an open mind, let alone an open heart. When we loosen our grip on our beliefs and come to know them, we are able to be in relationship to them without fear - what is needed to serve us peacefully remains, what hinders us loses its grip in the knowing.

Connecting with Others Authentically

*It's not our differences that divide us.
It's our judgements about each other that do.*
Margaret Wheatley

Defence is the first act of war.

Byron Katie

Working with our limiting beliefs enables us to host a level of consciousness in ourselves where we can connect with others in an authentic way. In order to be available to host and participate in authentic co-creation and collaboration, it is important that we have the ability to hold our minds and hearts open to the diversity of the world we will meet in this work. And of course to be able to hold our minds and hearts open to ourselves. Prejudice, blame and fear make it difficult to hear and see each other fully, let alone create a new future together.

- What do I believe about others that limits my ability to connect and work with them?
- What do I dislike or fear about people?
- He/she/they are....
- He/she/they should or shouldn't....
- He/she/they always...

*The Master doesn't see saints as saints or sinners as sinners;
they're just people who are suffering or not;
believing their thoughts or not.*
Byron Katie

The Work of Byron Katie

Caitlin Frost

*A thought is harmless unless we believe it.
It is not our thoughts but our attachment to our thoughts that causes suffering.*
Byron Katie

The Work of Byron Katie is a powerful and accessible tool for engaging and making peace with our limiting beliefs and stressful thoughts. Used as a practice it can increase our understanding of how our own mind works and enables a more resourceful and compassionate response to the beliefs and resulting actions of other people. It is very simple in its structure, yet deeply wise in where it invites us to travel. The process of exploring a belief with The Work changes our relationship to the belief and allows space and movement.

As the I-Know mind is educated it dissolves into the polarity of wisdom. What is left is absolutely sane, undivided and free. The bottom line is that when the mind is closed, the heart is closed. So if you want to open your heart - question your mind.
--Byron Katie

The Work provides the simple, wise and deep structure of 4 powerful questions and a turnaround that invite us each into our own clarity and wisdom, and allow us to understand our limiting beliefs and stressful thoughts and how they operate in our lives, in our work and in our relationships. Like many of the hosting tools in the Art of Hosting, The Work is very simple in its design, and holds great power in its practice.

Putting the Mind on Paper

The first step in The Work is to write down your judgments or stressful beliefs about any situation in your life or work - past, present or future. Any person or situation that angers, frightens, saddens you, or feels like it is stopping or blocking you. You are invited to give your judgement or fear a voice on paper as clearly as you hear it in your mind. Do not be wise, spiritual or understanding when doing this. It is not the wise thoughts and beliefs that are causing blocking and stress. Blame and judgement happens in our thinking and in this process we are able to come to peace with them by writing the thoughts and beliefs down and exploring them with an open mind. Write the thoughts down as they come, using short clear statements. "They will never listen to us", "He doesn't care about the people." "It is their fault." It is important to write the thoughts and beliefs down so that they stay still while we look closer. As discussed above, specific questions can be crafted to help uncover limiting beliefs and thoughts - both generally or in relations to a chosen situation, relationship or project. These statements can then be explored one at a time through the 4 questions.

The Four Questions

Choose one statement of belief that feels stressful or limiting. Using the four questions you are invited to investigate your statement. Using your clear statement, you are invited to answer each of the questions in order as deeply and honestly as you can. Take your time. The power of the Work is in your answers - you are looking for your own honest answers - waiting for your own answers to



arise - not simply the answers you have been taught or told, but what is true for you and in your own experience. If you find yourself justifying, defending, telling a new story or advising, move back to the question and ask again. If you are facilitating - please ask only the questions and hold space for your partner to do their own work. If their focus shifts, invite them back to the Work with the original statement and the question. It is a fundamental premise of this work that we can find our own wisdom and it is important not to give advice or chat.

You can answer these questions on your own in writing, or in person with a facilitator asking you the questions, all you need for this work is pen and paper and an open mind. You are invited to take your time finding your answers.

1. Is it true?

Answer simply yes or no. Be still and wait for the truth. If your answer is no, go to # 3.

2. Can you absolutely know that it is true?

An invitation to look deeper. What can I know with absolute surety - can I know the future? another person's mind? Answer simply yes or no. Either is fine.

3. How do you react, what happens, when you believe that thought?

What does it feel like? How do I treat people when I believe this thought? How do I live my life? What do I 'get' for holding this belief/story? What am I afraid would happen if I didn't believe it? Close your eyes and watch yourself in your life with this belief. Be specific.

4. Who would you be without that thought?

Who would you be in your life (in that situation; with that person) if you didn't hold that thought or belief? Close your eyes. What do you see? Take your time and watch.

Turnarounds:

After engaging with the 4 questions, you are invited to turn your original statement around as another way of exploring it and opening your mind to possibility. It is important to do the questions before the turnarounds. It is not about re-directing blame, it is an opportunity to compassionately look clearly. For each turnaround - can you find where it could be as true or truer than your original statement? Find 3 concrete examples of how it could be true.

Possible turnarounds (you will sense what works for your statement) include turning to the opposite. ie - "He doesn't know what he is doing" becomes "He does know what he is doing."; turn to yourself becomes "I don't know what I am doing." Take your time and be creative with how you hold the questions.

Take a few moments of quiet when you are done. Sometimes there is a powerful and immediate insight and shift, other times it is more subtle and the shift appears over time as you re-experience the belief in your life. The Work is also a practice - so the more you use it, the more profound the shifting and the deeper your understanding of how your own mind works.

(The Work is used internationally as a tool for increased clarity and is also being facilitated and taught in businesses, organizations, prisons, hospitals and schools around the world. For more information and resources about The Work go to: www.thework.com.)



"The are no new stressful thoughts"
Byron Katie

The more we work with limiting beliefs in their basic form, the more clear it becomes that the same beliefs and thoughts occur over and over again, around the world and through human history. Below is a list of a few of the many repeating thoughts and beliefs that arise.

- I need to know what to do.
- I need to keep my guard up.
- I am not smart enough.
- People can't be trusted.
- It is their fault.
- Something terrible is going to happen
- I need to be careful
- It isn't safe
- There is something wrong with...
- I need more....
- He/she should....
- He/she shouldn't.....
- There isn't enough....
- I can't because....
- I am afraid of...

List of limiting beliefs:

We invite you to keep a list of beliefs you identify and experience as limiting. This itself is a useful exercise - and you may also want to walk these thoughts through The Work to experience some shift in their limiting effect.

The Art of the Authentic Call

Phil Cass, CEO Columbus Medical Association

Starts with a disturbance deep inside that is noticed

At first its nature may not be clear but sometimes it is

Clarity often comes through courage to dialogue with mates

This disturbance feels like mine and ours

This disturbance feels like it is immediate and forever

To move on this disturbance seems like it could be good for me and for us

Is it courage or I can't help it that gives voice to this disturbance?



Discovering mates that will likely resonate with the disturbance

Evaluating the resonance to determine the level of energy present

Connecting with mates to discover the purpose of a call to action

Connecting with mates to discover a wise action that could be taken

Once mates are gathered the caller lets go to let come but not completely

Call and purpose are now held and interpreted by a team and also reside and is interpreted within each of us

The disturbance may be altered or the same but is always with the first caller

Through the gathering of mates a bold move is conceived, a strategy born

An authentic invitation is made that embodies the disturbance that connects with the heart that must be noticed by others who carry the disturbance deep inside

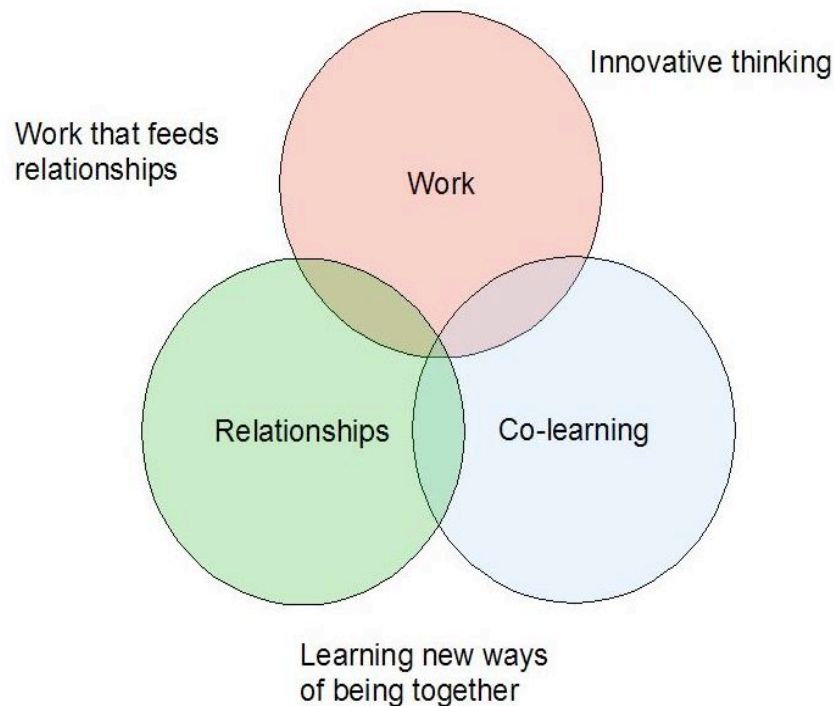
The strategy toward action begins usually with early influencers, creating the wave, creating the momentum of energy

A gathering happens, an action is taken, learning takes place-energy, purpose, connection and then next steps-together

Three Conditions for Deeper Conversation

Chris Corrigan

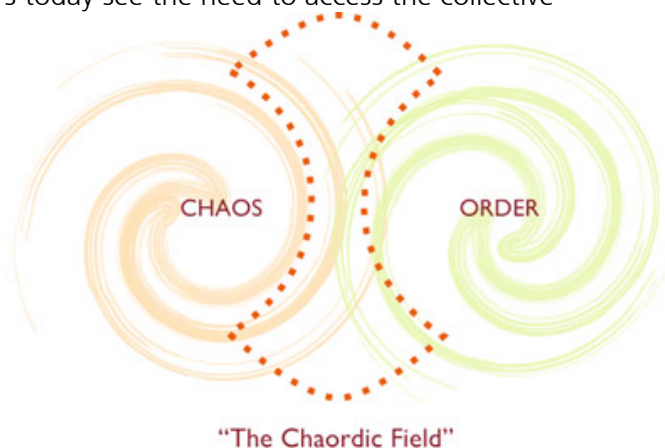
When we sense the need to call a deeper, more meaningful conversation we are looking for something that moves beyond simply a meeting to do work. The most meaningful and powerful conversations combine good work with deeper relationships and a crackling learning environment. When the need arises for these kinds of gatherings, pay attention to processes that support all three of these domains. There is an art to hosting all three at once, and the benefits from doing so well include innovative thinking, work that feeds relationships and learning new ways to be together. These are also conditions under which a deeper community of practice may emerge, giving long life to excellent results. When it's time to host powerful conversations, seek to balance these three.



The Challenge of Walking The Chaordic Path

There is a path to take between Chaos and Order that leads us to the new - to collective learning and real-time innovation. Instead of relying on controlling every detail in our organisations or communities from the top down, many leaders today see the need to access the collective intelligence and collective wisdom of everyone.

We are beginning to understand and treat organisations and communities more like living systems than static machines. After all, the chaordic path is the story of our natural world – form arises out of nonlinear, complex, diverse systems. New levels of order become possible out of chaos.



This “chaordic confidence” – the capacity we need to stay in the dance of order and chaos – supports a generative emergence that allows the new, collective intelligence and wise action to occur. In this space of emergence, we leave our collective encounters with something that not one of us individually brought into the room. This requires us to stay in a transformative shift, though we may want to veer toward either chaos or order.

And in fact, we will move between chaos and order – this is the generative dance, an oscillation often seen in the natural world. A balance between two seeming polarities, which instead complement each other.

As we tread the line between chaos and order, individually and collectively, we move through confusion and conflict toward clarity. We are all called to walk this path without judgment – some will feel more comfortable with chaos, others with order. Both are needed as, together, we walk the edge between these two toward something wholly new.

On the far side of chaos is chamos – despair. On the far side of order is control. When we move toward either of these extremes, the result is apathy or rebellion - the very opposite of chaordic confidence, where the new cannot be born.

So, the question becomes – How much order do we need? How much chaos would be helpful here?

There is a path toward common ground, co-creation, and wise and strategic action. There is a “sweet spot” of emergence with tangible results.

We call it the Chaordic journey....a path less travelled.

The Chaordic Stepping Stones

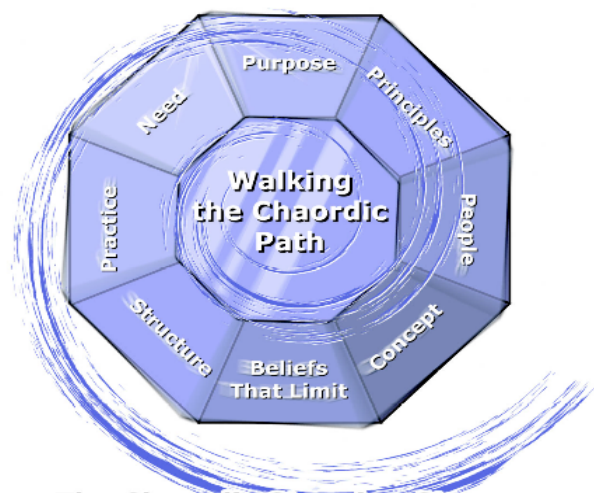
When there is a call, and we have understood the need to work in the chaordic space of generative emergence, it helps to have a tool to plan our work together. Over the years many of us have worked with clear strategic steps we take when walking the Chaordic path. We call these the chaordic stepping stones. These steps allow us to create conversational processes that are rooted in real need that are sustainable for the community they serve and the people working within them. These steps can be used both as a planning tool and to help understand what you are discovering about an organization, community or initiative. They are all interdependent, although in working with these as a planning tool, it is most common to begin with need.

Designing Meetings and Processes

In designing a meeting or a process, each of these stepping stones is activated by asking key questions. In beginning to design work together we can select from these questions (or create others) to help us explore each stone as we lay it in place.

Need

The need is the compelling reason for doing anything. Sensing the need is the first step to designing a meeting, organizational structure or change initiative that is relevant. The need is outside of our work: it is the thing that is served by the work you are doing.



The Chaordic Stepping Stones

- What time is it in the world now ?
- What time is it for our initiative now ?
- What are the challenges and opportunities we are facing ?
- What do I really need to be able to understand and work on in the world?
- What is the need that this project can uniquely meet?
- What does the world need this conference to be?

Purpose

From the need flows the purpose. Purpose statements are clear and compelling and the guide us in doing our best possible work.

- If this work should live up to its fullest potential, what do you dream (or vision) is possible?
- What is the purpose we can adopt that will best meet the need?
- What could this work do/create/inspire?
- What is the next level for the for our work? Where should we be heading?
- What is the simplest and most powerful question we could keep at the core of our work?

Principles

Principles of cooperation help us to know how we will work together. It is very important that these principles be simple, co-owned and well understood. These are not principles that are

platitudes or that lie on a page somewhere. They are crisp statements of how we agree to operate together so that over the long term we can sustain the relationships that make this work possible.

- What are the principles we want to enact at for our learning networks?
- What is it important to remember about how we want to work with the participants in our initiative?
- What do we think is most important to remember as we design to meet the need and purpose?
- What unique ways of doing work and being together can we bring to this work.
- If our team should live up to its fullest potential - what do you dream (or vision) possible for this team?

People

Once the need and the purpose are in the place and we have agreed on our principles of co-operation, we can begin to identify the people that are involved in our work. Mapping the network helps us to see who is in this work for us and who will have an interest in what we are doing.

- Who is in the room?
- Who is not in the room and how do we bring them in?
- How do we leverage relationships to propagate the ideas generated by our work together?
- Who will be interested in the results of our work?

Concept

As we move to a more concrete idea of what our structures are, we begin to explore the concepts that will be useful. This is a high level look at the shape of our endeavour. For example, if our need was to design a way to cross a body of water, we could choose a bridge, a causeway or a ferry. The concept is important, because it gives form to very different structures for doing our work. In our work together we might explore here the different kinds of structures including circles and networks and really understand what these are, how they operate, how they are embedded with various contexts and cultures and what implications each has for our work.

- What are the shapes that we might choose for our work?
- What is the deeper pattern of our work and what organizational forms are in alignment with that?
- How might we activate our principles to best do our work?

Limiting Beliefs

So much of what we do when we organize ourselves is based on unquestioned models of behaviour. These patterns can be helpful but they can also limit us in fulfilling our true potential. We cannot create innovation in the world using old models and approaches. It pays to examine ways in which we assume work gets done in order to discover the new ways that might serve work with new results. Engaging in this work together brings us into a co-creative working relationship, where we can help each other into new and powerful ways of working together, alleviating the fear and anxiety of the unknown.

- What makes us tremble, and what do we fear about new ways of working together?
- Who would we be without our stories of old ways of working?
- What will it take for us to fully enter into working in new and unfamiliar ways?
- What is our own learning edge in working together?

Structure

Once the concept has been chosen, it is time to create the structure that will channel our resources. It is in these conversations that we make decisions about the resources of the group: time, money, energy, commitment, and attention.

- Who are we becoming when we meet and work together this way?
- How do we support the aspirations of the group?
- What is the lightest structure that will serve our purpose and need?
- What role might the Core team play when the project is over?
- How do we wisely combine the various organizational concepts to support our work and sustain the results?

Practice

The ongoing practice within the structures we build is important. This is the world of to do lists, conference calls and email exchanges. The invitation here is to practice working with one another in alignment with the designs we have created.

- What do we need to do to sustain our work together?
- What is our own practice of working in networks?
- How do we leverage relationships and support the work that arises from them?
- How do we sustain and nourish our relationships and collective aspirations?
- What commitments are we willing to make to contribute to the success of our endeavour?

Harvest

There is no point in doing work in the world unless we plan to harvest the fruits of our labours. Harvesting includes making meaning of our work, telling the story and feeding forward our results so that they have the desired impacts in the world.

- What are the forms of harvest from our work that best serves the need?
- What intentional harvest will serve our purpose?
- What are the artefacts that will be the most powerful representations of what we have created?
- How will we carry the DNA of the our work forward?
- What are the feedback loops that we need to design to ensure that learning and change accelerates itself?
- How will we stay open to emergent learning?
- What are the questions we need to carry about what we are learning by meeting this way?

Chaordic Design of Organizations

Dee Hock

In Dee Hock's original conception of the chaordic design process he identified six dimensions, beginning with purpose and ending with practice. Each of the six dimensions can be thought of as a lens through which participants can examine the circumstances giving rise to the need for a new organisation or to re-conceive an existing one. This is one example of how you might use the chaordic stepping stones to design an organization.

Developing a self-organising, self-governing organisation worthy of the trust of all participants usually requires intensive effort. To maximise their chances of success, most groups take a year or more to go through the process. During that time, a representative group of individuals (sometimes called a drafting team) from all parts of the engaged organisation or community meet regularly and to work through the chaordic design process.

The steps involved in conceiving and creating a more chaordic organisation are:

Develop a Statement of Purpose

The first step is to define - with absolute clarity and deep conviction - the purpose of the community. An effective statement of purpose will be a clear, commonly understood statement of what identifies and binds the community together as worthy of pursuit. When properly done, it can usually be expressed in a single sentence. Participants will say about the purpose: "If we could achieve that, my life would have meaning."

Define a Set of Principles

Once the purpose has been clearly stated, the next step is to define - with the same clarity, conviction and common understanding - the principles by which those involved will be guided in pursuit of that purpose. Principles typically have high ethical and moral content, and developing them requires engaging the whole person, not just the intellect. The best principles will be descriptive, not prescriptive, and each principle will illuminate the others. Taken as a whole, together with the purpose, the principles constitute the body of belief that will bind the community together and against which all decisions and acts will be judged.

Identify all Participants

With clarity about purpose and principles, the next step is to identify all relevant and affected parties - the stakeholders whose needs, interests and perspectives must be considered in conceiving (or reconceiving) the organisation. As the drafting team members pursue their work, their perceptions of who constitutes a stakeholder will typically expand. They now have an opportunity to ensure that all concerned individuals and groups are considered when a new organisational concept is sought.

Create a New Organisational Concept

When all relevant and affected parties have been identified, drafting team members creatively



search for and develop a general concept for the organisation. In the light of purpose and principles, they seek innovative organisational structures that can be trusted to be just, equitable and effective with respect to all participants, in relation to all the practices in which they may engage. They often discover that no existing form of organisation can do so and that something new must be conceived.

Write a Constitution

Once the organisational concept is clear, the details of organisational structure and functioning are expressed in the form of a written constitution and by-laws. These documents will incorporate, with precision, the substance of the previous steps. They will embody purpose, principles and concept, specify rights, obligations and relationships of all participants, and establish the organisation as a legal entity under appropriate jurisdiction.

Foster Innovative Practices

With clarity of shared purpose and principles, the right participants, an effective concept and a clear constitution, practices will naturally evolve in highly focused and effective ways. They will harmoniously blend cooperation and competition within a transcendent organisation trusted by all. Purpose is then realised far beyond original expectations, in a self-organising, self-governing system capable of constant learning and evolution.

Drawing the Pieces Into a Whole

The process is iterative. Each step sheds new light on all of the preceding steps and highlights where modifications or refinements need to be made. In effect, the process continually folds back on itself, more fully clarifying the previous steps even as each new dimension is explored. Over time, the elements become deeply integrated. None is truly finished until all are finished.

Two difficulties are frequently encountered - moving onto the next stage too quickly and allowing the striving for perfection to bog down the process. The first difficulty is common when working on purpose and principles, where agreement on "platitudes" can often be reached even when underlying differences persist. In these situations, finding an easy answer that pleases everyone is not enough; digging deeper to find richer and more meaningful understanding and agreement is essential. This can be taken to an extreme, of course, which leads to the second risk. Perfection is not required and will never be attained. Getting a very good answer that is "good enough" to move on to the next step is the goal. Keep in mind that what is done at each stage will be subsequently refined.

The most difficult parts of the process are releasing preconceived notions about the nature and structure of organisations and understanding their origins in our own minds. We often catalyze this process by asking the question: "If anything imaginable were possible, if there were no constraints whatever, what would be the nature of an ideal institution to accomplish our purpose?"

There is no right or wrong way to undertake and proceed through the chaordic design process, but we typically observe the following pattern in our work with organisations:

- One or two sessions exploring the core chaordic concepts with a leadership or initiating group. We urge groups and organisations to take time to assess the relevance and "fit" of

chaordic concepts and processes for their circumstances. Having key participants consider and endorse a major change initiative is essential if the effort is to have a serious chance of success.

- One or two sessions identifying participants, developing resources and devising a strategy for working through the chaordic design process. One or more months of work are typically required to organise the resources and support that an organisational development effort will need. This includes the development of several dedicated teams with responsibility for project management and staffing, outreach and communications, and organisational concept and design.
- A series of in-depth meetings, each several days in length, to work through each of the six elements. Some elements, such as principles and organisational concept, often take more than a single meeting. It is not uncommon for this series of meetings to take at least a year, sometimes two, especially when dealing with large, complex organisations or industries.
- Ongoing analytic and educational support for participants in the process. Issues invariably arise that require more detailed research or attention by a special team. Research on industry-specific matters, or mapping potential participants and their current relationships to each other, are examples. Legal analysis is often required.
- Chartering and implementation. Our aim is to create a dynamic, evolving organisation. Yet implementation of the new concept can take several months. In the case of existing organisations seeking to transform themselves, a careful strategy for the transition from one structure to another must be created. When a new organisation is being formed, it may take some months for individuals and other institutions to elect to join and participate.

(Dee Hock, Birth of the Chaordic Age, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, San Francisco.

Read the Visa story under Resources)

Reflections on Invitation

Chris Corrigan

When we think of invitation, the first thing that usually comes to mind is simply a notice sent out by email or appearing on a bulletin board. Invitation as a THING,

Over the years I have come to realize that invitation is not a thing but a process, a lifestyle and a practice. When we host the call of inspiration, we do well to pay attention to how it generates the urge to invite others. Invitation is a process that brings us alive. Compared to compulsion, invitation results in people choosing to show up and being open, curious and enthusiastic. Compulsion results in closed, defensive, judgemental and apathetic participation.

In our work, developing invitations to gatherings is becoming more and more of an art. And the process starts well before the formal “invitation” is issued. As a design principle, it pays to remember that the meeting begins long before the invitation is issued.

The goal of invitation is to attract people fully to the event. So invitation begins very early on in the planning process and continues to build up to the event and beyond. Typically when I am working with a group, we follow something like this work plan:

- Work through the chaotic stepping stones and harvest the need, purpose and people. This becomes the basis for the invitation process.
- Create an invitation list of people who are needed for the meeting
- Begin contacting these people and hosting little conversations to find out what quality of invitation would attract them to this gathering.
- As the design progresses, issue small invitations to the growing list of invitees. Let them know when the dates are chosen, where the location will be, the clarity of the need and purpose as it arises.
- Try to send out more than one invitation. The more important and deep the gathering is, the more information I like to send out before hand. With some communities, setting up a web site, blog, forum, or wiki before hand can begin the conversations before the participants arrive. The more engaged you are with the participants before the meeting, the more engagement arises in the face to face space.
- Within the meeting itself, frame everything as an invitation. Using language that invites people to choose to participate so they participants are aware that the quality of the experience is up to them.
- Support follow up by inviting participants to connect to one another and continue to find each other. Keep websites in place, send out follow ups and invite connection until the event wanes and the project moves on.

It's a lot of work, but it is essential because the quality of any gathering depends largely on how the participants show up. Be creative, be diligent and make sure the invitation process works well.

The Arts of Hosting and Harvesting

The living systems view,
design tools,
processes for hosting,
understanding how conversations scale change,
and harvesting for wise action.



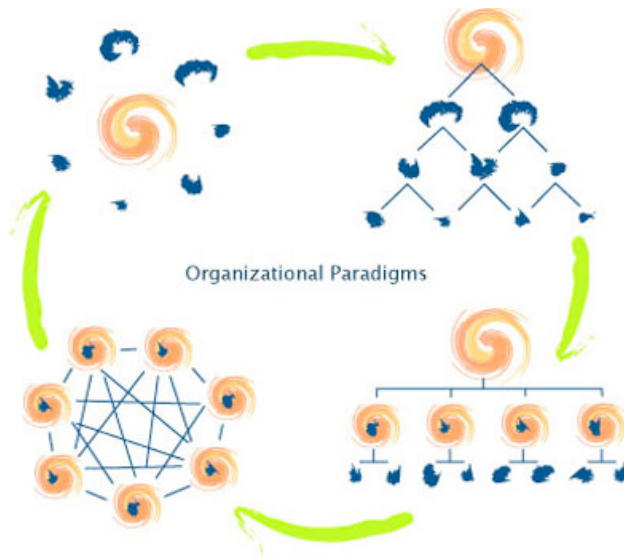
Living Systems: Organizing Life

The tools and processes covered in this section are chosen specifically to work with a living systems view of organization. This view sees human systems as natural and evolving, and runs somewhat contrary to the view that groups are machines. Working with living systems is differently from seeing organizations and groups as machines. Here are some ways in which living systems are unique.

- A living system only accepts its own solutions (we only support those things we are a part of creating)
- A living system only pays attention to that which is meaningful to it (here and now)
- In nature a living system participates in the development of its neighbour (an isolated system is doomed)
- Nature and all of nature, including ourselves is in constant change (without 'change management')
- Nature seeks diversity – new relations open up to new possibilities (not survival of the fittest)
- 'Tinkering' opens up to what is possible here and now – nature is not intent on finding perfect solutions
- A living system cannot be steered or controlled – they can only be teased, nudged, titillated
- A system changes (identity) when its perception of itself changes
- All the answers do not exist 'out there' – we must (sometimes) experiment to find out what works
- Who we are together is always different and more than who we are alone (possibility of emergence)
- We (human beings) are capable of self-organising – given the right conditions
- Self-organisation shifts to a higher order



Organizational Paradigms



Throughout human history the living system of human organization has created many ways of organizing itself to get work done. We notice that these ways of working together can be captured within four organizational paradigms. Each of these paradigms is alive and familiar to us, and each has its strengths and weaknesses. When we are designing process, projects and organizations, it is worth paying attention to the different roles of these paradigms so that they can be used wisely.

Circle – Our oldest organizational form. In a circle, people come together equally to provide a multiplicity of perspectives on something. Circles are powerful for reflection, for harnessing collective insight and for making

decisions. To work, people in circles need to have equal access to information, power and responsibility.

Hierarchy (the triangle) – Hierarchy is another ancient form. When things need to get done and someone has more responsibility than others, hierarchy is an efficient way to channel action. In a small and dynamic hierarchy, a leader is assisted by helpers. The helpers don't need to have the same information as the leader in order to do the work.

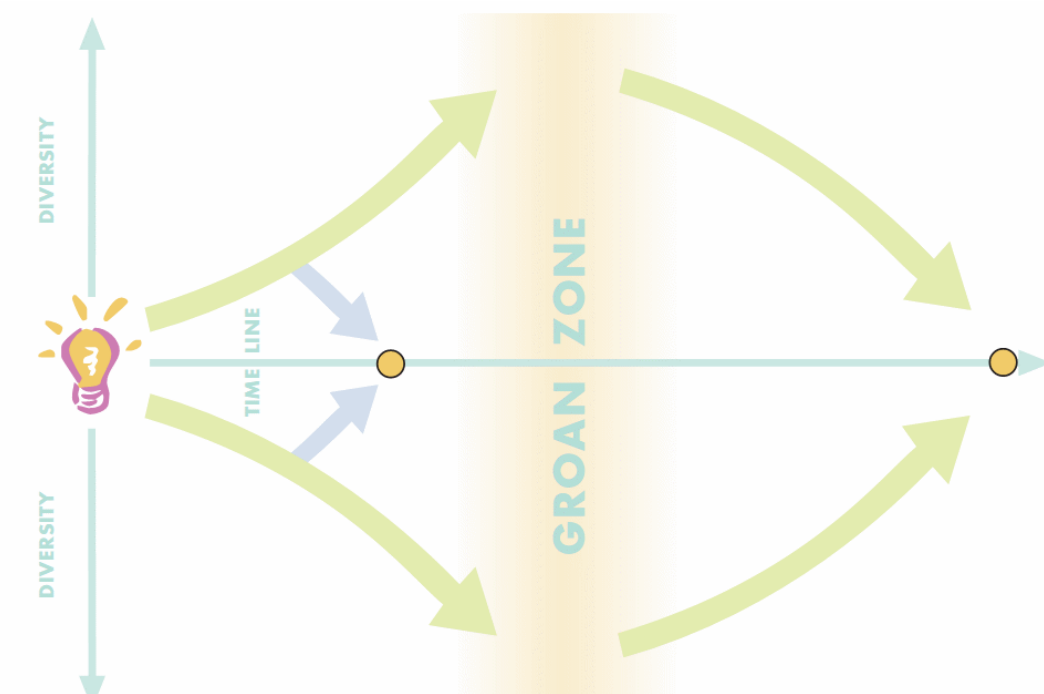
Bureaucracy – Despite its bad rap, the gift of the bureaucracy is that it can bring stability and efficient ways of distributing resources. Bureaucracies that work well act like irrigation systems, ensuring that all parts of an organization are “watered” and that resources don't flow too fast. To slow down the flow, bureaucracies retain accountabilities from the bottom to the top in exchange for a flow of resources from the top down. This form, used wisely, is a brilliant adaptation of the way energy flows in a natural system.

Network – Networks are formed by actors who actively choose to be in relationships with others. Actors are autonomous and only engage in relationships that mutually serve partners. Networks are incredibly fast ways to organize complexity. In nature the network is the prevalent form of sustainability. Increasingly, human networks are becoming the prevalent form of organizing on the planet led and abetted by the internet. Networks thrive when sharing and reciprocity is present. Huge amounts of work can get done very efficiently by networks, because actors can find exactly the partners they need for any given time.

The Fifth Paradigm – What could the next paradigm in human systems be? How will we integrate these four systems in a post-networked world? As we work with each of these four paradigms, we get hints about what it might be like to work at the next stage of human evolution.

Divergence and Convergence

This model is a basic pattern of learning. All groups who are trying to do something new go through the three zones of this model. In the divergence zone, people explore ideas, and become aware of diversity and become aware of possibilities. In this zone the group needs to be open and share ideas.



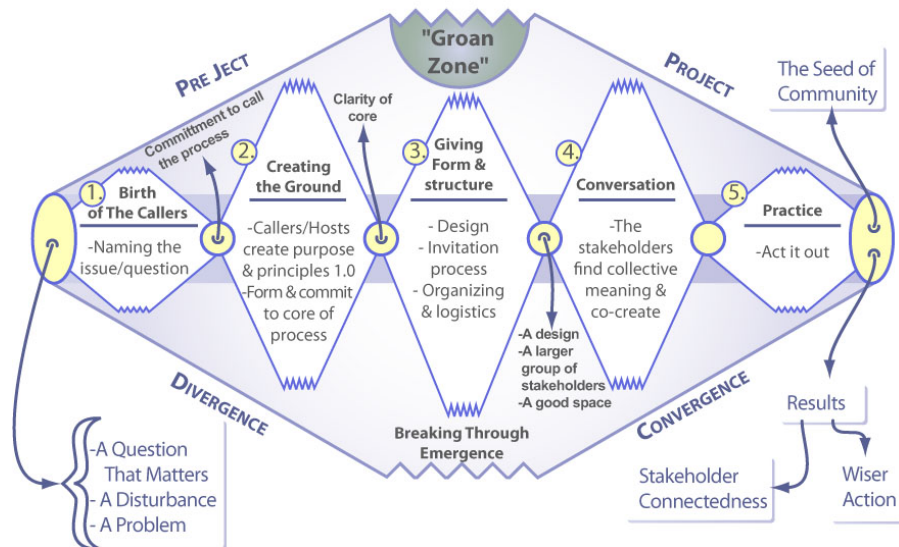
In the groan zone, new ideas emerge, ideas that seem not to be the property of anyone in particular but rather the groups as a whole. This zone is called the groan zone, because individuals and groups enter a period of struggle as they try to integrate what they are learning. In this zone groups need strong relationships in order rely on one another to get through the struggle. Good process matters here.

In the convergence zone, excitement and clarity builds and decisions become clear. Groups need processes that take them to meaning making, clarity and decision making for sustainable results.

This is a map of the journey learning groups take. When you use this map to design processes, you will find yourself becoming more aware of what is needed in any given time. When the group hits the groan zone you will know it and you can shift your focus to supporting the relationships. Sharing this map with a group before a powerful conversation helps participants to co-own the journey together, and not be surprised by the dynamics that arise.

The 5 'Breaths' of Design

5 Breaths of Design



When we notice the diamond, we can see that it forms the basis for entire projects. This map shows five diamonds linked together, each one leading to another. These five diamonds represent five major stages in project design. In practice it feels like these are breaths, each one leading to the next.

Birth of the callers – The first breath is the birth of the callers. When a person or group is inspired to create a project, the calling breath happens. The callers come together and decide whether or not to act on the sense of things. If there is a need to go ahead, the callers often form the core team for the project and hold the intention all the way through.

Creating the ground – If the project moves ahead, the next stage is to create the ground of principles, process and people. In this breath, the chaordic stepping stones can be used to help guide the planning for the rest of the process.

Giving form and structure – The third breath is the active design of the project, be it a meeting, an initiative or a whole new organization. In this breath the core team designs what is needed and begins the invitation process.

Conversation – It is finally in the fourth breath that stakeholders come together and begin to work. This breath might be one meeting or a years-long engagement. This is the meat of the work

Practice – As the project becomes a way of life, the core team might start to fall away and the legacy is released to the community. Founders leave, new leaders emerge and the original project's intent is met. From here, a whole new breath can begin, and the cycle continues.

Emergence: Taking Social Innovation to Scale

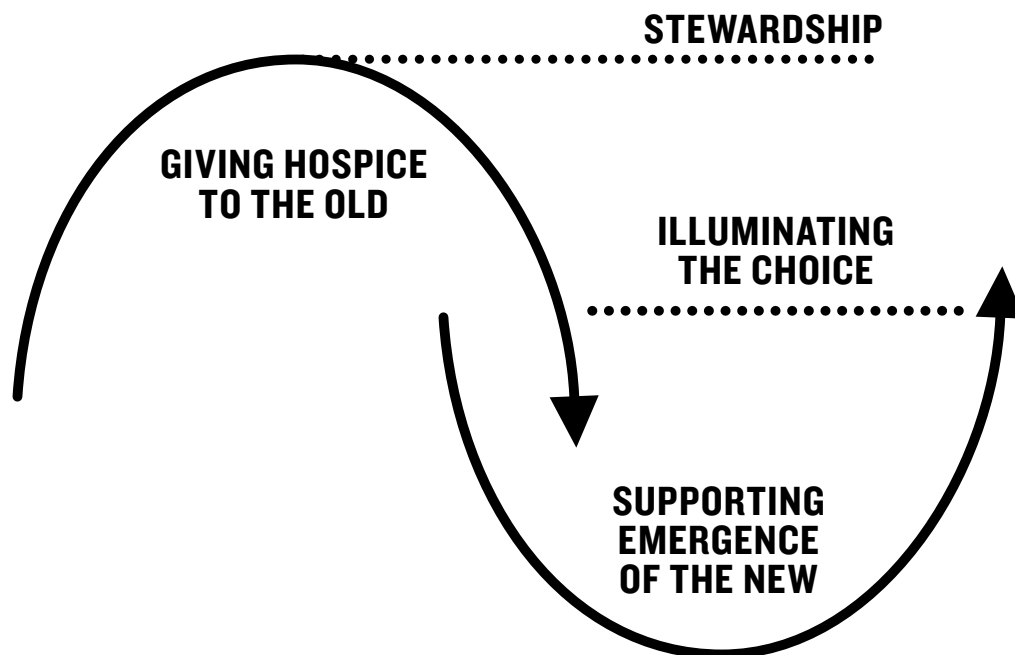
www.berkana.org

If we follow the trajectories of systems we see that they all have life cycles. They have a beginning, a middle, and an end. We can see many of our modern systems failing to sustain themselves in the complexity of our times.

Human systems, like systems in nature, don't tend to change through plans or dictates, but through emergence. If we want to support movements taking hold, the best thing we can do is foster critical connections between pioneers who are working on the ground to create fresh and relevant solutions.

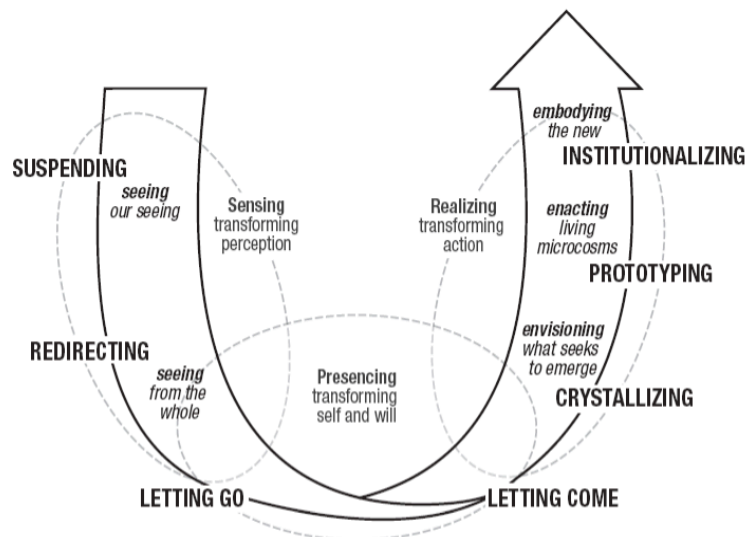
At The Berkana Institute, we have been noticing and practicing four levels that help support the creation of new systems while old systems die. Each of these steps show up on the new / bottom curve.

1. Naming the work of pioneers.
2. Connecting pioneers into networks of shared interest and purpose.
3. Nurturing networks into deliberate communities of practices.
4. Illuminating the stories of communities of practice to help them become more far-reaching systems of influence. From the former fringe into a new social norm.



“Presencing” is bringing into presence, and into the present, your highest potential and the future that is seeking to emerge. Your highest future possibility is related to your own highest intention... it’s being an instrument of life itself, to accomplish, in a sense, what life wishes for me to accomplish.

Presence: Human Purpose and the Field of the Future



Seven Capacities of the U Movement

The entire U movement arises from seven core capacities and the activities they enable. Each capacity is a gateway to the next activity – the capacity for suspending enables seeing our seeing, and the capacity for prototyping enables enacting living microcosms – but only as all seven capacities are developed is the the movement through the entire process possible.



© Peter Senge, C. Otto Scharmer, Joseph Jaworski, Betty Sue Flowers. *Presence: Human Purpose and the Field of the Future*. Cambridge, Mass.: SoL, Society for Organizational Learning, 2004. Page 225.

What Makes a Powerful Question?

Asking the right question is the most effective way of opening up a conversation and keeping it engaging. A high-quality question focuses on what is meaningful for the participants, triggers our curiosity and invites us to explore further. While answers tend to bring us to closure, questions open up to exploration.

When inviting people into a conversation that matters, it is helpful to have an overall question, one that itself embodies the purpose of the meeting. This is the key question or the “calling question” for the conversation or meeting. The calling question is best formulated together with key stakeholders.

The conversation may include other questions than the calling question. The questions you choose or that people discover during conversation are critical to its success. A hosted conversation could explore one question or a series of related questions.

Jean Monnet launched the process of European integration by asking the question: "How can we ensure that France and Germany never go to war again?" European history since the last war speaks of the power, momentum and direction that a well-focused question can create.

Some guidelines for choosing questions

- A well-crafted question attracts energy and focuses attention on what matters. Experienced hosts recommend asking open ended questions, not ones that have a simple yes/no answer.
- Good questions invite inquiry and curiosity. They do not need to promote action or problem solving immediately.
- You'll know a good question when it continues to surface good ideas and possibilities.
- Check possible questions with key people who will take part in a conversation. Does it hold their attention and energy?

High-quality questions

Hundreds of people around the world were asked what for them counted as a powerful question. The following common themes emerged. A powerful question focuses attention, intention and energy

- Is simple and clear
- Is thought-provoking
- Generates energy
- Focuses inquiry
- Challenges assumptions
- Opens new possibilities
- Evokes more questions

For more inspiration see “The Art of Powerful Questions”,

<http://www.theworldcafe.com/hosting.htm>,

Source material from www.theworldcafe.org



The Art of Harvesting

Chris Corrigan, Monica Nissen, Silas Lusias



How many good conversations and crashing insights are lost because they are never recorded, shared or acted on? What if we were planning not a meeting but a harvest? When we understand the process of meaningful conversations as a series of connected breaths, we see that each must somehow feed into the next – and the oxygenation of the greater system requires the fruits of the conversation to leech out into the wider world. When approaching any meeting in this spirit, we must become clear about why we are initiating the process. The Art of Hosting and the Art of

Harvesting dance together as two halves of the same thing.

Harvesting is more than just taking notes. To get a sense of the complexity of this art, let's begin by picturing a field in which someone has planted wheat. How can that field of wheat be harvested?

We first imagine the harvest from that field as a farmer using equipment to cut down the wheat, thresh it, and separate the seeds from the stalks. The farmer might store the grain, further refine it, sell it quickly or wait for the price to increase.

Now imagine a geologist, a biologist and a painter harvesting from the same field. The geologist picks through the rocks and soil gathering data about the land itself. The biologist might collect insects and worms, bits of plants and organic matter. The painter sees the patterns in the landscape and chooses a palette and a perspective for work of art.

They all harvest differently from the field. The results of their work go to different places and are put to different uses. But they all have a few things in common; they have a purpose for being in the field and a set of questions about that purpose, they have a pre-determined place to use the results of the harvest, and they have specific tools to use in doing their work.

Despite the field being the same, the tools and results are specific to the need, purpose and inquiry.

There are eight stages of harvesting, elucidated in the companion book to this one. Briefly they are:

Stage 1: Sensing the need

Sensing the need may at first be intuitive or very basic – like sensing hunger, but once the sensed need becomes conscious one can act on it.

We sense that we are hungry and from there we plant a garden, knowing that the work of planting, cultivating and harvesting lies before us but that the end result meets the need for sustenance.



The need is not complicated; it is real and clear and it speaks deeply and inspires invitation and action. Everything begins from this need, and the way we hold it and invite others into it informs the harvest that we take at the end of the day

Stage 2: Preparing the field

In some cases the caller makes the field ready by creating awareness around the need. Others with a similar need will recognise the call.

In preparing the field – sending out the call, giving the context, inviting etc.– we set the tone of the whole process. The seriousness and quality of the call will determine the quality of what we reap. The work of readying a field for planting can take a whole year during which we condition the soil, clear the rocks and prepare things. What we are doing here is actually harvesting a field so that the seeds can be planted.

In other words: start thinking about the harvest from the very beginning – not as an afterthought.

Stage 3: Planning the Harvest

Planning the harvest starts with and accompanies the design process. A clear purpose and some success criteria for the process of the harvest itself will add clarity and direction.

What would be useful and add value - and in which form would it serve best?



Translated into a simple check-list, it becomes:

- What intent are you holding?
- Who is going to benefit?
- How can you add most value to the work at hand – how will the harvest serve best?
- What form or what media will be most effective?
- Who should host or do the harvesting?
- What is the right timing?

Stage 4: Planting the seeds

The questions around which we structure the hosting become the seeds for harvesting. All gardeners and farmers know that planting seeds depends on the season and the conditions. You can't just plant whenever you want to. You plant once the conditions are right to maximise the yield.

In hosting practice, this means being sensitive to timing when asking questions.

In sowing the seeds that will drive the inquiry – identifying and asking the strategic and meaningful questions – you determine the output. So in planning the harvest, ask yourself, "What is it that this process needs to yield? What information, ideas, output or outcome will benefit us here and now, and what might take us to the next level of inquiry?"

The process itself is an on-going one. With each part of the process, you harvest something. Some

of it you need to use right away, to help lead you into the next process. Some of the harvest you will need later.

So part of planning the harvest is also knowing for whom, when and how you need to use it. Another part of the planning is asking yourself in which format the harvest will serve you best.

Stage 5: Tending the crop

Protect the integrity of the crop. Nurture it as it grows, weed it and thin it to keep the strong plants growing and get rid of all that will not nourish or serve. This involves a combination of feeding the field and letting it grow. But it also involves just sitting in the field. Holding space for what is emerging and enjoying it.

During the process, enjoy seeing your work unfold in all its complexity. The more you can welcome the growth you are witnessing, the higher the quality of the harvest. Now you are in the pulse of noticing both the quality of the field and the quality of the crops.

This is where we engage in conversation and exploration – where the richness of the harvest is born. The richer the conversation or exchange, the richer the harvest!

Stage 6: Picking the fruits

The simplest way to harvest is to record what is being said and done, the output of the conversations, etc. This creates a record or collective memory.

Recording can be done in words.

- your notes, which will be subjective
- or transcripts of output from conversations recorded on tapes, etc., which will be objective.

Recording can also be done with pictures / photographs / video / film.

- Pictures evoke and recall feelings, atmospheres, situations.
- Or you can video the conversation - record both verbally and visually

It is helpful to give some thought in the planning phase to how you want to harvest. What kind of records, templates etc. will help you gather the relevant information or knowledge?

Stage 7: Preparing and processing the fruits

Creating a memory is the first step. As we pick the fruits or seeds for processing, some will be used right away, some will be used for further processing and some will be used as seed for the next season.

The second step is making collective sense and meaning. This is where we add value and make the data useful. There are many ways of doing this. The general idea is to take the many bits of information and transform them into “holons” – wholes that are also parts of greater wholes.

Things that can help in this process:.

- Harvest in a systemic way. Ask collectively: What did you notice? What gave sense and meaning to you? Notice the patterns - they indicate what is emerging



- Use metaphors, mental models and stories to make complex issues simple
- Use drawings and graphics to make complex issues manageable and visible

Stage 8: Planning the next harvest - feeding forward

Most harvesting is done to bring closure to a process or bring us to the next level of understanding. More importantly, it helps us to know collectively, to see the same picture and share the same understanding together.

A few comments

The above reflections mainly concern collective harvesting.

Individual reflection and harvest will raise the level of the collective harvest.

During learning processes, individual harvesting can be done intentionally, by using a journal as a learning tool.

Web-based tools open up a whole world of possibilities that are not dealt with here.

Harvesting the “soft” is much more subtle and subjective than dealing with the “cognitive” or more objective, tangible parts. A qualitative inquiry into what we have noticed, what has shifted or changed in our relationships, in the culture or atmosphere may give us some information about the softer part of the harvest.

For the most effective harvest, these eight steps should be planned beforehand, as part of designing the whole process.

The Simplest Forms of Hosting

Chris Corrigan

All conversations are opportunities for us to connect a little deeper with one another. In the Art of Hosting practice we often talk of the four fold way and the seven little helpers: the simplest tools for convening any conversation.

By far most of the conversations we host in our lives at work or in the community are conversations with small groups. These simple processes are offered as quick reference for bringing depth and life to those conversations.



The Four Fold Way of Hosting

We have learned that quality conversations leading to close team work and wise action arise when there are four conditions present.

1. Be Present
2. Participate and practice conversations
3. Host
4. Co-create

We call these four conditions the Four Fold Way of Hosting, because you can practice these any time. They form the basis for all good hosting.

Be Present

...host yourself first - be willing to sit in the chaos - keep the space open - sit in the fire of the present...

Being present means showing up, undistracted, prepared, clear about the need and what your

personal contribution can be. It allows you to check in with yourself and develop the personal practice of curiosity about the outcomes of any gathering. Presence means making space to devote a dedicated time to working with others. If you are distracted, called out or otherwise located in many different places, you cannot be present in one. For meetings to have deep results, every person in the room should be fully present.

Collectively, it is good practice to become present together as a meeting begins. This might be as simple as taking a moment of silence to rest into the present. If an Elder is present, a prayer does this very nicely. Invite a collective slowing down so that all participants in a meeting can be present together.

**Questions to help you
become present**
What am I curious about?
Where am I feeling anxiety
coming into this meeting
and how can I let that go?
What clarity do I need?
What clarity do I have?

Participate and practice conversation

...be willing to listen fully, respectfully, without judgement and thinking you already know all the answer – practice conversation mindfully...

Conversation is an art, it is not just talk. It demands that we listen carefully to one another and that we offer what we can in the service of the whole. Curiosity and judgement cannot live together in the same space. If we are judging what we are hearing, we cannot be curious about the outcome, and if we have called a meeting because we are uncertain of the way forward, being open is a key skill and capacity. Only by practising skilful conversation can we find our best practice together.

If we practice conversation mindfully we might slow down meetings so that wisdom and clarity can work quickly. When we talk mindlessly, we don't allow space for the clarity to arise. The art of conversation is the art of slowing down to speed up.

Practicing conversation
Listen and help others to listen
Use silence
Contribute to the harvest
Put good questions in the
centre
Connect ideas

Host conversations

...be courageous, inviting and willing to initiate conversations that matter - find and host powerful questions with the stakeholders – and then make sure you harvest the answers, the patterns, insights learnings and wise actions...

Hosting conversations is both more and less than facilitating. It means taking responsibility for creating and holding the container in which a group of people can do their best work together. You can create this container using the seven helpers as starting points, and although you can also do this in the moment, the more preparation you have the better.

The bare minimum to do is to discern the need, prepare a question and know what you will do with the harvest. If there is no need to meet, don't meet. If there is a need get clear on the need and prepare a process that will meet that need by asking a powerful question. And always know how you will harvest and what will be done with that harvest, to ensure that results are sustainable and the effort was worth it.

Hosting conversations takes courage and it takes a bit of certainty and faith in your people. We sometimes give short shrift to conversational spaces because of the fear we experience in stepping up to host. It is, however, a gift to host a group and it is a gift to be hosted well. Work in meetings becomes that much better.

Hosting basics
Determine the need and the purpose
Create a powerful question
Host an appropriate process
Encourage contributions
Harvest

Co-create

...be willing to co create and co-host with others, blending your knowing, experience and practices with theirs, working partnership..

The fourth practice is about showing up in a conversation without being a spectator, and contributing to the collective effort to sustain results. The best conversations arise when we listen for what is in the middle, what is arising out of the centre of our collaboration. It is not about the balancing of individual agendas, it is about finding out what is new. And when that is discovered work unfolds beautifully when everyone is clear about what they can contribute to the work. This is how results become sustainable over time – they fall into the network of relationships that arise from a good conversation, from friends working together.

So contribute what you know to the mix so that patterns may become clear and the collaborative field can produce unexpected and surprising results.



Co-creation

Speak truth
Speak for what is in the middle
Offer what you can
Ask for what you need
Commit to what you can
Let go

The Seven Helpers

Over the years, we have identified seven little tools that are the source of good conversational design. At the bare minimum, if you use these tools, conversations will grow deeper and work will occur at a more meaningful level. These seven helpers bring form to fear and uncertainty and help us stay in the chaos of not knowing the answers. They help us to move through uncomfortable places together, like conflict, uncertainty, fear and the groan zone and to arrive at wise action.

- Be present
- Have a good question
- Use a talking piece
- Harvest
- Make a wise decision
- Act
- Stay together

1. Be Present

Inviting presence is a core practice of hosting, but it is also a key practice for laying the ground work for a good meeting. There are many ways of bringing a group to presence, including:

- Start with a moment of silence
- Check in with a personal question related to the theme of the meeting
- Pass a talking piece and provide space for each voice to be heard

Start well. Start slowly. Check everyone in.

2. Have a good question

A good question is aligned with the need and purpose of the meeting and invites us to go to another level. Good questions are put into the centre of a circle and the group speaks through them. Having a powerful question at the centre keeps the focus on the work and helps a groups stay away from unhelpful behaviours like personal attacks, politics and closed minds.

A good question has the following characteristics:



- Is simple and clear
- Is thought provoking
- Generates energy
- Focuses inquiry
- Challenges assumptions
- Opens new possibilities
- Evokes more questions

It is wise to design these questions beforehand and make them essential pieces of the invitation for others to join you. As you dive into these questions, harvest the new questions that are arising. They represent the path you need to take.

3. Use a talking piece

In its simplest form a talking piece is simply an object that passes from hand to hand. When one is holding the piece, one is invited to speak and everyone is invited to listen. Using a talking piece has the powerful effect of ensuring that every voice is heard and it sharpens both speech and listening. It slows down a conversation so that when things are moving too fast, or people begin speaking over one another and the listening stops, a talking piece restores calm and smoothness. Conducting the opening round of a conversation with a talking piece sets the tone for the meeting and helps people to remember the power of this simple tool.

Of course a talking piece is really a minimal form of structure. Every meeting should have some form of structure that helps to work with the chaos and order that is needed to co-discover new ideas. There are many forms and processes to choose from but it is important to align them with the nature of living systems if innovation and wisdom is to arise from chaos and uncertainty.

At more sophisticated levels, when you need to do more work, you can use more formal processes that work with these kinds of context. Each of these processes has a sweet spot, its own best use, that you can think about as you plan meetings. Blend as necessary.

| Process | Requirements | Best uses |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Appreciative Inquiry | At least 20 minutes per person for interviews, with follow up time to process together. Can be done anywhere. | Discovering what we have going for us and figuring out how to use those assets in other places. |
| Circle | A talking piece and a space free of tables that can hold the group in a circle. | For reflecting on a question together, when no one person knows the answer. The basis for all good conversations. |
| Open Space Technology | A room that can hold the whole group in a circle, a blank wall, at least an hour per session. You have to let go of outcomes for this to realize its full power. | For organizing work and getting people to take responsibility for what they love. Fastest way to get people working on what matters. |

| | | |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| World Café | Tables or work spaces, enough to hold three to four at each, with paper and markers in the middle. You need 15 to 20 minutes per round of conversation and at least two rounds to get the full power. People need to change tables each round so ideas can travel. | For figuring out what the whole knows. World Café surfaces the knowledge that is in the whole, even knowledge that any given individual doesn't know is shared. |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Refer to The Power of Appreciative Inquiry, Calling the Circle, Open Space Technology: A User's Guide, and The World Café Guide for details on running these processes.

4. Harvest

Never meet unless you plan to harvest your learnings. The basic rule of thumb here is to remember that you are not planning a meeting, you are instead planning a harvest. Know what is needed and plan the process accordingly. Harvests don't always have to be visible; sometimes you plan to meet just to create learning. But support that personal learning with good questions and practice personal harvesting.

To harvest well, be aware of four things:

- Create an artefact. Harvesting is about making knowledge visible. Make a mind map, draw pictures, take notes, but whatever you do create a record of your conversation.
- Have a feedback loop. Artefacts are useless if they sit on the shelf. Know how you will use your harvest before you begin your meeting. Is it going into the system? Will it create questions for a future meeting? Is it to be shared with people as news and learning? Figure it out and make plans to share the harvest.
- Be aware of both intentional and emergent harvest. Harvest answers to the specific questions you are asking, but also make sure you are paying attention to the cool stuff that is emerging in good conversations. There is real value in what's coming up that none could anticipate. Harvest it.
- The more a harvest is co-created, the more it is co-owned. Don't just appoint a secretary, note taker or a scribe. Invite people to co-create the harvest. Place paper in the middle of the table so that everyone can reach it. Hand out post it notes so people can capture ideas and add them to the whole. Use your creative spirit to find ways to have the group host their own harvest.

For more information and inspiration, consult The Art of Harvesting booklet available from Monica Nissen or Chris Corrigan.

5. Make a wise decision

If your meeting needs to come to a decision, make it a wise one. Wise decisions emerge from conversation, not voting. The simplest way to arrive at a wise decision to to use the three thumbs consensus process. It works like this:

First, clarify a proposal. A proposal is a suggestion for how something might be done. Have it worded and written and placed in the centre of the circle. Poll the group asking each person to offer their thumb in three positions. UP means "I'm good with it." SIDEWAYS means "I need more clarity before I give the thumbs up" DOWN means "this proposal violates my integrity...I

mean seriously.”

As each person indicates their level of support for the proposal, note the down and sideways thumbs. Go to the down thumbs first and ask: “what would it take for you to be able to support this proposal.” Collectively help the participant word another proposal, or a change to the current one. If the process is truly a consensus building one, people are allowed to vote thumbs down only if they are willing to participate in making a proposal that works. Hijacking a group gets rewarded with a vote. Majority rules.

Once you have dealt with the down thumbs, do the same with the sideways thumbs. Sideways doesn't mean “no” but rather “I need clarity.” Answer the questions or clarify the concerns.

If you have had a good conversation leading to the proposal, you should not be surprised by any down thumbs. If you are, reflect on that experience and think about what you could have done differently.

For more, refer to The Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision Making.

6. Act.

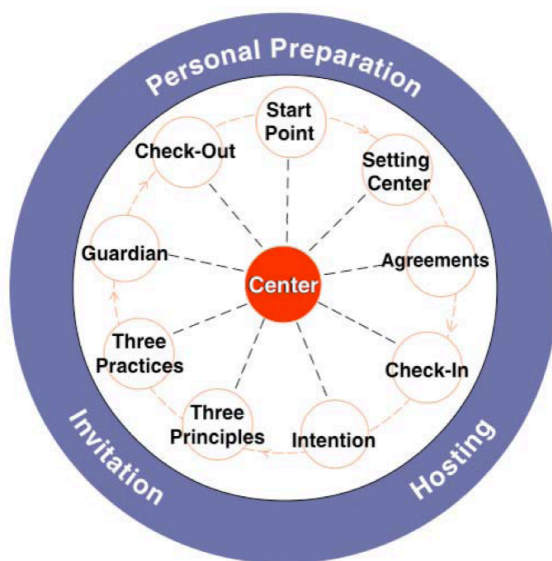
Once you have decided what to do, act. There isn't much more to say about that except that wise action is action that doesn't not over-extend or under-extend the resources of a group. Action arises from the personal choice to responsibility for what you love. Commit to the work and do it.

7. Stay together

Relationships create sustainability. If you stay together as friends, mates or family, you become accountable to one another and you can face challenges better. When you feel your relationship to your closest mates slipping, call it out and host a conversation about it. Trust is a group's most precious resource. Use it well.



The Components of Circle



Source:  Peerspirit
Building Communities of
Reflection, Adventure and Purpose
Founded by: Christina Baldwin and Ann Linnea
PO Box 350, Langley, WA 98260 USA • 360-333-3580 • www.peerspirit.com

Circle, or council, is one ancient form of meeting and gathering human beings into respectful conversations. It was a form to listen, to be wise, to unite communities, to make decisions. In some cultures, this tradition remains intact. In many others, it has been forgotten.

PeerSpirit Circle is also a modern methodology that calls on this tradition as both a specific form and a way of being that can be used by all in organizing community.

Whether with a partner, a small or mid-sized group, invoke the following:

Practices

- speak with intention – focus on what has relevance to the conversation in the moment
- listen with attention – respect the learning process and experience of all members of the group

- tend to the well-being of the group – remain

aware of what the group needs to hold its focus (pause, restating purpose, commitment to time)

Agreements

- listen without judgement
- offer what you can; ask for what you need
- silence is also part of the conversation
- respect confidences
- be present, be curious – there is something in the middle that is more than what individuals bring

Principles

- rely on human goodness
- depend on diversity
- people support what they create
- to be sustained by a community, it must be born from the community

Beginnings

- invoke presence (welcome, poem, mediation, silence)
- check-in (even a word or two from each in the group that supports their full attention)
- have a good question (speak the purpose with clarity and call people to it, even if you think everyone knows it already)

Middles

- use a listening tool (talking piece, listening piece)
- harvest (make visible what has occurred, what is alive, including the energy and relationships)
- reflect

Ends

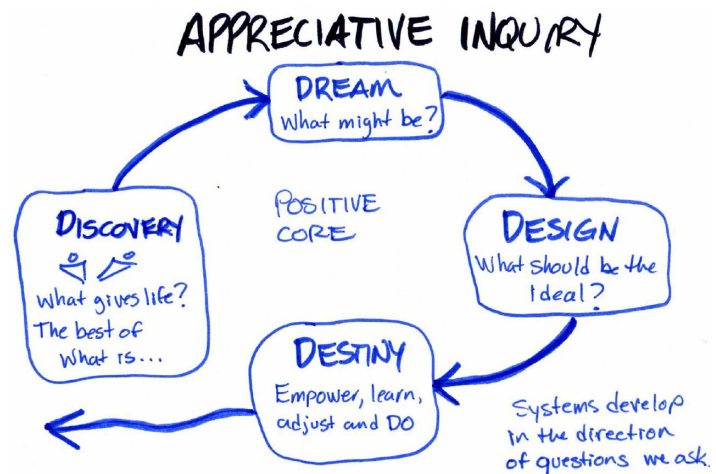
- check-out (even a word or two on what just happened, what is different now)
- seal the space (closing thought or observation)
- release people from this intense listening and learning back to a less formal social space

Appreciative Inquiry is a strategy for intentional change that identifies the best of 'what is' to pursue dreams and possibilities of 'what could be; a cooperative search for strengths, passions and life-giving forces that are found within every system that hold potential for inspired, positive change. (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987)

Assumptions

- In every community something works
- What we focus on becomes our reality
- Reality is created in the moment – there is more than one reality
- The act of asking questions influences the community in some way
- People have more confidence and comfort to journey to the future when they carry forward parts of the past
- If we carry forward parts of the past, they should be what is best
- It is important to value differences
- The language we use creates our reality

Source: Cooperrider et.al



No problem is solved with the same thinking that created it
- Albert Einstein

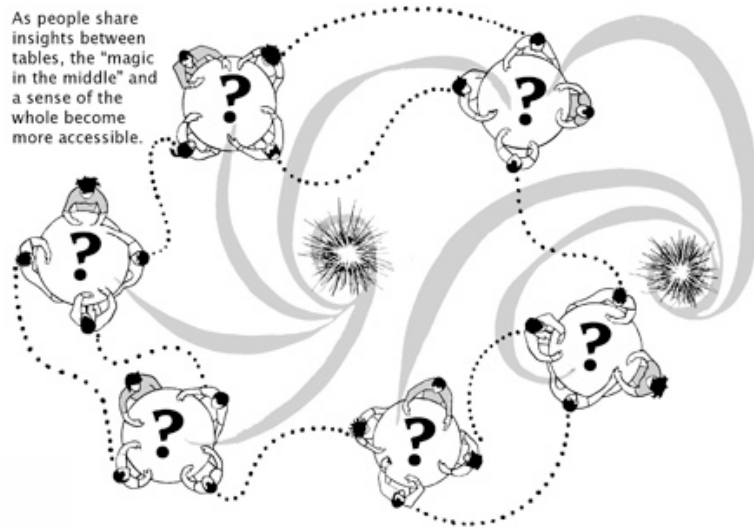
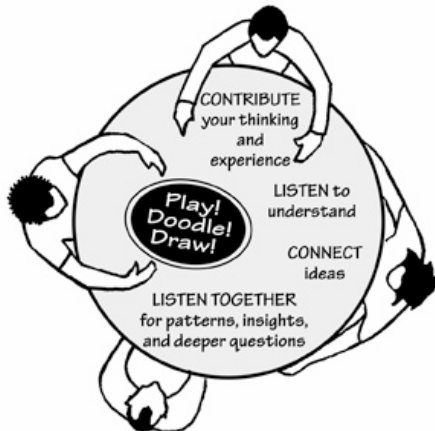
The World Café is a method for creating a living network of collaborative dialogue around questions that matter in real life situations. It is a provocative metaphor...as we create our lives, our organisations, and our communities, we are, in effect, moving among 'table conversations' at the World Café.

Operating Principles:

- Create hospitable space
- Explore questions that matter
- Encourage each person's contribution
- Connect diverse people and ideas
- Listen together for patterns, insights and deeper questions
- Make collective knowledge visible

CAFÉ ETIQUETTE

FOCUS
on what matters!



Assumptions:

- The knowledge and wisdom we need is present and accessible.
- Collective insight evolves from: honouring unique contributions; connecting ideas; listening into the middle; noticing deeper themes and questions.
- The intelligence emerges as the system connects to itself in diverse and creative ways.

How can we enhance our capacity to talk and think more deeply together about the critical issues facing our communities, our organisations, our nations and our planet?

How can we access the mutual intelligence and wisdom we need to create innovative paths forward?

Juanita Brown & David Isaacs

Open Space Technology

The goal of an Open Space Technology meeting is to create time and space for people to engage deeply and creatively around issues of concern to them. The agenda is set by people with the power and desire to see it through, and typically, Open Space meetings result in transformative experiences for the individuals and groups involved. It is a simple and powerful way to catalyze effective working conversations and truly inviting organizations – to thrive in times of swirling change. It has been described as the most effective process for organizations and communities to identify critical issues, voice to their passions and concerns, learn from each other, and, when appropriate, take collective responsibility for finding solutions.

Open Space Technology is useful in almost any context including strategic direction setting, envisioning the future, conflict resolution, morale building, consultation with stakeholders, community planning, collaboration and deep learning about issues and perspectives.

Open Space Technology is an excellent meeting format for any situation in which there is:

- A real issue of concern
- Diversity of players
- Complexity of elements
- Presence of passion (including conflict)
- A need for a quick decision

Open Space operates under four principles and one law. The four principles are:

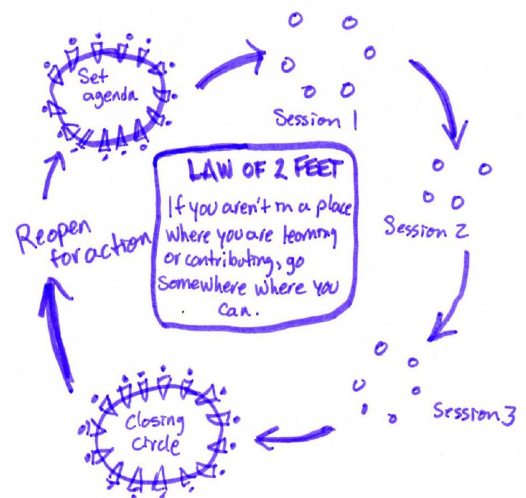
- Whoever comes are the right people
- Whatever happens is the only thing that could have happened.
- When it starts is the right time
- When it's over it's over

The Law of Two Feet: If you find yourself in a situation where you are not contributing or learning, move somewhere where you can.

The four principles and the law work to create a powerful event motivated by the passion and bounded by the responsibility of the participants.

OPEN SPACE TECHNOLOGY

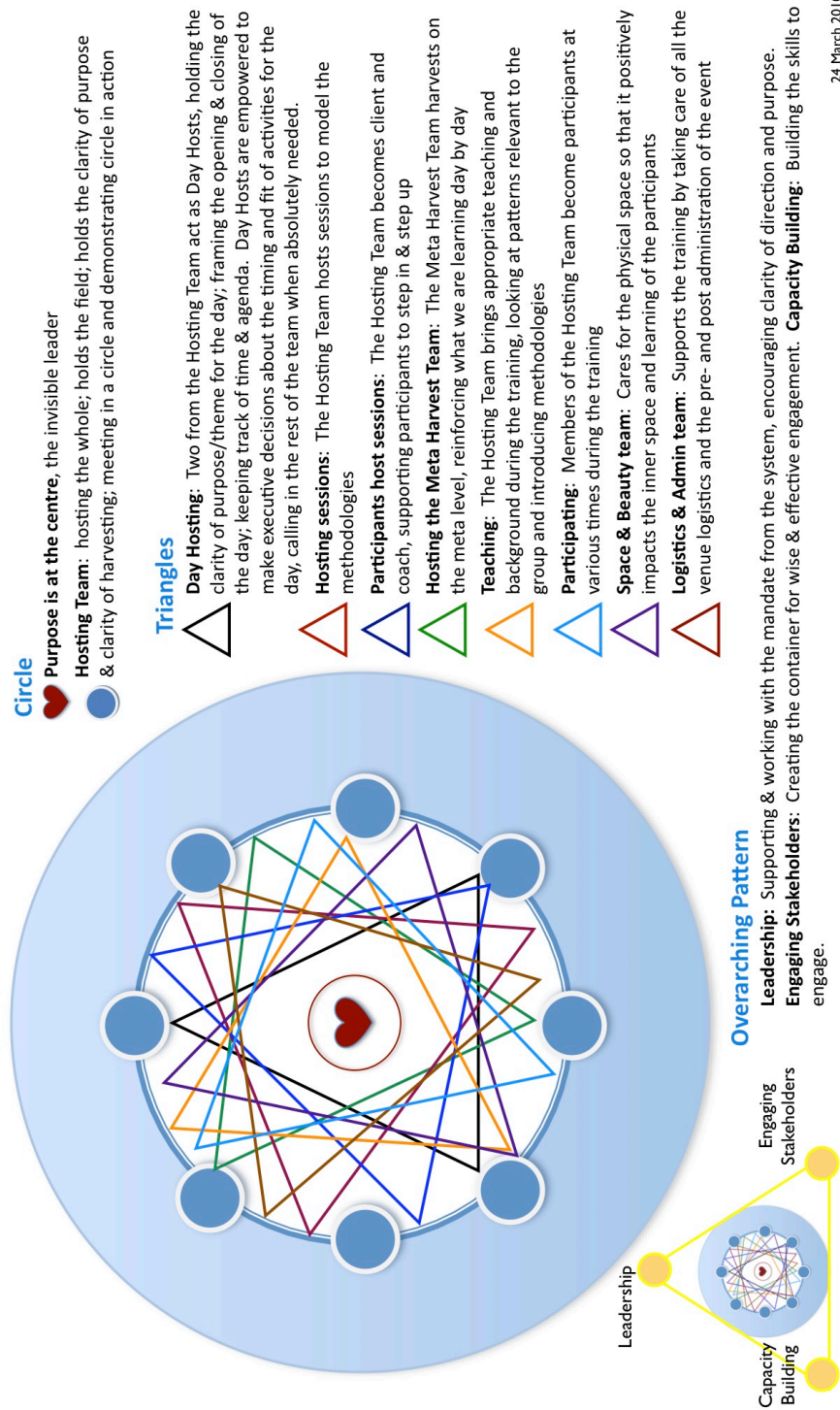
Whoever comes are the right people.
Whatever happens is the only thing that could have
When it starts is the right time.
When it's over, it's over.



Source: Owen

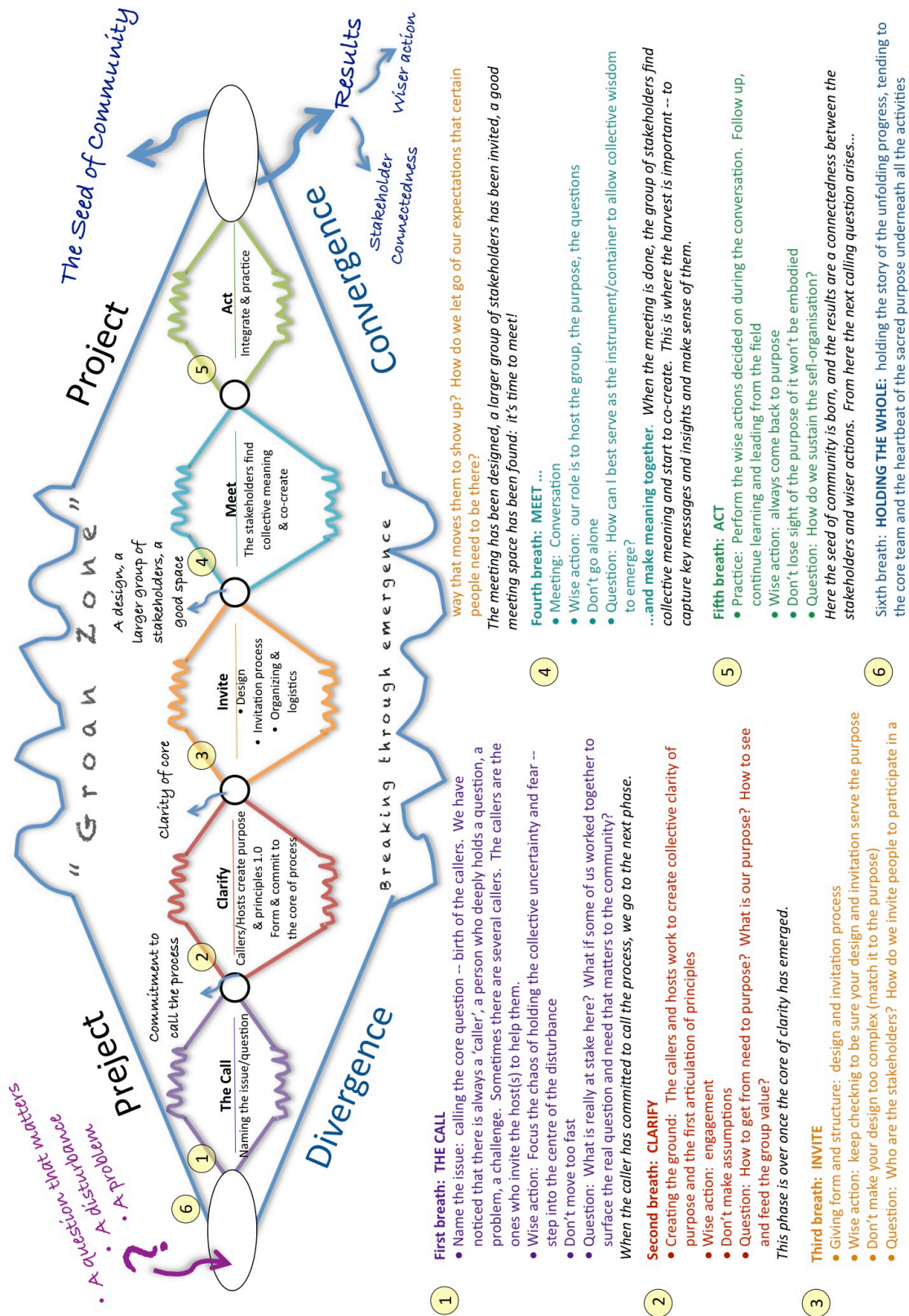
Patterns behind the Art of Hosting & Harvesting practice

While appearing simple on the surface, an Art of Hosting training carries many levels of deep patterns operating simultaneously. This diagram harvests some of the complexity of layers at work. Within this diagram, the *circle* holds the flow of communication, reflection and stewardship, while the *triangles* hold the pattern of leadership and action. One purpose of AoH practice is to heal fragmentation and create the container for skillful, heartfelt, wise working with what is and what is needed now.

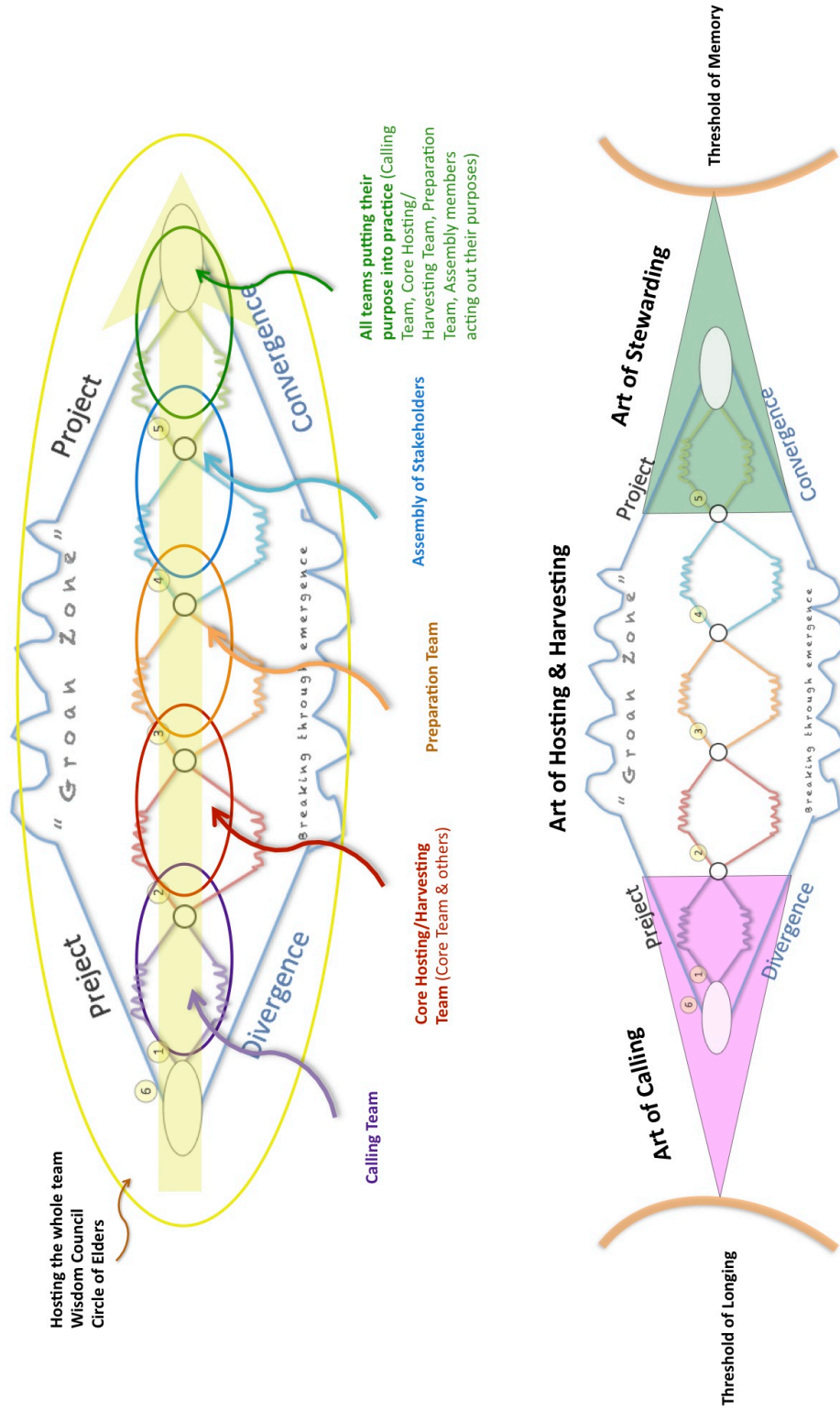


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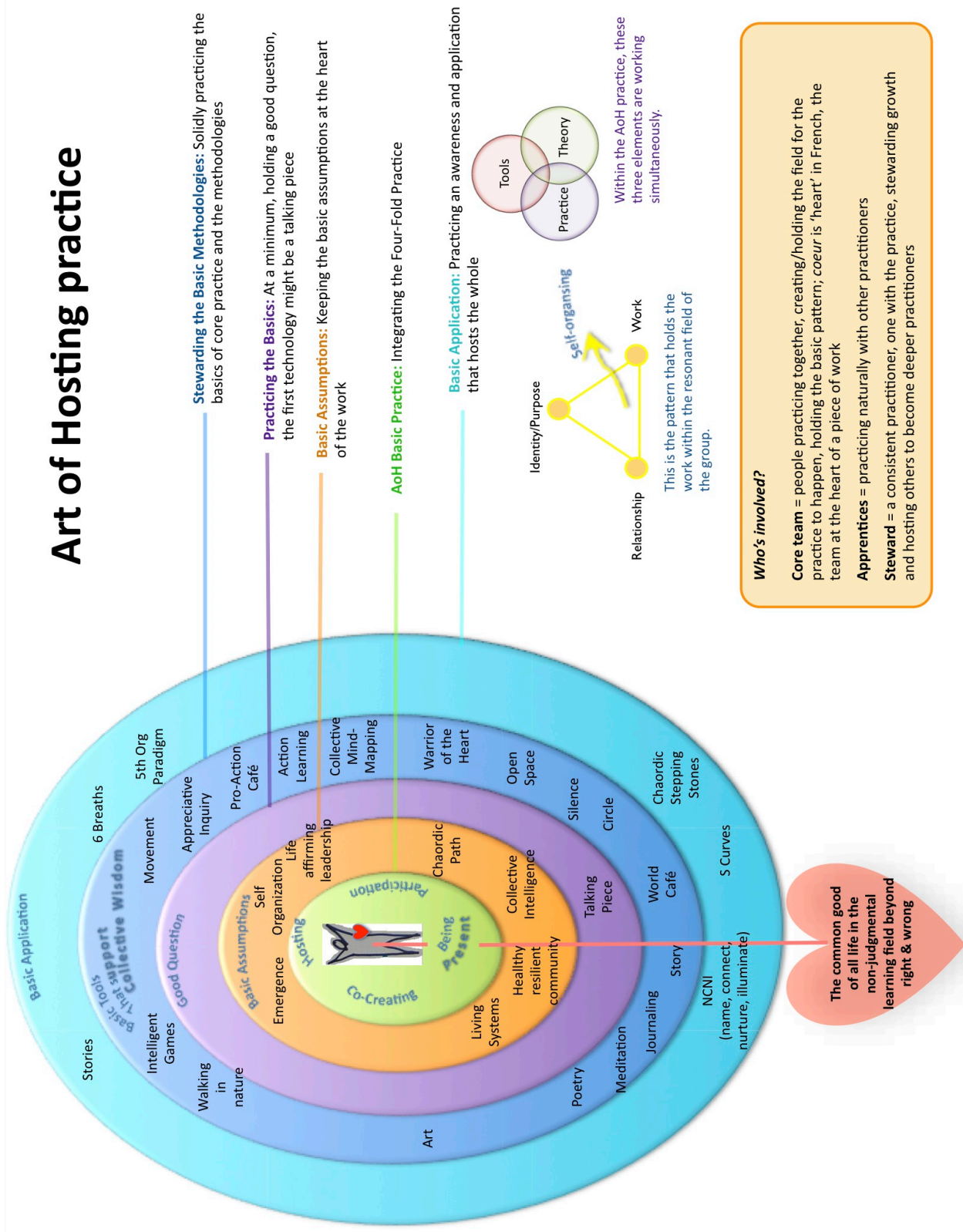
The 6 Breaths of Process Architecture



People & Teams within the Process Architecture



Art of Hosting practice



Pro Action Cafe

Resource:

<http://sites.google.com/a/pro-action.eu/pro-action-cafe/how-to-become-a-host/hosting-kit>

You have an idea that you want to realize, ***you seek for the lever to get started?***
You enjoy exploring your idea - project – vision - life questions ***with other likeminded people?***

You enjoy receiving fresh insights that could help you to get you kick - ***started in implementing your project?***

You are looking for inspiration to start a project – a business – a big plan?
You enjoy listening to other people's projects and to share your ***story, knowledge, experiences, insights, opinions?***

You enjoy leading meaningful and engaging conversations around various topics?
You are invited to bring your project - ideas - questions - knowledge - experience- or whatever you feel inspired by - to:

The Pro Action Café

- a space for creative and inspirational conversation -

The original concept of Pro Action Café is a blend from 'World Café' and 'Open Space' technologies. It is scientifically well described as a conversational process based on a set of integrated design principles that reveal a deeper living network pattern through which we co-evolve our collective future.

As a conversational process, the Pro Action Café is an innovative yet simple methodology for hosting conversations about questions and projects that matter to the people that attend. These conversations link and build on each other as people move between groups, cross-pollinate ideas, and discover new insights into the questions or issues that are most important in their life, work, or community. As a process, the Café can evoke and make visible the collective intelligence of any group, thus increasing people's capacity for effective action in pursuit of common aims. This means that during this event we participate in different topics of conversation.

Pro Action Café is also a growing global community of people, groups, organizations and networks.

Pro Action Café can be used for open invitation to broad number of people and/or as a methodology for specific group/organization/community to engage in creative and inspirational conversation.

Basic checklist for a Pro Action Café (open invitation)

- set the date
- choose a timeframe according to your city's habits
- find your special place, according to the date and time
- create a web page for your café
- set a Doodle page for attendance
- design a poster (if the case)
- locate other off/online place you can promote your café (Xing, LinkedIn, Meetup, Facebook, etc.)
- set up a mailing list that you will grow with each cafe

About 10% of the invited people show up. From the Doodle list take the number minus 10%.

For a first time, rework the invitation, explain more the process.

Logistics:

- flipchart paper
- markers, thick or intermediate, so you can draw with them
- talking piece (to mark who's speaking)
- decorations on the tables (candles, etc. for cosy atmosphere – but make sure they do not interfere with the drawing, keep in mind the ergonomic of the space)
- nametags

The venue:

- space for 40-50 people but not to look empty with 10
- it has to be flexible, so you can make a big circle with the chairs or have the tables arranged individually
- central location, well-known, easy to reach
- you can have a close space at a café with a lump sum for consummation
- or traiteur to deliver something, tapas style

Brief description of the evening

- Arriving time with open reception, warm-up, getting to know the others informally.
- Check-in – big circle, people to consider in silence a decision for the evening – share it and have others work on it or just move around.
- People with an issue stand up and we do that until tables are full (1 host per table + 3).
- 3 rounds – a consulting process moving the problem:
 - What is the quest behind the question?
 - What is missing? A discovery question once the quest has been redefined, what makes the picture more complete.
 - What did I learn? What next steps will I take?
 - Think about actions (Pro *Action* café, from questions to actions)
- Feedback in circle. At least the hosts of each table share what happened. Anyone can share.
- Another drink, sharing. End of the café.

Example for the Pro Action Café Invitation

We sense a growing desire to discover a new and alternative approach to finding breakthroughs and co-create the world we want to live in. By accepting this invitation you bring your trust and talents to an emergent way of supporting other peoples projects or be supported by them.

Do you enjoy:

- to **explore** your questions about life, visions, ideas or projects you wish to start
- to **discover** something new while meeting new people
- to **engage** and relate with peers, to share knowledge and experiences
- to **develop** new meaning for your and our selves.
- to **co-create** your projects, actions, adventures, dreams, journeys.

If you feel called to participate, you are invited.

We will facilitate your project inquiries as a World Café. This allows intense, personal conversations with many people at once, and cross-fertilises between the various projects, plans and discoveries.

If you have received this invitation, you may invite your friends or colleagues that you personally know and would like to join us !

Plan for surprise and join with like-minded, creative, responsible people!

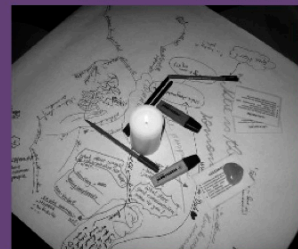
The great thing about emergence is that you never know where you will end up, but you can be sure that it is meaningful, real and populated with people who care as much as you do.

Program:

- 18:00 a snack is served
- 18:45 Welcome and start World Café
- 21.30 Harvesting result and outcomes
- 22:00 Closing

We are looking forward to meeting you!

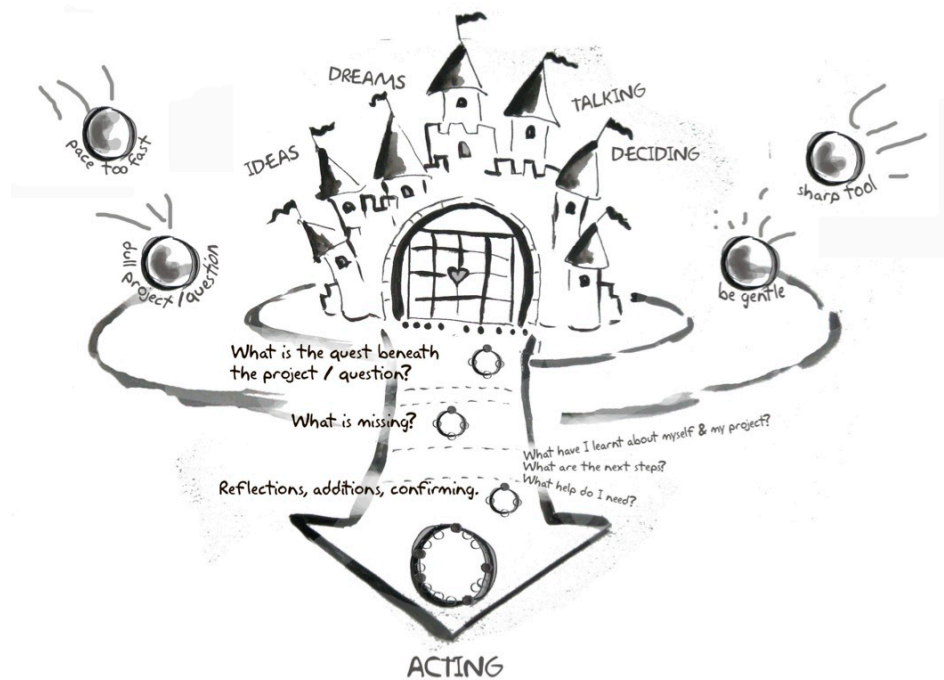
The Pro Action Team



A **fine tuning** of the rhythm of the pro action cafe process

- 3 rounds – a consulting process moving the problem:
 - What is the quest behind the question?
 - What is missing? A discovery question once the quest has been redefined, what makes the picture more complete.
 - What did I learn? What next steps will I take? And What help do I need?
- Have a longer break of 20 to 30 minutes in which the question / action owners first reflect on these 3 question and harvest on the first 2 rounds alone or with a colleague
- Then a last round where 3 new participants visit the tables to hear the learning, steps and help needed – and then offer any last fin tunings and help they may offer...
- Think about actions (Pro *Action* café, from questions to actions)
- Feedback in circle. At least the hosts of each table share what happened. Anyone can share.
- Another drink, sharing. End of the café.

Illustration by Sonja Niederhumer (MSLS)



Art of Hosting – A Glimpse of the Whole

Tenneson Woolf

Recently I was with my daughter at her piano lesson. Zoe, 13, has been taking piano for about six years. She brings tears of joy to me as I watch her in love with her music. Her teacher, Chad, is gifted. His love of piano is clear. His artistry is enriching. Each time I have taken Zoe to her piano lesson, I have learned something important about artistry in my work as I have listened.

One day it was about wholeness. Chad was encouraging Zoe to think of the music as one whole, as one movement, rather than the practice chunks she was separating it into. Not doubt there were helpful practice chunks, but what I saw was Chad trying to help Zoe evolve beyond the mechanics she knew into an artistry of deeper feeling for the whole of the music and its resonance.

From this, I could begin to feel a language to describe different sections and characteristics of an Art of Hosting training and other group process artistry that I love. I began to see more of how each part of trainings that I and my colleagues offer are best experienced as a whole. To show up for the first, or even a middle part is to experience something good, but it misses the exponential magic of an integrated whole.

The following are sections of a four-day training that I and my colleagues have often offered, viewed as a whole. I've seen them named different things. The intent is what matters more to me and how each, when integrated, creates magic, both in expanded and shared vision, and in simple, clear practical applications.

1. Arrival. Coming Present. Feeling Shared Purpose.

The intention of this first time, often in an evening, is to help people arrive. Show up. Begin to see each other. Begin to see more of themselves. To open participants to being in the event context, in the learning space, and in the community for the next period of time. To begin to feel, beyond words, a sense of shared purpose. Some of this is letting go of what participants bring to the room. For many, we carry pretty big to-do lists wherever we go. We are committed to speed and efficiency. The intent in this first period is to find another way into the accomplishment that we want. It has the feel of slowing down, so that we can speed up. It is about moving deeper so that from that depth, we might work faster and in more sustainable ways. It usually involves a welcome by the sponsor. It usually involves overall sharing of context – the process we will be in over the next days. It usually involves a question, “Why did you choose to come here?” I’ve seen it work very well with a circle. I’ve seen it work very well with a world café. I’ve seen people at the end of this first evening delighted and surprised by how close they feel to other participants in such a short period of time and by how clear the purpose is.

2. Deepening In. Dreaming. Identifying Questions.

The intention of this second time, often a full day, is to deepen in. To begin to note the many layers of assumptions, questions, and beliefs that are part of the work we do. It is increasingly rare for any of us, individuals or teams, to take time to imagine what our work could also be. And yet it is increasingly common for us to need better ways to do our work. Many of us are accountable in our



doing within very demanding deadlines. Many are without time to pause and look more broadly at the purpose and the practicalities of our work and how we must innovate our working together. Or what new insights we have learned through our experience. Or what conditions have changed in the world that require us to adapt some of our previous plans. I have seen this work very well, again in circle and café, and also in appreciative inquiry. I have seen it work well in open space, particularly when the invitation is to stay conceptual rather than tactical. It is a time to ask questions like, “What is going on in the world that makes this work important?” Or, what are the core questions that if given attention would further strengthen our ability to do the work that we know matters and that we care about? Or what are the images of the future that we can see that we want to begin building in the present? I’ve seen people in a mix of places by the end of this day. Some are full – without any plenary speakers, there is a lot of information that has been shared and created. Some are tired – listening in conversation is hard work. Some are elated – they feel the quality of learning, work, and relationships that is beginning to spark new images of possibility. And some are frustrated – to let go of a personal viewpoint amidst a sea of other viewpoints can be a real challenge to individual or shared identity.

3. Listening. Letting Come. Doing the Work.

The intention of this third time, often another full day, is to roll up our sleeves and get to work. It is the kind of work that many crave, and that some arrive ready to do on the first evening. However, doing the work on this third day is very different than if done on the first night. Work on this day comes from a greater sense of community, and thus sustainability. It comes from a greater sense of colleagues who have come to see each other at more rich and more whole levels. Work on this day comes from the process of seeing our own opinions and beliefs change as we have been actively learning with others. It comes from a sense of shared story, of enriched sense of purpose. It comes from a place of shared commitment rather than obligation. I have seen this work very well in open space formats. People name the topics that they most care about. Others self-select into joining them, and they get to work. I have seen teams uniquely united on this day. The response I often hear from participants is surprise at how quickly things moved and how detailed and practical they were. Whereas the previous day felt more conceptual, this day is more tactical and leaves people feeling a great sense of tangible outcome.

4. Taking it Out of the Room. Action at Home.

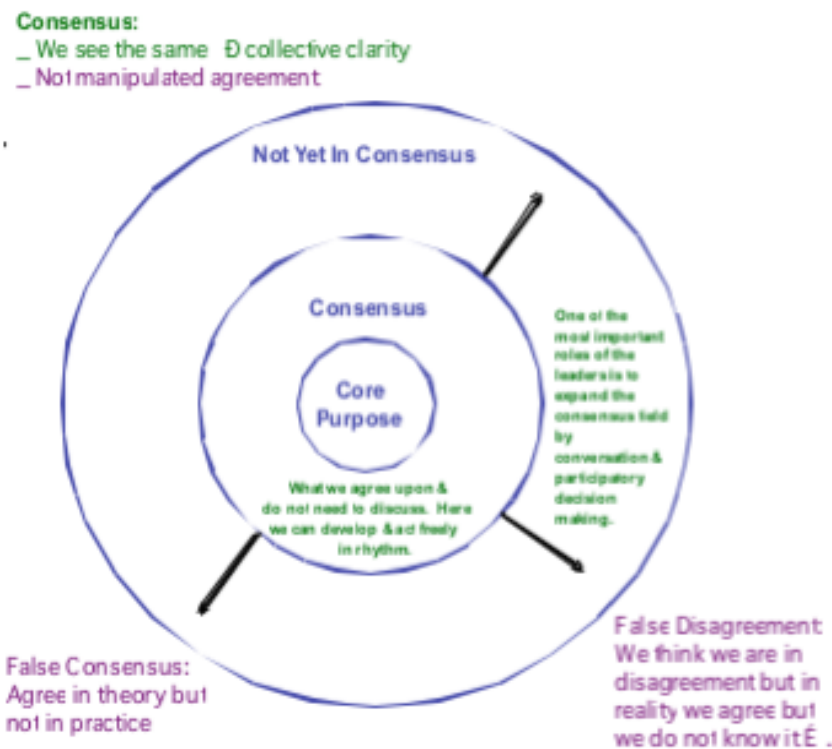
The intention of this last time, often a half or two thirds of a day, is to further solidify what participants take with them to apply in their local settings. For some it is asking a few more questions. For some it is setting a clear intention. For some it is connecting with a few more people. For some it is listening to one more teaching or model. I have seen this work well with knowledge cafes, circles, and action open spaces. It is a time to help people clarify their next first steps, whether in content, process, relationships, or strengthening fields. It is also about taking the surprise, the reawakened memory or strengthened sense of community and applying it. Practicing it. Doing the work in our local places of work and community. It is about a commitment to action, wise action that is simple, clear, and sustainable. And it is a time to close well, often with simple ritual, to seal the learning space that we have had together. I have seen many people share heartfelt expressions of love and appreciation here. It is what happens when we realign with our deepest sense of purpose.

Hosting conversations that matter is an art. It is a group process artistry. I find the principles in the sections above apply as well to four day trainings as they do to four hour meetings, or even 60 minute meetings, whether in person or by phone conference. Arrival flows into deepening, deepening into working, working into practicing and action. And it begins again. My experience with them is one of music. Of an art that I love. Of a wholeness that brings delight and capacity to the people we work with and the work that we all care about and that is so needed in these times.

Consensus Decision-Making

Consensus can be a very powerful model of participatory decision-making when it is considered to be a “win-win” process and held as integral to the purpose of the group. Although it is sometimes abandoned as being overly complex and time consuming, consensus decision-making in itself opens the process to careful consideration, listening, and negotiation. In this context, decisions must be fully understood and agreed to by all members of the group, and the group holds the process of making a decision which is in the best interests of everyone.

Consensus should not be seen as giving power to a small group to veto a decision. Opposing a suggestion or decision also means being willing to take responsibility for moving the process forward.



What Happens When You Don't Agree on a Decision-Making Process?

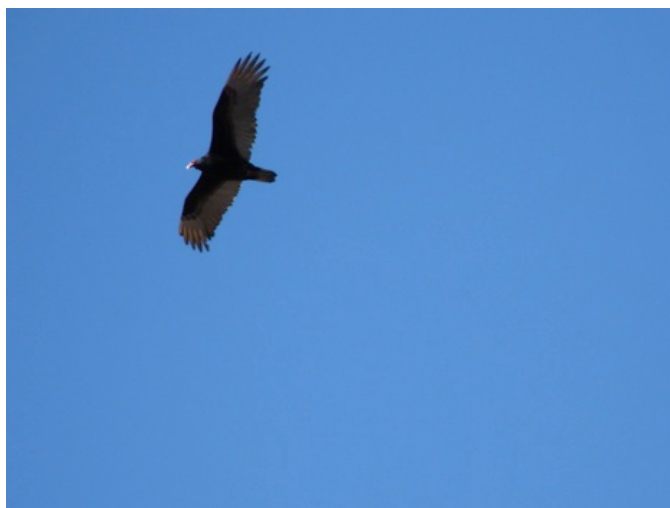
Sometimes a group will move forward on their path and begin making decisions before agreeing on how such decisions will be made. This may work – or appear to work – at the outset of a process, but some difficulties can occur.



Sam Kaner, Facilitators Guide to Participatory Decision-Making

Inspiration for Stewarding Beauty

Poetry,
resources
and material
to propel you on the path



The Power of Questions

"You can eat an apple," I said and gave him the green fruit.

It was as if he had seen an apple for the first time. First he just held it there and smelled it, but then he took a little bite.

"Mmmm," he said and took a bigger bite.

"Did it taste good?" I asked.

He bowed deeply.

I wanted to know how an apple tastes the very first time you taste it, so I asked again,

"How did it taste?"

He bowed and bowed.

"Why do you bow?" I asked.

Mika bowed again. It made me feel so confused, that I hurried to ask the question again.

"Why do you bow?"

Now it was him who became confused. I think he did not know if he should bow again or just answer. "Where I come from we always bow, when someone asks an interesting question," he explained, "and the deeper the question, the deeper we bow."

That was the strangest thing I had heard in a long time. I could not understand that a question was something to bow for. "What do you do when you greet each other?"

"We always try to find something wise to ask?" he said.

"Why?"

First he bowed quickly, because I had asked another question and then he said, "We try to ask a wise question to get the other person to bow".

I was so impressed by the answer that I bowed as deeply as I could.

When I looked up Mika had put his finger in his mouth. After a long time he took it out.

"Why did you bow?" he asked and looked insulted.

"Because you answered my question so wisely," I said.

Now he said very loudly and clearly something that has followed me in my life ever since.

"An answer is nothing to bow for. Even if an answer can sound ever so right, still you should not bow to it."

I nodded briefly. But I regretted it at once, because now Mika may think that I bowed to the answer he had just given.

"The one who bows shows respect", Mika continued, "You should never show respect for an answer."

"Why not?"

"An answer is always the part of the road that is behind you. Only questions point to the future."

Those words were so wise, I thought, that I had to press my hands against my chin not to bow again...- Jostein Gaarder, 1996 in Norway

Lessons in Community Change

Howard Mason, Metro United Way, Louisville, USA

- Change always starts within us—in our hearts—then in our organizations and communities.
- Vision powers and unites everything. We must be able to vision from a quiet place.
- It takes people with a passionate commitment to a vision to ignite progress. But it does not take a lot of them in the beginning.
- If we want new results, we have to do new things.
- Acting on the vision begins with a “What if we...?” question. Discovering one’s personal role in the vision begins with a “What if I...?” question.
- People support what they create. Local ownership and a meaningful role in decision making are necessary for energy, creativity and commitment.
- When partnerships are united by common vision and values, the whole becomes greater than the sum of the parts. The effort will look and act more like a social movement than a chain of command.
- When committed people self-organize to solve common problems, new solutions emerge. But we cannot control or predict what those solutions will be or when they will happen. Prepare to be surprised.
- Small actions produce enormous results. The most important, global, systematic actions and changes are also the most personal, local and human in scale.
- Results can come surprisingly quickly once a tipping point is reached.

The VISA Story

Visa is often cited as an early prototype of chaordic organization. Despite Dee Hock's caution that the design is "at best a third right", the story is both inspiring and instructive. What follows is an abbreviated rendition. For complete history, please read *Birth of the Chaordic Age*, by Dee Hock.

A Troubled Industry

In 1958, Bank of America issued sixty thousand credit cards to the residents of Fresno, California. After years of losses, the program became profitable and the bank blanketed the state with cards. In 1966, several California banks countered by launching Mastercharge. In turn, Bank of America began franchising BankAmericard.

Other large banks launched proprietary cards and offered franchises. Action and reaction exploded. Banks dropped tens of millions of unsolicited cards on an unsuspecting public with little regard for qualifications. Within two years, the infant industry was in chaos. Issuing banks were thought to be losing hundreds of millions of dollars, politicians were alarmed, the public was exasperated and the media was criticizing everyone involved.

An Intractable Problem - And Incredible Opportunity

In 1968, as a vice president of a small bank in Seattle franchised to offer BankAmericard, Dee Hock became involved in the formation of a complex of licensee committees to look into the situation. The problems were far worse than imagined - far beyond any possibility of correction by the existing system.

It was necessary to reconceive, in the most fundamental sense, the concepts of bank, money and credit card, and to understand how those elements might evolve in a micro-electronic environment.

Three bank managers joined Hock to begin the process of re-conceptualization. There followed days and nights of intense discussion. They could agree on nothing and were most conflicted by two questions: What is it that we want to accomplish? How will we organize it? Their deliberations led nowhere. The group was ready to throw in the towel when one of them said, "I'm beginning to think I don't know what an organization is." Blank looks all around. They then began to explore what they considered to be the nature of organization. As the discussions continued, several conclusions emerged.

Money had become nothing but alphanumeric data recorded on valueless paper and metal. It would become data in the form of arranged electrons and photons that would move around the world at the speed of light, at minuscule cost, by infinitely diverse paths, throughout the entire electromagnetic spectrum. The concept of "credit card" was inadequate. Credit cards had to be reconceived as a device for the exchange of monetary value in the form of arranged electronic particles. Demand for that exchange would be lifelong and global, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, wherever the customer happened to be. Perceptions swiftly changed.

Embedded in what had seemed a hopeless problem was an incredible opportunity. Any organization that could globally guarantee and clear monetary information in the form of arranged electronic particles in every monetary value in the world would have the market -- every exchange of monetary value in the world -- that staggered the imagination. But a major problem remained.

No bank could do it. No stock corporation could do it. No nation-state could do it. In fact, no existing form of organization could do it. It would require a transcendental organization linking together in wholly new ways an unimaginable complex of diverse financial institutions, individual



customers, merchants, communication companies, suppliers and government entities. It was beyond the power of reason or the reach of the imagination to design such an organization or to anticipate the problems and opportunities it would face.

Yet, Hock refused to give up. He noted that evolution routinely created much more complex organizational patterns - rain forests, marine systems, body, brain, immune system - with seeming ease. The group simply hadn't "peeled back the onion" far enough.

A Powerful Purpose and Set of Principles

With that perspective in mind, they decided to reverse the normal process of immediately asking what the practices of the organization would be. Instead, they began to ask themselves what would be the purpose and principles - its institutional genetic code - which would allow a new kind of institution to emerge and, in effect, to create and develop itself.

They focused on a single question:

If anything imaginable were possible, if there were no constraints whatever, what would be the nature of an ideal organization based on biological organizing principles to create the world's premier system for the exchange of monetary value?

Slowly, a dozen or so principles emerged. For example:

- Power and function must be distributive to the maximum degree. No function should be performed by any part of the whole that could reasonably be done by any more peripheral part, and no power vested in any part that might reasonably be exercised by any lesser part.
- It must be self-organizing. All participants must have the right to organize for self-governance at any time, for any reason, at any scale, with irrevocable rights of participation in governance at any greater scale.
- Governance must be distributive. No individual, institution, or combination of either or both, particularly management, should be able to dominate deliberations or control decisions at any scale.
- It must seamlessly blend both cooperation and competition. All parts must be free to compete in unique, independent ways, yet be linked so as to sense the demands of other parts, yield self-interest and cooperate when necessary to the inseparable good of the whole.
- It must be infinitely malleable, yet extremely durable. It should be capable of constant, self-generated, modification of form or function, without sacrificing its essential purpose, nature or embodied principle, thus releasing human ingenuity and spirit.
- It must be cooperatively and equitably owned. All relevant and affected parties must be eligible to participate in functions, governance and ownership.

After drafting the principles, none of the four believed such an organization could possibly be brought into being. A concentrated, two-year effort involving people throughout the industry and at all levels within individual banks proved them wrong. In June 1970, the organization that would come to be known as VISA came into being.

A Remarkable Organizational Concept

In the legal sense, Visa is a non-stock, for-profit, membership corporation. In another sense, it is an inside-out holding company in that it does not hold but is held by its functioning parts. The institutions that create its products are, at one and the same time, its owners, its members, its

customers, its subjects and its superiors. It exists as an integral part of the most highly regulated of industries, yet is not subject to any regulatory authority in the world.

If converted to a stock company, Visa would have an astronomical market value, excluding its thousands of affiliated entities. But it cannot be bought, raided, traded or sold, since ownership is in the form of non-transferable rights of participation. However, that portion of the business created by each member is owned solely by them, is reflected in their stock prices and can be sold to any other member or entity eligible for membership.

It espouses no political, economic, social or legal theory, thus transcending language, custom, politics and culture to successfully connect a bewildering variety of more than 21,000 financial institutions, 16 million merchants and 800 million people in 300 countries and territories. Annual volume of \$1.4 trillion continues to grow in excess of twenty-percent compounded annually. A staff of about three thousand scattered in twenty-one offices in thirteen countries on four continents provides product and systems development, global advertising, and around-the-clock operation of two global electronic communication systems with thousands of data centers communicating through nine million miles of fiber-optic cable. Its electronic systems clear more transactions in one week than the Federal Reserve system does in a year.

It has gone through a number of wars and revolutions, the belligerents continuing to share common ownership and never ceasing reciprocal acceptance of cards. It has multiple boards of directors within a single legal entity, none of which are inferior or superior, as each has jurisdiction over certain areas or activities. No part knows the whole, the whole doesn't know all the parts and none had any need to. The entirety is largely self-regulating.

In less than five years, Visa transformed a troubled product with a minority market share into a dominant market share and the single most profitable consumer service in the financial services industry. Visa returns as much as 100% on its member's invested capital, while at the same time reducing by more than 50% the cost of unsecured credit to individuals and merchant cost of handling payment instruments.

Its products are the most universally used and recognized in the world, yet the organization is so transparent its ultimate customers, most if its affiliates and some of its members do not know how it functions or how it is structured.

Optimism and the Art of Dropping Balls

Chris Corrigan

Recently, I had a shimmering moment of clarity about my own sort of permanent state of optimism. It's obvious that we cannot know the future, even though many of us are certain that some things will surely come to pass or never change. But in the context of doom versus hope it seems clear to me that optimism may actually be the only useful stance. If things are not doomed, but merely hard, then it would seem that optimism would be a useful place from which to work. But if things are truly doomed and we are all about to face imminent death, then we have a choice: optimism or pessimism will have an equally useless effect. So why not learn from those we have seen die beautifully among us, and choose an optimistic and peaceful death. Making peace with our death, indeed, is really the last act that we will ever get a chance to perform, and it may be that this is what our lives are all about.

It seems clear to me now that pessimism (including the "I'm not a pessimist, I'm a realist" stance) is simply a statement of fear that one is not yet friends with. And if one is not friends with fear, then one may actually not be resourceful enough to be of much use in a crisis, or in a moment of chaos and uncertainty.



In my own life I faced one such moment in 1995 in a mountaineering accident. A group of us were traversing an avalanche slide on the slopes of Mount Seymour in North Vancouver when one of our party slipped and fell 300 feet off a cliff. In the moment that she disappeared, I found myself extraordinarily calm. Three of our party were rather more panicky and were unable to be of much help until we got them to safety. The two of us who remained calm were really living in a state of extreme optimism. The only thing to do was be peaceful and resourceful and get help as quickly as we could. It turned out that our friend survived and in fact the rescue effort was a text book example. I was struck during and afterwards that my adrenal state was actually calm. Of course there have been plenty of times when I have been frightened and useless, but in that deep crisis, my body somehow adopted calm presence as a response. I was fearless and unworried. My friend had gone over a cliff and six of us remained with an overwhelming need to find safety before we could do anything about her. But without that calm, we were in extreme danger.

It seems to me that a pessimistic stance is more about the individual's fear of inadequacy. If you feel overwhelmed, you give up. But two people in exactly the same situation may react in totally different ways, meaning that there are no givens about any situation or any result. I sometimes use a juggling metaphor to describe what I think of as my stance that "I'm not an optimist, I'm a realist." When you juggle you are working with the reality of gravity. Gravity ensures that every ball that drops will hit the ground. That is reality. But juggling is not so much cheating gravity as it is entering a partnership with it – the reliability of balls dropping at constant rate is actually what makes juggling possible.

When I teach people to juggle they generally come in with one of two attitudes. A pessimist might generally watch me juggle and say "I could never do that." Even as they gradually learn to work

with one ball and then two and then three, they will deny the possibility that they could ever juggle. Usually what they are speaking is their fear of inadequacy or embarrassment at failing. Perfectionists are often pessimists because the reality never lives up to their ideal. Pessimists often give up on themselves and me, and they never learn the deceptively simple act of juggling three balls.

Optimists on the other hand approach the situation with curiosity and are usually interested in the aesthetic experience of juggling as well. Optimists learn fast because they recognize immediately that the balls always drop, so there is no problem, and their challenge is to gain more and more mastery, producing more and more beauty and living into more and more amazement at what they can do. Once they learn one trick, they hunger for more, they take satisfaction in what they can do and seek to improve and do it better. They are fearless about their learning and this resourcefulness produces results that continue to surprise them. I have taught people with very little perceived natural ability to juggle within three minutes. I have also taught people who don't believe in themselves as much, but who take so much longer because we have to break through the belief that dropping the ball is wrong.

The truth is that the balls always fall to the ground. The beauty of juggling is simply the ongoing possibility that the balls might not drop.

When we partner with reality it doesn't matter what beliefs we carry. They are all false. And so, taking the advice of my mentor and hero and partner Caitlin Frost who is a deep practitioner of Byron Katie's work, we need only question the beliefs that cause us suffering and not worry about the ones that don't. If we can think of a peaceful reason for keeping a thought, we should do so. If not, work to shed the thought and make friends with reality. I can see this work now as terrifying optimism, a fierce sharpening of our own edges where we meet the world with resourcefulness, power and care.

I am constantly reaffirmed in my belief that my work is to continue to be in the world living and working at every turn with the possibility that today the whole thing just might not fall apart.

ENERGETICALLY REPATTERNED

Energetically patterned
perhaps repatterned
reworked
reborn
for the new

this is arrival

brought about by those most important
and destined shifts

at some point
we pop
wholly
to the new

like the way a pond freezes
instantly and at once
in winter's touch

the ancestors prepared us
to do this
they imprinted
the expectation

now they call to us
they call in us
to remember
meet in awe
and welcome

support each other
offer a gentle hand
touch
patience
a little room

meet in joy
and play
repattern

THIS IS ARRIVAL

The Sense of Things

Chris Corrigan,

I have seen the texture of space
felt the sound of silence, falling in a wide open offering
tasted hesitancy and the sweetness of light
touching time

we sense into the most astonishing places together, you and I
into the tight cracking of possibility
screaming for release

we let the humour of despair rest on our tongues,
choke our eyes with tears and scour our nostrils
with tendrils of acrid smoke.

we walk together in circles
dizzy with the sensation of silent music
anxious that the soft holding
be strong enough to withstand the wails of pain and joy
that accompany liberation

I have seen the music of leadership
arise to dance with chaos;

watched the bitterness of hunger
fade into the dark recesses of the palette;

heard the smooth and cool surface of flow
course through networks of veins;

tasted the colour of peace:
its pure yellow flavour flecked with crimson notes;

smelled the birth of worlds and the shifting of lives;
in ever opening space.

Books and Websites

Many resources are available – books, articles, websites, blogs, communities. We included a few websites in the journal section on processes.

As starting points or hubs for more extensive lists of resources, we suggest:

www.artofhosting.org

(co-created by many art of hosting stewards)

www.chriscorrigan.com

www.tennesonwoolf.com

www.peerspirit.com

www.berkana.org

And for now, here are a few gems with which to start or perhaps, like old friends, return to.

Ways of Hosting

Baldwin, Christina. Calling the Circle: The First and Future Culture

Baldwin, Christina. Storycatcher

Baldwin, Christina and Linnea, Ann: The Circle Way: A Leader in Every Chair

Brown, Juanita and Isaacs, David, et. al. The World Café: Shaping our Future Through Conversations that Matter

Herman, Michael and Corrigan, Chris (eds.): Open Space Technology: A User's NON-Guide

Holman, Peggy, Cady, Steve and Devane, Tom (eds): The Change Handbook: Large Group Methods for Shaping the Future.

Isaacs, William: Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together.

Kaner, Sam et. al. The Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision Making

Marianne Miller Bojer [et.al.](#): Mapping Dialogue: Essential Tools for Social Change (Taos Institute)

Owen, Harrison. Open Space Technology: A User's Guide

Owen, Harrison. Expanding our Now: The Story of Open Space Technology

Whitney, Dianna and Trosten-Bloom, A. The Power of Appreciative Inquiry: A Practical Guide to Positive Change

Ways of Being in Organization and Community

Atlee, Tom. The Tao of Democracy

The Berkana Institute and Neighborhood Centers Inc: Health Community Tool Kit -- Unlocking the Strength of Our Communities: A Step by Step Guide to Appreciative Community Building

Block, Peter - Community: The Structure of Belonging

Block, Peter and McKight, John: The Abundant Community: Awakening the Power of Families and Neighborhoods (2010, Berrett-Koehler)

Briskin, Alan et. al.: The Power of Collective Wisdom and the Trap of Collective Folly

Cziksentmihaly, M. Flow.

Cziksentmihaly, M. Good Business

Frost, Peter. Toxic emotions at work

Herman, Michael. The inviting organization emerges

Kahane, Adam. Solving Tough Problems

Jaworski, J. Synchronicity

Marshall, Stephanie Pace: The Power to Transform: Leadership that Brings Learning and Schooling to Life

Scharmer, Otto. Theory U

Senge, Peter. The Fifth Discipline

Senge, P., Scharmer, O., Jaworski J., Flowers BS. Presence

Sutherland, Jessie Worldview skills: transforming conflict from the inside out

Wheatley, Margaret. Leadership and the New Science

Wheatley, Margaret Turning to One Another: Simple Conversations to Restore Hope to the Future

Ways of Seeing, Practicing and Knowing

Arrien, Angeles. The Four Fold Way

Atleo, Richard (Umeek). Tsawalk: A Nuu-Chah-Nulth Worldview

Beck, Don and Cowan, Chris. Spiral Dynamics

Capra, Fritjof. The Web of Life

Chodron, Pema. The Places that Scare You



Johnson, Basil. Ojibway Ceremonies

Katie, Byron. Loving What Is.

Lao Tzu. Tao te Ching

Macy, Joanna and Brown, Molly. Coming Back to Life: Practices to Reconnect Our Lives, Our World

Lindahl, Kay: Practicing the Sacred Art of Listening: A Guide to Enrich Your Relationships and Kindle Your Spiritual Life

Ruiz, Don Miguel: The Four Agreements - A Toltec Wisdom Book

Senge, Peter et. al.: Presence: Human Purpose and the Field of the Future

Wheatley, Margaret. Perserverence

Wilber, Ken. Sex, Ecology and Spirituality

Wilber, Ken. A Theory of Everything

Notes



Notes



There Is No Power Greater Than a Community

Margaret Wheatley

There is no greater power than a community discovering what it cares about.

Ask "What's possible?" not "What's wrong?" Keep asking.

*Notice what you care about.
Assume that many others share your dreams.*

Be brave enough to start a conversation that matters.

*Talk to people you know.
Talk to people you don't know.
Talk to people you never talk to.*

*Be intrigued by the differences you hear.
Expect to be surprised.
Treasure curiosity more than certainty.*

*Invite in everybody who cares to work on what's possible.
Acknowledge that everyone is an expert in something.
Know that creative solutions come from new connections.*

*Remember, you don't fear people who's story you know.
Real listening always brings people closer together.*

Trust that meaningful conversations change your world.

Rely on human goodness. Stay together.

Margaret Wheatley
Turning to One Another

