Theory U: Leading From the Future as It Emerges

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Two Sources of Learning, Two Learning Cycles

A. Learning by reflecting on the experiences of the past

act - observe - reflect - plan - act

B. Learning from the future as it emerges (presencing)
Four Levels of Responding to Change

1. Reacting: quick fixes

2. Redesigning: policies

3. Reframing: values, beliefs

4. Regenerating: sources of commitment and energy
The Blind Spot of Leadership

Results: What

Process: How

Source: Who

**Blind Spot:** Inner place from where we operate
“The success of an intervention depends on the interior condition of the intervenor.”

William O’Brien, former CEO of the Hanover Insurance Company
On the Core Process of Profound Innovation
3 Movements of the U

Downloading

Observe, observe, observe

Retreat and reflect:
Allow the inner knowing to emerge

Act in an instant
Theory U

**VoF**
- Presencing
  - connecting to Source
- **Open Will**
  - letting come

**VoC**
- Sensing
  - from the field
- **Open Heart**
  - enacting

**VoJ**
- Seeing
  - with fresh eyes
- **Open Mind**
  - Prototyping
    - the new by
      - linking head, heart, hand

**Performing** by
- operating from the whole

**Downloading** past patterns
- suspending
- redirecting

Who is my Self? What is my Work?
U Process: 1 Process, 5 Stages

1. Co-initiating: uncover common intent
   stop and listen to others and to what life calls you to do

2. Co-sensing: observe, observe, observe
   connect with people and places to sense the system from the whole

3. Presencing: connect to the source of inspiration and will
   go to the place of silence and allow the inner knowing to emerge

4. Co-creating: prototype the new in living examples to explore the future by doing

5. Co-evolving: embody the new in ecosystems that facilitate acting from the whole
Levels of Listening

LISTENING 1: from habits
  Downloading habits of judgment
  connecting to an emerging future whole; shift in identity and self

LISTENING 2: from outside
  Factual listening noticing differences
  seeing through another person’s eyes emotional connection

LISTENING 3: from within
  Empathic listening
  reconfirming old opinions & judgments

LISTENING 4: from Source
  Generative listening (from the future wanting to emerge)
  disconfirming [new] data

Open Mind
Open Heart
Open Will
Field: Structure Of Attention

1. **Downloading**: Talking nice
   - Speaking from what I think
   - Polite routines, empty phrases
   - Autistic system (not saying what you think)

2. **Debate**: Talking tough
   - Speaking from what I think
   - Divergent views: I am my point of view
   - Adaptive system (say what you think)

3. **Dialogue**: Reflective inquiry
   - Speaking from seeing myself as part of the whole
   - From defending to inquiry into viewpoints
   - Self-reflective system (reflect on your part)

4. **Presencing**: Generative flow
   - Speaking from what is moving through
   - Stilness, collective creativity, flow
   - Generative system (identity shift: authentic self)
Field: Structure Of Attention

**Attentional action**

- **Listening 1:** Downloading habits of thought
  - I-in-me

- **Listening 2:** Factual, object-focused
  - I-in-it

- **Listening 3:** Empathic listening
  - I-in-you

- **Listening 4:** Generative listening
  - I-in-now
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field: Structure Of Attention</th>
<th>Attentional action</th>
<th>Conversational action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Listening 1:</td>
<td>Downloading:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Downloading habits of thought</td>
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**Listening 1:**
Download habits of thought

**Listening 2:**
Factual, object-focused

**Listening 3:**
Empathic listening

**Listening 4:**
Generative listening
### Field: Structure Of Attention

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<th>Global action</th>
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<td><strong>Downloading:</strong> Talking nice, politeness, rule-reenacting</td>
<td><strong>Centralized:</strong> Machine bureaucracy</td>
<td><strong>Hierarchy:</strong> Central plan</td>
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<td><strong>Debate:</strong> Talking tough, rule-revealing</td>
<td><strong>Decentralized:</strong> Divisionalized</td>
<td><strong>Market:</strong> Competition</td>
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<td><strong>Dialogue:</strong> Inquiry, rule-reflecting</td>
<td><strong>Networked:</strong> Relational</td>
<td><strong>Dialogue:</strong> (Mutual adjustment)</td>
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<td><strong>Ecosystem:</strong> Ba</td>
<td><strong>Collective Presence:</strong> Acting from the emerging Whole</td>
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**Notes:**

- *Presencing Institute - Otto Scharmer - www.presencing.com/permissions*
Selecting Prototyping Ideas for Large Systems Change

1. Relevant: Does it matter to the key stakeholders involved?
2. Right: Have you got the right dimensions? Does the microcosm mirror the whole?
3. Revolutionary: Can it change the system? Do you address the systemic root issues?
4. Rapid: Can you do it quickly?
5. Rough: Can you do it small scale?
6. Relationally effective: Are you leveraging the existing networks and competencies?
7. Replicable: Can you scale it?
Resources and Literature


www.presencing.com

www.ottoscharmer.com