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
- **letting go**

**VoC**
- **Sensing**
  - from the field
- **redirecting**

**VoJ**
- **Seeing**
  - with fresh eyes
- **suspending**

**Performing by**
- operating from the whole
- **embodying**
- **Prototyping**
  - the new by linking head, heart, hand

**Crystallizing**
- vision and intention
- **enacting**

**Open Mind**

**Open Heart**

**Open Will**

**Who is my Self? What is my Work?**

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Presencing Institute - Otto Scharmer - www.presencing.com/permissions/
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
- reconfirming old opinions & judgments

**LISTENING 2:** from outside
- Factual listening
- noticing differences
- disconfirming [new] data
- seeing through another person’s eyes

**LISTENING 3:** from within
- Empathic listening
- downloading habits of judgment
- emotional connection
- connecting to an emerging future whole; shift in identity and self

**LISTENING 4:** from Source
- Generative listening
- (from the future wanting to emerge)
- Open Mind
- Open Heart
- Open Will

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Field: Structure Of Attention

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

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

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

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

Field:

- I-in-me
- I-in-it
- I-in-you
- I-in-now
Field: Structure Of Attention

Attentional action

- **Listening 1:** Downloading habits of thought
- **Listening 2:** Factual, object-focused
- **Listening 3:** Empathic listening
- **Listening 4:** Generative listening

I-in-me

I-in-it

I-in-you

I-in-now
Field: Structure Of Attention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Conversational action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Downloading:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Downloading</td>
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<tr>
<td>habits of thought</td>
<td>politeness,</td>
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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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| **Listening 2:** Factual, object-focused | **Debate:** Talking tough, rule-revealing | **Decentralized:** Divisionalized | **Market:** Competition |
| **I-in-it** | | | |

| **Listening 3:** Empathic listening | **Dialogue:** Inquiry, rule-reflecting | **Networked:** Relational | **Dialogue:** (Mutual adjustment) |
| **I-in-you** | | | |

| **Listening 4:** Generative listening | **Presencing:** Collective creativity, flow rule-generating | **Ecosystem:** Ba | **Collective Presence:** Acting from the emerging Whole |
| **I-in-now** | | | |
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