

The Art of Participatory Leadership Workbook



Leading strategic conversations for sustainable growth

**AoPL Training, Croatia, Poreč
November, 2014**

About this Workbook

This workbook is intended to be a personal reference journal, to help you remember, focus and deepen your learning. It shares basic assumptions and our current understanding of the participatory leadership. It includes methods, tools and practices that the community of practitioners has found simple and helpful.

This workbook is intended to be a ***personal reference journal***, to help you remember, focus and deepen your learning.

Please use this workbook in ways that help you most – capture your learning, reflections, insights, ideas, questions, plans for action, inspirations – and share them with others in an active web of conversation during your time here and beyond.

Enjoy your learning journey!

Your hosting team: Cate, Jan, Miljenka, Adrijana and Jasmina



Introduction

Welcome to the Art of Participatory Leadership!

This training offers you the opportunity to learn the skills and methodologies that will help you grow your business by nurturing and mobilizing the capacity of your people to increase their sense of ownership and take the lead in igniting organizational & business development, strategically important projects and new initiatives. This is what we call participative leadership in action. You will have a chance to use your own specific business challenges as your learning and practice playground – thus leave the training with new ideas, expanded support network, renewed energy and fresh motivation for action 😊

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The Art of Participatory Leadership is based on the work originally called “Art of Hosting conversations that matter”. The name Art of Participatory Leadership is usually used when “Art of Hosting” is practiced in corporate or public administration organisations with focus to offer new perspective of leadership. Rather than the traditional leader pointing the way forward and driving the whole organisation towards set goals, we see the leader as a host, convening the diversity of perspectives required to make sense of a certain context in order to identify wise ways forward together. In situations where new solutions are needed, we as leaders (whatever our position in the organisation is) need to create the conditions for the emergence of better solutions.

Today’s complex and high-speed environments are calling us to engage multiple styles of leading and learning. We must know how to generate collective intelligence and how to call on everyone’s participation and leadership. We need to generate shared clarity of purpose and create spaces for non-judgmental learning. At the same time, we are asked to exercise hierarchical leadership. We are accountable to our stakeholders and must take decisive action when needed. Learning how to stand in this paradox and how to navigate the territory between too much chaos and too much control is the key to leading transformational change.

In this training we will practice staying focused and centred in the midst of both chaos and control. We will share stories from corporate and public organisations about what has worked. We will gain frameworks and skills for hosting conversations that matter, for inviting collaborative leadership, for generating collective intelligence and learning to create wiser solutions together.

The three-day Art of Participatory Leadership training creates a rich learning environment in which you will:

- Explore how participatory leadership can be applied in the context of corporate business and public administration
- Practice hosting conversations as a core leadership competence
- Learn participatory methods and tools as Circle, Appreciative Inquiry, World Café, Open Space, Chaordic design

- Work with questions relevant to your specific context and design your projects where this approach will be applied
- Become part of practitioners' network around the globe from which you can constantly learn and get support!

Participatory approach

A new type of approach is being called for in corporations, businesses, non-profit organizations, associations, schools, communities and families.

This style of approach generates fresh thinking and creates shared commitment to solving critical challenges in sustainable, inclusive ways.

We call this approach Participatory Leadership.

This kind of leader can skilfully call important conversations and connect different perspectives to address our complex challenges and to grow into our creative possibilities. He or she knows how to create opportunities where the essential knowledge present in even a large group can be shared in a short period of time.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has..."

Margaret Mead

How do you explain participatory leadership in one sentence?

As formulated by the staff of the European Commission, practicing Participatory Leadership in the day-to-day work of the Commission.

- Imagine a meeting of 60 people, where in an hour you would have heard everyone and at the end you would have precisely identified the 5 most important points that people are willing to act on together.
- When appropriate, deeper engagement of all in service of our purpose.
- Hierarchy is good for maintenance; participatory leadership is good for innovation and adapting to change.
- Using all knowledge, expertise, conflicts, etc. available to achieve the common good on any issue.
- It allows dealing with complex issues by using the collective intelligence of all people concerned and getting their buy-in.
- Participatory Leadership is methods, techniques, tips, tricks, tools to evolve, to lead, to create synergy, to share experience, to lead a team, to create a transversal network, to manage a project, an away day, brainstorming, change processes, strategic visions.

The participatory approach is a four-fold practice that requires us to operate at four levels at once—individual, team, community/organisation, and global. These four levels are connected, and learning at each of these levels informs learning at the others.

Individual

- To connect to our own motivation and reason for choosing a different way of leading
- To strengthen our individual courage to lead as hosts

Team

- To train the competencies of collective reflection and wise action
- To practice co-creating, co-deciding and co-hosting strategic meetings, focus groups, community conversations, etc.

Community, Organisation etc.

- To experience working in unity with other leaders
- To experience new organisational forms and work at co-creating relationships that serve the needs of our organisation or community.

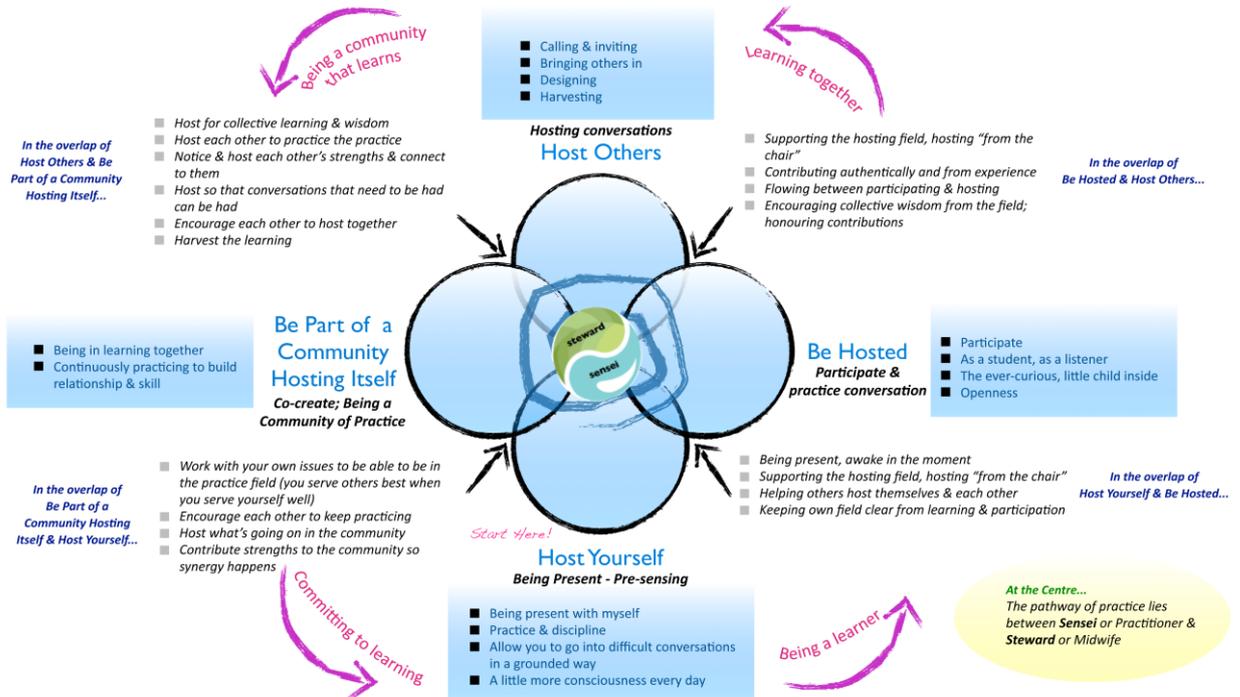
Global

- To understand the bigger context that we are always part of
- To benefit from knowledge and experience of a global or “trans-local” network of practitioners and learners in this field

The Four Fold Path

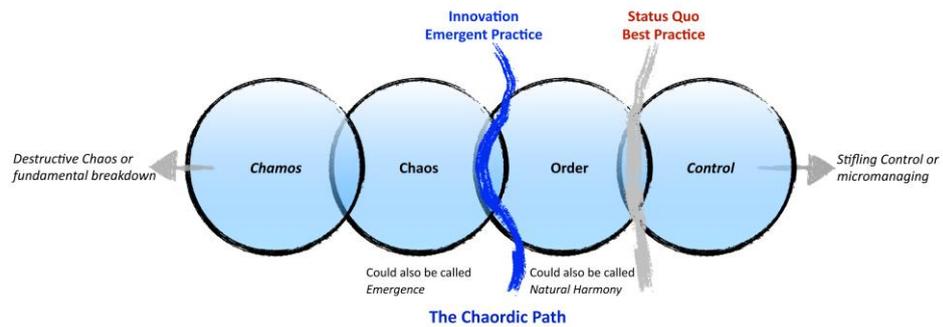
Being truly present, engaging skillfully in conversations, being a good host of conversations and engaging with others in co-creation are all practices or skills that are easily understood, but it takes continuous practice to hone these skills. **A practice means actively and regularly doing something to maintain or enhance a skill or ability.**

As we learn to be truly present and engage in conversations that really matter, we become learners. As learners many doors are open to us. As we begin to host conversations and connect with other hosts or practitioners, we become a community of learners or practitioners. As a community we embody a much bigger capacity than as individuals learners. As a community of individual practitioners or learners truly becomes "a community that learns", that is where we really enter collective intelligence. We multiply our capacity and enter the field of emergence.



What if the Art of Hosting is really a way to help people uncover their power to hold their ground and not be afraid of change?
 What if the methodologies are an excuse for teaching people they can change in intelligent ways?

The Chaordic Path



Chaos—Order—Control are different states of being and experiencing. We tend to feel safest in the state of order, or for some people, in control. Being out of control is scary if we are looking for predictability. If we have a mechanistic view on organisations, our tendency will be to stay within the realms of order and control, where things are predictable and stable—and where we produce status quo or “more of the same”—which in some cases is exactly what is needed.

The world and times we live in are, however, neither predictable nor stable and call for more flexibility, as “more of the same” solutions are not meeting the challenges. If we are looking for innovative, new solutions we will find them in a place between chaos and order—the chaordic path.

The chaordic path is actually the story of our natural world, as form arises out of nonlinear, complex, diverse systems. “At the edge of chaos” is where life innovates, where things are not hard-wired, but are flexible enough for new connections and solutions to occur. New levels of order become possible out of chaos.

As in nature, so in organisations the path between Chaos and Order 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, which can be, at times, a “messy” process until we reach new insight and clarity.

To lead our organisation on the chaordic path we need “chaordic confidence”, to have the courage to stay in the dance of order and chaos long enough to support a generative emergence that allows the new, collective intelligence and wise action to occur.

As we tread the line between chaos and order, individually and collectively, we move through confusion and conflict toward clarity. It is in the phase of not knowing, before we reach new clarity, that the temptation to rush for certainty or grab for control is strongest. We are all called to walk this path with open minds and some confidence if we want to reach something wholly new.

In this space of emergence, we leave our collective encounters with something that not one of us individually brought into the room.

The art is to stay in the fine balance between chaos and order. Straying too far to either side is counterproductive. On the far side of chaos is chamos or destructive chaos where everything disintegrates and dies. On the far side of order is stifling control—where there is no movement that eventually means death. When we move toward either of these extremes, the result is apathy or rebellion—the very opposite of chaordic confidence. Staying on the chaordic path is where the balance is and where life thrives.

Chaos/Order is the Place for Leadership

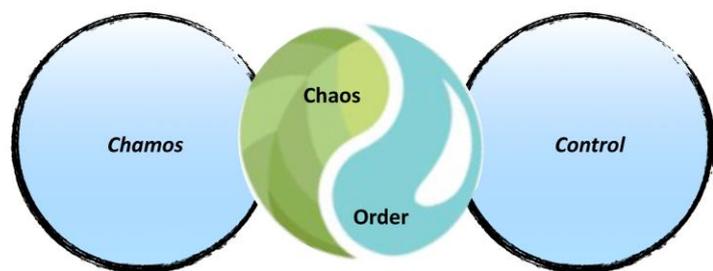
The practice of leadership and particularly participatory leadership resides in the place between chaos and order. When facing new challenges that cannot be met with the same way we are currently working, we need to learn new ways of operating. It is during these times of uncertainty and increased complexity, where results cannot be predicted, that leaders need to invite others to share diverse knowledge to discover new purpose and strategy and decide the way forward.

Order/Control is a Place for Management

The practice of management lies between order and control where activities need to be maintained and executed routinely so that a particular standard results. It is the place where 'more of the same' is required, e.g. landing an airplane safely, operating on a patient, etc. Therefore, it is where predictability is called for and where procedures and standards are clearly defined and need to be adhered to.

The path between **Order and Chaos** is informed by the complexity insights: Order emerges out of Chaos and is stabilised against it. We know that we do not know and we stay in constant learning mode.

When you learn to practice the Chaordic Path, it begins to look like this...



The path between **Control and Order** is when we begin declaring and defining best practices or recipes or procedures to follow. They are not emergent and fluid but constrain the whole system.

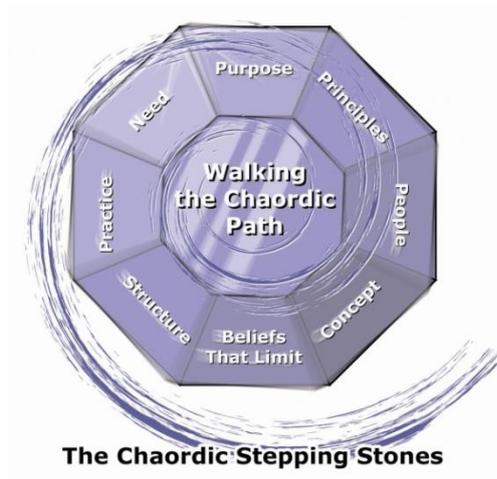
We are then leading as in the simple or complicated domain with the inherent risk of increasing the possible chaos, and to suppress creativity and learning. Here we assume that we know and reality has to follow.

The Chaordic Stepping Stones - A Way to Walk the Path

There are clear strategic steps we can take when walking the Chaordic path. These steps are a way of bringing just enough structure or order into the chaos to keep us moving forward on the chaordic path. These steps allow us to progress gradually giving our project or organisation more form as we progress.

The first step is identifying the **real need**, followed by formulating a clear **purpose**, then defining the **principles** that help guide us towards our goal (as attributes or characteristics describing where we want to be or how we want to get there), gradually proceeding to defining a **concept**, then giving it more **structure** and

moving into **practice**. These steps can be used both as a planning tool and to help understand what you are discovering about an organisation, community or initiative.



The *Chaordic* process is in continual motion, each step integrating and including the previous steps. It is an iterative, non-linear process supported by an ongoing harvest and feedback loop. Once you have defined the principles you check back if they

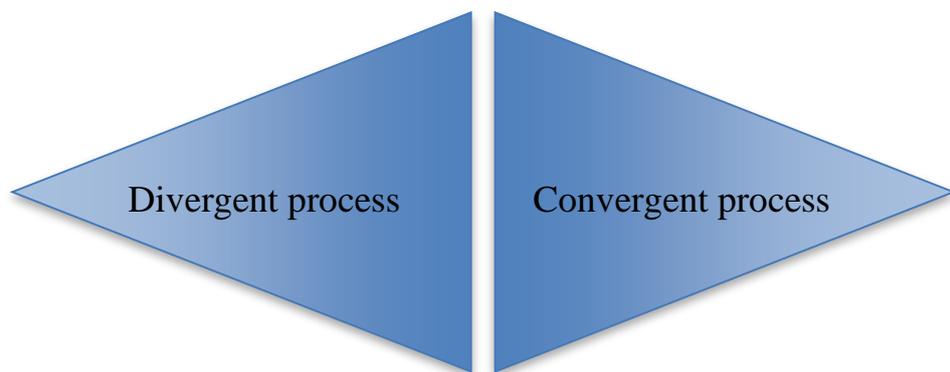
support the purpose etc. The process allows us to be able to remain in both reflection and practice.

Participatory process

It is important in this kind of work that we have some understanding of the process in itself.

As shown, we have divided the process of developing ideas into four phases, but basically the process is determined by two different ways of working.

The one kind of process, as we see in the phase of generating ideas and in the phase of improving ideas, is a *divergent* process. The other kind of process used in the phase of evaluation and in the phase of describing the idea is a *convergent* process.



Divergent process

This kind of process can be described as an open approach in which we unfold a problem or a possibility to come up with alternative and creative solutions.

The approach leads us to share divergent views and create a base of new knowledge on which we can generate new innovative ideas. It is important that we as participants are open minded and are willing to suspend our beliefs in a way that let us co-create with others.

Using this kind of approach will give us the possibility to create multiple new solutions and the flow of the process seems to be a bit chaotic.

Convergent process

The convergent process is a more closing approach in which we conclude on a solution to enter into a more project oriented phase of work.

Being in this kind of process invites us to analyse on multiple solutions, categorise new insights and choose which idea we want to implement.

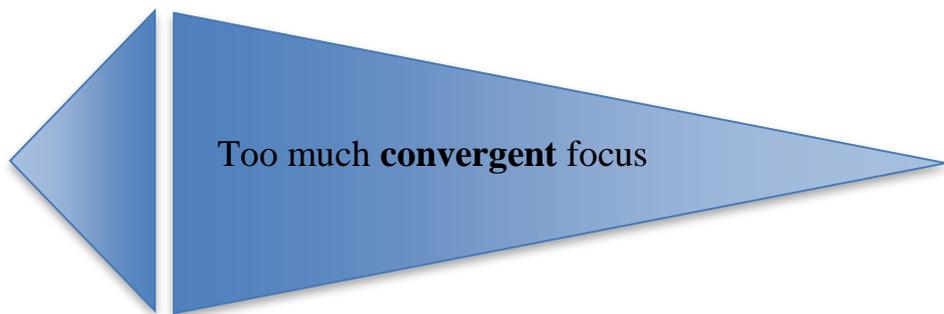
The pitfalls

All work we do consist more or less of the two different processes having *both a divergent and a convergent* approach.

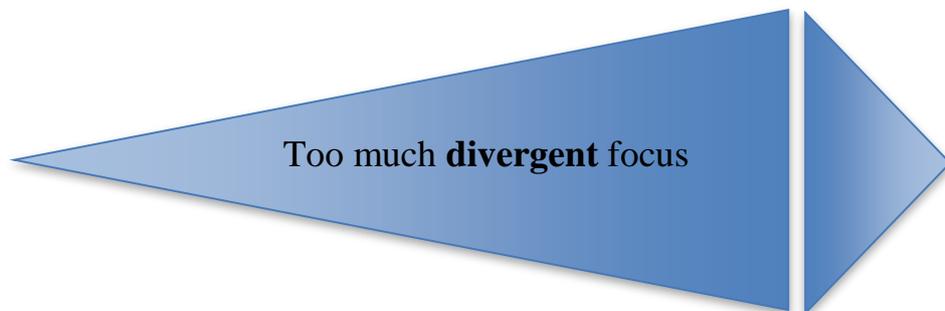
Knowing that gives us two obvious pitfalls that we need to be aware of in the process of developing new ideas.

In the need of working on new solutions we often find ourselves in a position where we are so focused on solving the problem or seize the opportunity in front of us, that we "fall in love" with the first idea we get which will help us. Thereby we lose the possibility to explore multiple solutions and create any kind of innovation.

Often in these cases we end up with a solution that is "more of the same", and after a short period of time we need to return to the process of creating a new solution.



The other pitfall is that we focus too much on the divergent part of the process. In the excitement of keeping creating new ideas and looping new solution we sometimes forget to align our work with our current and future reality.



In this case we will end up being frustrated of not going anywhere and achieving practical results. The end result will surprisingly be that we end up using the solutions that we know already, and yet again we will not reach the level of innovation that we were working for.

CORE METHODS

The following pages will give a short introduction to some of the core methodologies that are good practice in participatory leadership.

They are designed to engage a group of people (large or small) in strategic conversations, where our collective wisdom and intelligence can be engaged in service of finding the best solutions for a common purpose.

There are some **basic principles or qualities** that are common to all these methodologies, e.g.

- They offer a **simple structure** that helps to engage small or large groups in conversations that can lead to results.
- They each have their **special advantages and limitations**.
- They are usually **based on dialogue**, with **intentional speaking** (speaking when you really have something to say) and **attentive listening** (listening to understand) as **basic practices**, allowing us to go on an exploration and discovery together, rather than trying to convince each other of our own present truths.
- **Suspending assumptions** is a basic practice. It allows us to listen without bias (or with less bias) and to examine our own present truths.
- **Circle is the basic organisational form**, whether used as the only form (e.g. circle practice) or used as many smaller conversation circles, woven into a bigger conversation, (e.g. World Café, Open Space)
- Meeting in a circle is a **meeting of equals**. Generally all these methodologies inspire peer-to-peer discovery and learning.
- **Inquiry or powerful questions are a driving force**. Answers tend to close a conversation while inquiry keeps the conversation going deeper.
- The purpose of all this is to “think well together, that is to **engage the collective intelligence for better solutions**.
- **Facilitating** these engagements or conversations is more like stewarding or “**hosting**”, allowing the solutions to emerge from the wisdom in the middle. Hosting well requires a certain proficiency in the four-fold practice of: being present in the moment to what is happening, engaging in conversations with others, hosting conversations and co-creating or co-hosting with others.

- There are a number of **conditions** that need to be in place for engagement to work well. Any engagement or strategic conversation needs to be based in a **real need** and has to have a **clear purpose**. Any **“givens” or boundary conditions** need to be clear ahead of time. You may also have defined success-criteria or have an idea of the outcome even if the concrete **solutions will emerge from the conversations** (see also the section on design)

Method: The Circle

The circle, or council, is an ancient form of meeting that has gathered human beings into respectful conversation for thousands of years. The circle has served as the foundation for many cultures.

What transforms a meeting into a circle is the willingness of people to shift from informal socializing or opinionated discussion into a receptive attitude of thoughtful speaking and deep listening and to embody and practice the structures outlined here.

The components of the circle:

- Intention
- Welcome as start-point
- Centre and Check-in/Greeting
- Agreements
- Three Principles and Three Practices
- Guardian of process
- Check-out and Farewell

Intention

Intention shapes the circle and determines who will come, how long the circle will meet, and what kinds of outcomes are to be expected. The caller of the circle spends time articulating intention and invitation.

Welcome as start-point

Once people have gathered, it is helpful for the host, or a volunteer participant, to begin the circle with a gesture that shifts people's attention from social space to council space. This gesture of welcome may be a moment of silence, reading a poem, or listening to a song - whatever invites centering.

Establishing the center

The centre of a circle is like the hub of a wheel: all energies pass through it, and it holds the rim together. To help people remember how the hub helps the group, the centre of a circle usually holds objects that represent the intention of the circle. Any symbol that fits this purpose or adds beauty will serve: flowers, a bowl or basket, a candle.

Check-in/Greeting

Check-in helps people into a frame of mind for council and reminds everyone of their commitment to the expressed intention. It insures that people are truly present. Verbal sharing, especially a brief story, weaves the interpersonal net. Check-in usually starts with a volunteer and proceeds around the circle.

If an individual is not ready to speak, the turn is passed and another opportunity is offered after others have spoken. Sometimes people place individual objects

in the centre as a way of signifying their presence and relationship to the intention.

Setting circle agreements

The use of agreements allows all members to have a free and profound exchange, to respect a diversity of views, and to share responsibility for the well-being and direction of the group.

Agreements often used include:

- We will hold stories or personal material in confidentiality.
- We listen to each other with compassion and curiosity.
- We ask for what we need and offer what we can.
- We agree to employ a group guardian to watch our need, timing, and energy. We agree to pause at a signal, and to call for that signal when we feel the need to pause.

Three principles

The circle is an all leader group.

1. **Leadership rotates** among all circle members.
2. **Responsibility is shared** for the quality of experience.
3. **Reliance is on wholeness**, rather than on any personal agenda.

Three Practices

1. To speak with intention: noting what has relevance to the conversation in the moment.
2. To listen with attention: respectful of the learning process for all members of the group.
3. To tend the well-being of the circle: remaining aware of the impact of our contributions.

Forms of council

The circle commonly uses three forms of council: talking piece, conversation and reflection.

Talking piece council is often used as part of check-in, check-out, and whenever there is a desire to slow down the conversation, collect all voices and contributions, and be able to speak without interruption.

Conversation council is often used when reaction, interaction, and an interjection of new ideas, thoughts and opinions are needed.

Reflection, or Silent council gives each member time and space to reflect on what is occurring, or needs to occur, in the course of a meeting. Silence may be called so that each person can consider the role or impact they are having on the group, or to help the group realign with their intention, or to sit with a question until there is clarity.

Guardian

The single most important tool for aiding self-governance and bringing the circle back to intention is the role of the guardian. To provide a guardian, one circle member at a time volunteers to watch and safeguard group energy and observe the circle's process.

The guardian usually employs a gentle noise-maker, such as a chime, bell, or rattle, that signals everyone to stop action, take a breath, rest in a space of silence. Then the guardian makes this signal again and speaks to why he/she called the pause. Any member may call for a pause.

Checkout and Farewell

At the close of a circle meeting, it is important to allow a few minutes for each person to comment on what they learned, or what stays in their heart and mind as they leave.

Closing the circle by checking out provides a formal end to the meeting, a chance for members to reflect on what has transpired, and to pick up objects if they have placed something in the center.

As people shift from council space to social space or private time, they release each other from the intensity of attention being in circle requires. Often after check-out, the host, guardian, or a volunteer will offer a few inspirational words of farewell, or signal a few seconds of silence before the circle is released.



Method: Appreciative Inquiry

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 and 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 into 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

Problem Solving	Appreciative Inquiry
"Felt Need" identification of the problem Analysis of causes	Appreciating and valuing the best of "what is"
Analysis of possible solutions Basic assumption: an organisation is a problem to be solved.	Envisioning "what might be" Dialoguing "What should be" Innovating "What will be" Basic assumption: an organisation is a mystery to be embraced.

General flow of an Appreciative Inquiry process:

Appreciative inquiry can be done as a longer structured process going through phases of:

- Discovery:** Identifying organisational processes that work well.
- Dream:** Envisioning processes that would work well in the future.
- Design:** Planning and prioritising those processes.
- Delivery:** Implementing the proposed design.

The basic idea is to build organisations around what works, rather than trying to fix what doesn't.

At the centre is a positive topic choice—how we ask even the first question contains the seeds of change we are looking to enact.

Appreciative Inquiry can also be used as a way of opening a meeting or conversation by identifying what already works. What do you value most about yourself, work and organisation?

What is Appreciative Inquiry Good For?

Appreciative Inquiry is useful when a different perspective is needed, or when we wish to begin a new process from a fresh, positive vantage point. It can help move a group that is stuck in “what is” toward “what could be”. Appreciative Inquiry can be used with individuals, partners, small groups, or large organisations.

Materials Needed:

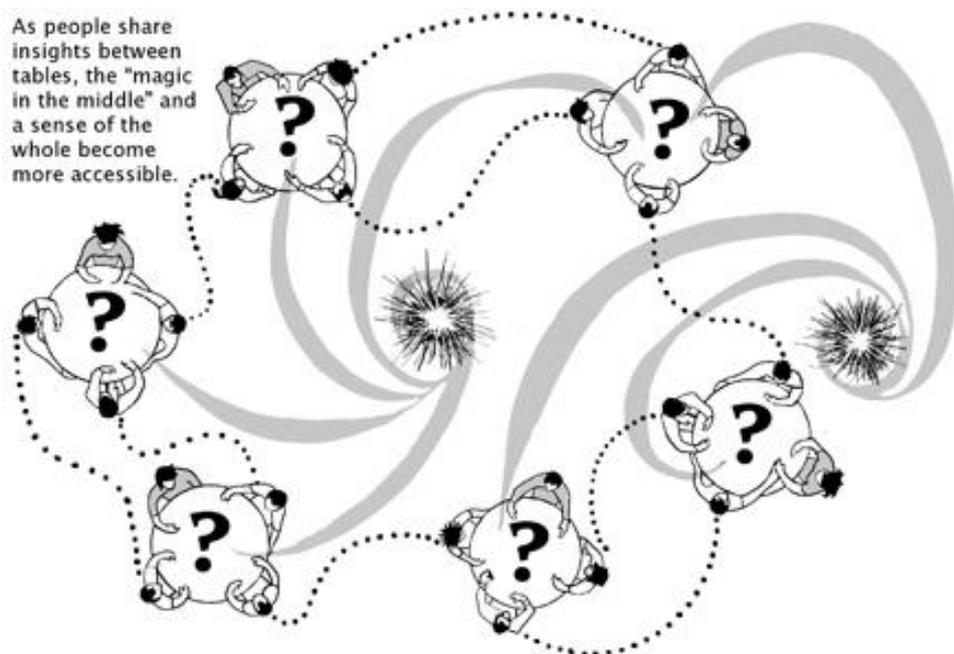
Varies depending on how the methodology is used.

Method: The World Café

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 organizations, and our communities, we are, in effect, moving among 'table conversations' at the World Café. (From The World Café Resource Guide)

Operating Principles of World Cafe:

- 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



Assumptions of World Café:

- 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.

General Flow of a World Café:

- Seat 4-5 people at café-style tables or in conversation clusters.
- Set up progressive rounds of conversation, usually of 20-30 minutes each—have some good questions!
- Ask one person to stay at the table as a “host” and invite the other table members to move to other tables as ambassadors of ideas and insights
- Ask the table host to share key insights, questions, and ideas briefly with new table members, then let folks move through the rounds of questions.
- After you’ve moved through the rounds, allow some time for a whole-group harvest of the conversations.

What is World Café Good For?

World Café is a great way of fostering interaction and dialogue with both large and small groups. It is particularly effective in surfacing the collective wisdom of large groups of diverse people. The café format is very flexible and adapts to many different purposes—information sharing, relationship building, deep reflection exploration and action planning.

When planning a café, make sure to leave ample time for both moving through the rounds of questions (likely to take longer than you think!) and some type of whole-group harvest.

Materials Needed:

- Small tables (36-42”), preferably round
- Chairs for participants and presenters

- Tablecloths
- Flip chart paper or paper placemats for covering the tables
- Markers
- Flip chart or large paper for harvesting collective knowledge or insights
- Posters/table tents showing the Café Etiquette
- Materials for harvesting



Method: 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 empowerment and ambition to see it through. 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 to truly invite organisations to thrive in times of swirling change.

Principles of Open Space:

- Whoever comes are the right people
- Whenever it starts is the right time
- Whatever happens is the only thing that could have
- 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.

PASSION & RESPONSIBILITY

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

Roles in Open Space:

- Host—announce and host a workshop
- Participant—participate in a workshop
- Bumble bee—“shop” between workshops
- Butterfly—take time out to reflect

General Flow of an Open Space Meeting:

The group convenes in a circle and is welcomed by the sponsor.

The facilitator provides an overview of the process and explains how it works. The facilitator invites people with issues of concern to come into the circle, write the issue on a piece of paper and announces it to the group.

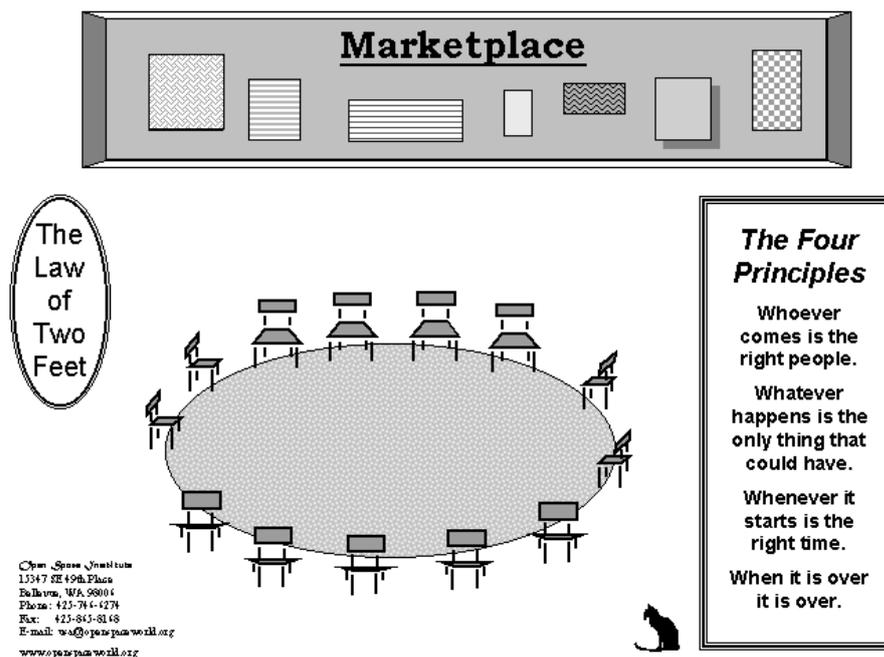
These people are "conveners." Each convener places their paper on the wall and chooses a time and a place to meet. This process continues until there are no more agenda items.

The group then breaks up and heads to the agenda wall, by now covered with a variety of sessions. Participants take note of the time and place for sessions they want to be involved in.

Dialogue sessions convene for the rest of the meeting. Recorders (determined by each group) capture the important points and post the reports on the news wall. All of these reports will be harvested in some way and returned to the larger group.

Following a closing or a break, the group might move into 'convergence', a process that takes the issues that have been discussed and attaches action plans to them to "get them out of the room."

The group then finishes the meeting with a closing circle where people are invited to share comments, insights and commitments arising from the process.



What is Open Space Good For

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 can be used in groups of 10 to 1,000—and probably larger. It's important to give enough time and space for several sessions to occur. The outcomes can be dramatic when a group uses its passion and responsibility—and is given the time—to make something happen.

Materials Needed:

- Circle of chairs for participants
- Letters or numbers around the room to indicate meeting locations
- A blank wall that will become the agenda
- A news wall for recording and posting the results of the dialogue sessions
- Breakout spaces for meetings
- Paper on which to write session topics/questions
- Markers/Pencils/Pens
- Posters of the Principles, Law of Two Feet, and Roles (optional)
- Materials for harvest



Method: Mind Map Brainstorm

“A mind map is a *diagram* used to represent *words*, *ideas*, tasks or other items linked to and arranged radially around a central key word or idea. It is used to *generate*, *visualize*, *structure* and *classify* ideas, and as an aid in *study*, *organization*, *problem solving*, *decision making*, and writing.”

Wikipedia

A Collective Mind Map

A collective mind map is a quick and simple way to create a shared overview of ideas and issues relevant to a particular subject or challenge. The mind map always has a clear focus that can be captured in a “burning” question, e.g. What ideas and issues do we see, that can make us overcome the challenge in front of us?

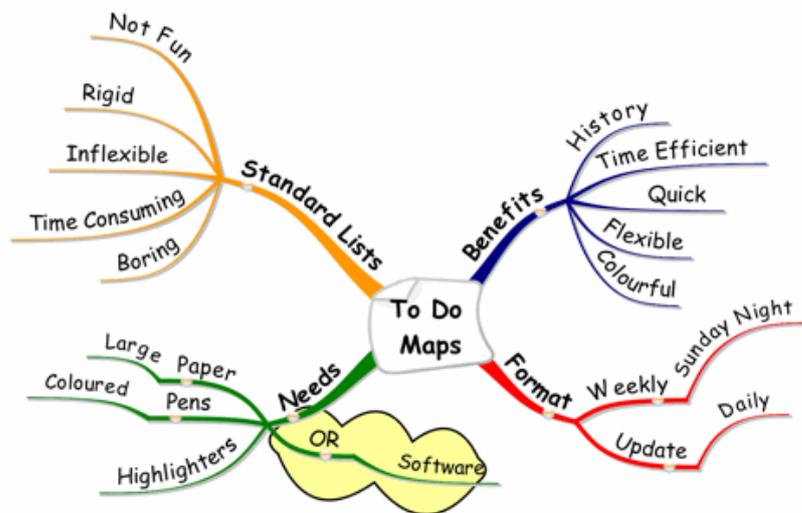
How-to-do-it

The mind-map can be done either on a large sheet of paper or electronically, with a mind-map program, projected on a screen.

Ground-Rules for Making a Collective Mind-Map:

- All ideas are valuable! We do not evaluate or discard ideas at this point.
- Whoever presents an idea or issue decides where it goes on the mind-map, and whether it is a major theme or a sub-issue.
- It's OK to have contradicting themes or issues.
- Whenever possible, give concrete examples.

The facilitator explains the procedure and rules of making a collective mind-map. Participants present their ideas and suggestions.



Making the Mind Map

The mind map process is led by a facilitator. All participants have access to post-it notes. When anyone has an idea or issue they want to suggest for the mind map, they write their name on the post-it and hold it up. Runners will collect the post-its and give them to the facilitator, who will then call out the names in the order received. Once a person's name is called, they can present their idea or issue.

If the group is large there will be a need for radio-microphones. These will be provided by the runners when it is the participant's turn to speak.

The actual map is drawn up by two scribes. The central question is at the centre of the mind-map. The major themes and different issues under each theme are recorded on the mind-map radiating out from the central question.

Voting and choosing

When all themes and issues have been recorded on the mind map, the group can decide on the priorities by voting. Everyone gets a number of votes i.e. sticky dots that they can place on the themes or issues they see as most important.

The voting procedure gives a clear indication on which ideas or issues have the highest leverage for further action.

Scribes capture what is said and draw the mind map—either on a big mind map or on a screen.

In the voting process everyone gets a certain number of votes to place on the themes or issues they believe are most crucial.

Method: Ritual Dissent

Ritual Dissent is a method designed to test and enhance proposals, stories, ideas, etc. by subjecting them to ritualised dissent (challenge) or assent (positive alternatives). In all cases it is a forced listening technique, not a dialogue or discourse.

The method is designed to be embedded inside a larger process, which it serves by ensuring that resulting action plans are robust and resilient. The basic approach involves a spokesperson presenting a series of ideas to a group who receives them in silence. The spokesperson then turns their chair, so that their back is to the audience and listens in silence while the group either attacks the proposal (dissent) or provides alternative proposals (assent).

The ritual of not facing the audience de-personalises the process and the group setting (others will experience the same process) means that the attack or alternative are not personal, but supportive. Listening in silence without eye contact will increase listening.

Overall plans that emerge from the process tend to be more resilient than consensus-based techniques.

Preparation

The technique is normally used in a workshop with a minimum of three groups with at least three participants in each. Ideally the number of participants should be higher, but no more than a dozen. The larger the number of groups, the more iterations and the greater the variety.

Each group should be seated at a small table (or in a circle of chairs), and the tables should be distributed in the work area to allow plenty of space between them. There should be a clipboard with paper and pen on each table. If the tables are too close, the noise will make it harder for the spokesperson to listen to the dissent/assent.

The tables should be set up so it is easy (and self-evident) to give an instruction to move to the next table in a clockwise or anti-clockwise fashion.

The flow of events starts after the group have been working for some time on the process/outcome which is to be improved by ritual dissent/assent. Cycling the ritual process several times with multiple groups offers a significant improvement opportunity. Not only the spokesperson learns, but the group dissenting or assenting also learn from their comments

Method: Pro Action Café

The Pro Action Café is a space for creative and action oriented conversation where participants are invited to bring their call - project - ideas - questions or whatever they feel called by and need help to manifest in the world.

What is Pro Action Café Good For?

As a conversational process, the Pro Action Café is a collective, innovative methodology for hosting conversations about calls, questions and projects that matter to the people that attend. These conversations link and build on each other as people move between café tables, cross-pollinate ideas, and offer each other new insights into the questions or issues that are most important in their life, work, organization or community.

As a process, the Pro Action Café can evoke and make visible the collective intelligence of any group, thus increasing people's capacity for effective action in pursuit of good work. Pro Action Café can be used with a network of people and/or as a methodology for a specific group, organization or community to engage in creative and inspirational conversation leading to wiser and more collectively informed actions.

General Flow of a Pro Action Café

Start with a quick check-in circle to connect to the purpose of the session and with each other. If check-in has already taken place as part of a longer process, go straight to building the agenda.

You need 2 ½ to 3 hours for a good Pro Action Café. Invite participants step forward with their call and in that way ask the community for the help you need to move your project into action. People with a call stand up, speak it and write it on the agenda that corresponds to a numbered café table.

Count the amount of participants divide by 4 that gives the amount of callers with projects that can be worked - with f. ex. 40 people you can have maximum 10 callers with each their project. **The principle is first come first serve.** If you have less callers add chairs to café tables but no more than 5 at each table. During this process each contributing participant (those who do not step forward) get to support 3 of the different projects.

When the agenda has been created invite the callers to go to their numbered café tables. There will be 3 rounds of conversation in café style of 20 to 30 minutes - each guided by a few generic questions to help deepen and focus the conversations:

Round 1:

What is the quest behind the idea/project? - to deepen the need and purpose of the idea.

Round 2:

What is missing? – when the quest has been deepened, explore what could make the project more complete and possible.

Round 3:

What am I learning about myself? – What am I learning about my project? - What next steps will I take? - What help do I still need? – to help bring it all together for caller and his/ her project.

This 3rd round is in 2 steps:

First 20-25 minutes for the callers to reflect by themselves on the 4 questions above and harvest their key insights.

Then a last round where 3 new contributors visit the tables to listen to the harvest of the caller, their learning, their steps, help needed – and then offer any insight and any further support ...

Between each round create breaks for the contributors to have a drink, relax together and get ready to support another caller in their quest/ project.

Last step is to meet in the circle and invite the callers from each table to share answers to these 2 questions:

- ***What am I grateful for?***
- ***What are my next steps?***

Materials and Set-Up

Ideally create a large circle in one part of the room and enough café tables with 4 chairs in another part (if the size of the room does not allow this, then participants will move the tables and chairs themselves as soon as the agenda is created).

Dress the tables with flipchart paper, colour pens and markers as basic café set up.

Prepare the matrix for the agenda setting of the session with the right amount of sessions according to the number of participants divided by 4.



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