

Theory U: Leading From the Emerging Future

Alpbach, 11/9/12

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MITSloan
MANAGEMENT

“I think there are good reasons for suggesting that the modern age has ended. Today, many things indicate that we are going through a transitional period, when it seems that something is on the way out and something else is painfully being born. It is as if something were crumbling, decaying, and exhausting itself – while something else, still indistinct, were rising from the rubble.”

Vaclav Havel



Ecological Divide: 1.5
Self - Nature

Social Divide: 2.5
Self - Other

Spiritual Divide: ≈ 3
Self - Self

Where do you experience a world that
is **ending/dying**,

where do you experience a world that
is **emerging / wanting to be born?**

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)

On the Core Process of Profound Innovation

Brian Arthur, Santa Fe Institute



3 Movements of the U

Downloading

Observe,
observe,
observe

Act in an
Instant:
prototype

Retreat and reflect:
Allow the inner knowing to
emerge



“The success of an intervention depends on the interior condition of the intervenor.”

William O'Brien,
former CEO of the Hanover Insurance Company

Theory U

Downloading
ABSPULEN

Performing
IN-DIE-WELT-BRINGEN

innehalten

verkörpern

VoJ

Seeing
HINSEHEN

*Open
Mind*

Prototyping
ERPROBEN

VoC

umwenden

Sensing
HINSPÜREN

*Open
Heart*

hervorbringen

Crystallizing
VERDICHTEN

VoF

loslassen

*Open
Will*

kommen lassen

Presencing
ANWESEND WERDEN-
GEGENWÄRTIGUNG

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



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The Blind Spot of Leadership

Results:

What



Process:

How

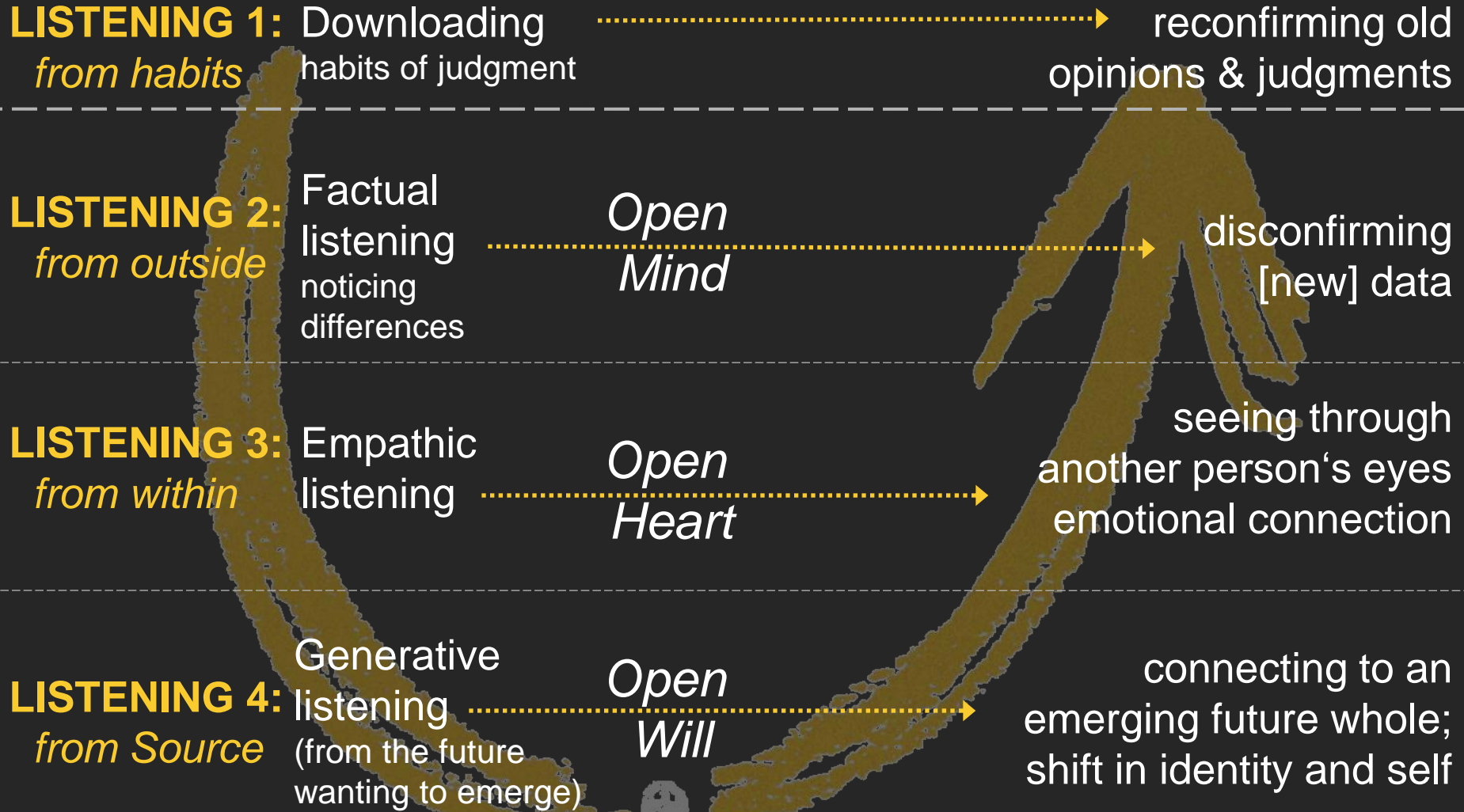


Source:

Who

Blind Spot: Inner place
from which we operate

Levels of Listening



Theory U

Downloading
past patterns

Performing by
operating from the whole

suspending

embodying

VoJ

Seeing
with fresh eyes

*Open
Mind*

Prototyping the new by
linking head, heart, hand

VoC

redirecting

Sensing
from the field

*Open
Heart*

enacting

Crystallizing
vision and intention

VoF

letting go

*Open
Will*

letting come

Presencing
connecting to Source

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

Theory U

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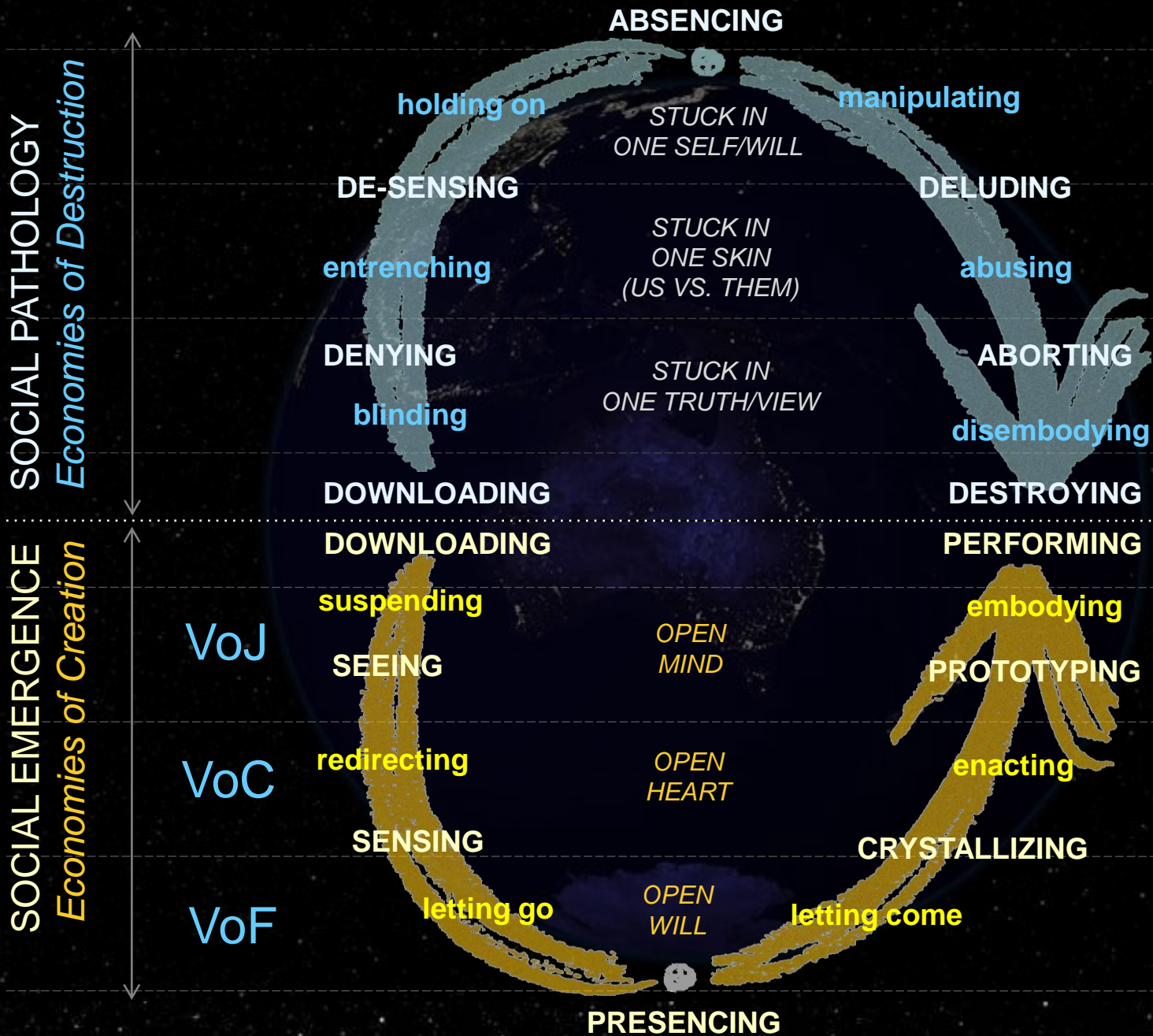
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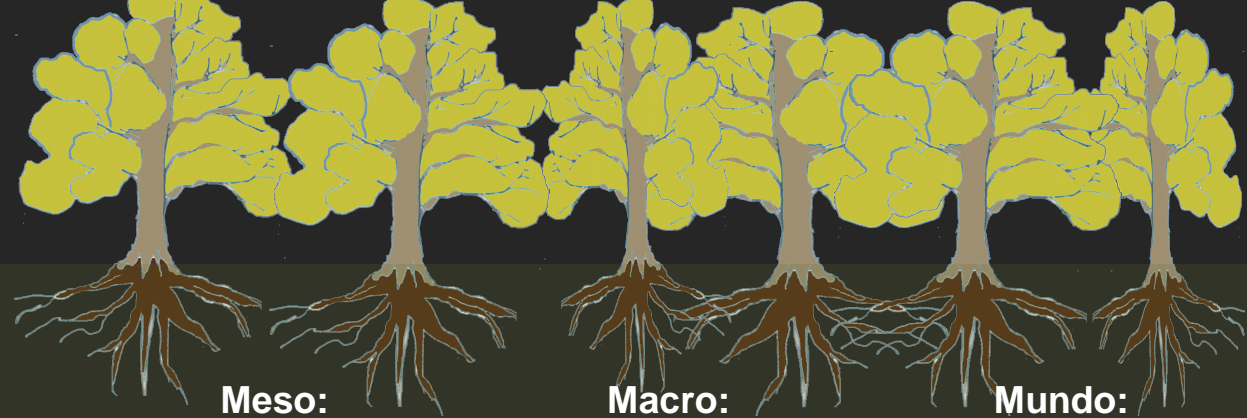
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Open
Will

Presencing
ANWESEND WERDEN-
GEGENWÄRTIGUNG

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





**Field:
Structure
of Attention**

**Micro:
ATTENDING
(individual)**

**Meso:
CONVERSING
(group)**

**Macro:
ORGANIZING
(institutions)**

**Mundo:
COORDINATING
(global systems)**



I-in-me
1.0: habitual
awareness

Listening 1--
Downloading:
more of the same

Downloading--
Talking nice:
speaking from what
they want to hear

Centralized:
Machine
bureaucracy, silos

Hierarchy:
Central plan,
regulation



I-in-it
2.0: ego-system
awareness

Listening 2--
Factual:
taking in sth new

Debate--
Talking tough:
speaking your mind

Decentralized:
Divisionalized

Market:
Competition



I-in-you
3.0: stakeholder
awareness

Listening 3—
Empathic: walking in
someone else's shoes

Dialogue--Inquiry:
speaking from
seeing self/whole

Networked:
Relational

**Negotiation
+Dialogue:**
Mutual adjustment



I-in-now
4.0: eco-system
awareness

Listening 4--
Generative: connect-
ing to the source of
the emerging future

**Collective
Creativity:**
Flow: Speaking from
what is moving
through

Eco-system:
Cross-institutional
co-creation

**Awareness-Based
Collective Action
(ABC):**
Acting from the whole

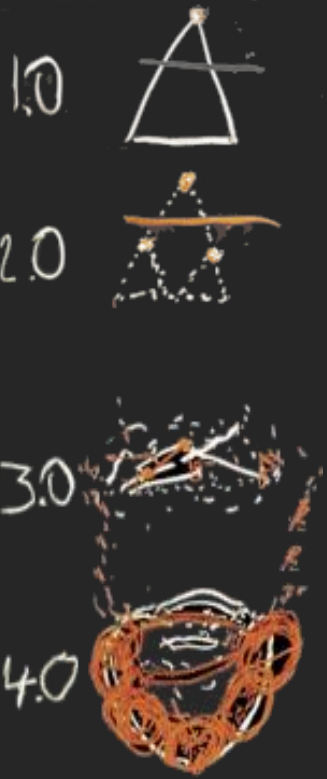




Theory U

Fields of Awareness

Sectors of the Current Institutional Transformation



	Government	Health	Schools	Relationship	Learner/Patient	Teacher/Physician
Traditional: <i>Hierarchy</i>	Dominating State	Institutional care: System centered	Institution centric traditional	Teacher centric	Recipient	Authority
Ego-system: <i>Markets + Competition</i>	Dormant State	Managed care: Outcome centered	Outcome centric Learning Factory	Transactional	Customer	Expert
Stakeholder: <i>Networks + Negotiation</i>	D-4: Direct, Distributed, Democratic, Dialogic	Integral health: Citizen journey centric, Salutogenesis	Sensing and actualizing one's highest future potential	Dialogic	Client	Coach
Eco-system: <i>Awareness-Based Collective Action (ABC)</i>				Co-creative	Co-creator	Midwife (Zubin Mehta)

Common intent: capture and build will and energy

Convening: a multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral group around an issue without easy answers

Intervention: Maternal Health Initiative

Address: 99% increase in maternal mortality rate, 1992-2006

Maternal Health Initiative

Visit places of greatest potential

Observe with both mind and heart wide open; listen to patients, the primary client

Connect: experience your part in the system you want to change

Make sense of what you've experienced



U-Process

One Process Five Movements

Co-initiate:

Stop and listen to others.
Learn through listening and dialogue.

Co-sense:

Observe, observe, observe
Learn through observation

Co-inspire:

Connect to the source of inspiration and will.
Moments of deep reflection.

Co-evolve:

Integrate the new in practice.
Scale-up what is working in the prototypes to create deeper impact.

Co-create:

Develop prototypes and innovations
Learn by doing to become wiser through small-scale practice!



Grow successful innovations:
Improved interaction between service providers and patients

"It used to be routine... now we are working towards this change!" (principal nurse, maternity unit, KSH)

"It's not about reviewing documents... but about growing personalities" (Deputy Permanent Secretary MoHSS)

Prototype: a microcosm of the new to explore future possibilities by doing

Improve access to services (CWIClinic and others)

Increase community awareness (radio talk show)

Develop skills and capabilities (in-service training; ambulance service)

Khomas Regional Delivery Unit

"I am the system."



Retreat and reflect: allow inner knowing to emerge

"I simply knew something I had no way of knowing!"

"Seeing through different eyes, I discovered purpose and meaning in what I do!"

"And there it was: the a-ha moment!"



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1. Mit Blick auf die letzten 6 Jahre, was ist das Neue im System, das Ihr seht?

1. Mit Blick auf die Zukunft, was sind die wichtigsten Hebelpunkte, auf die wir uns als change makers fokussieren sollten?



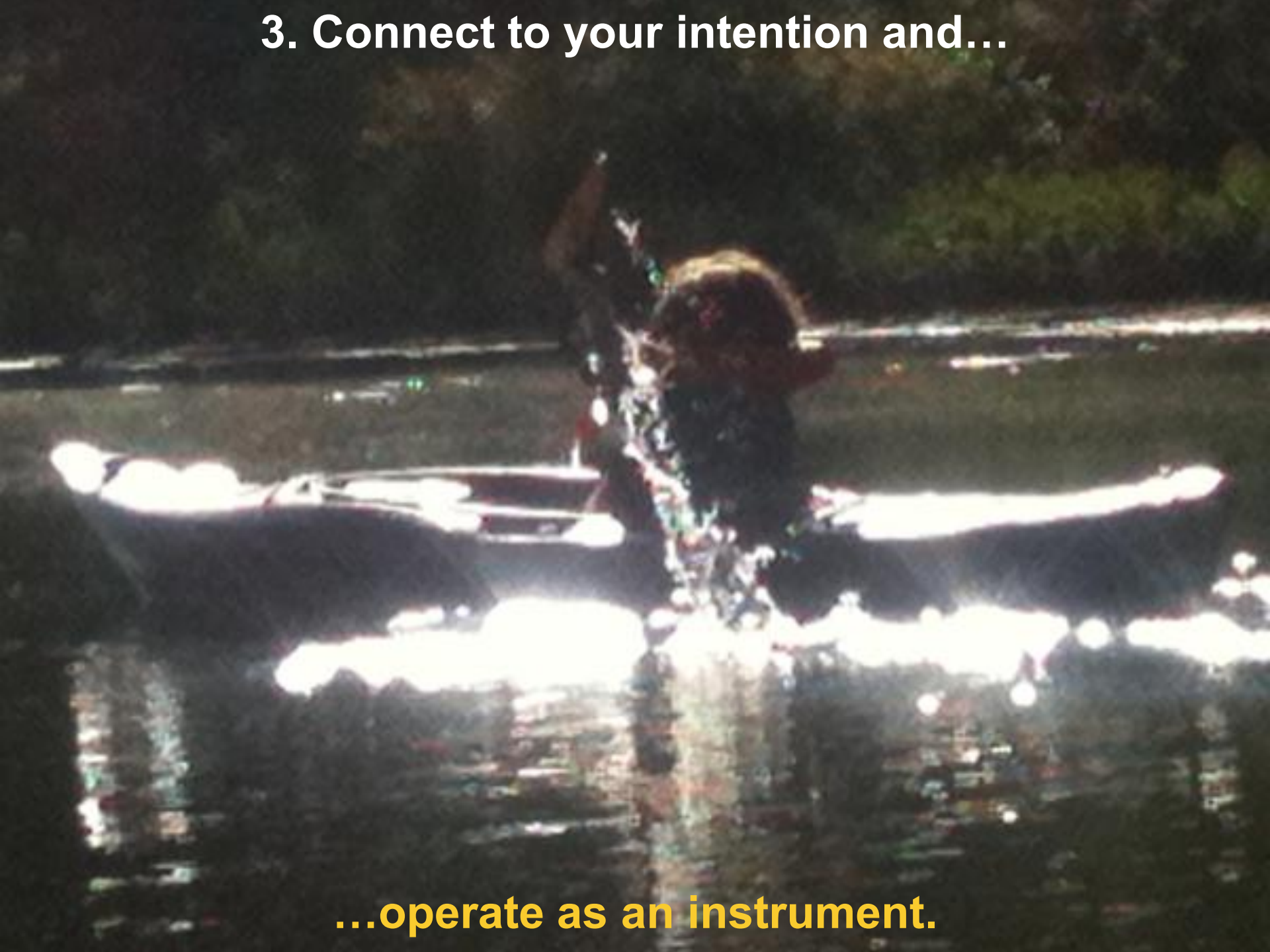
1. Practice the U – don't preach it.



2. Become a **blackbelt** observer and listener.



3. Connect to your intention and...



...operate as an instrument.



4. When reality opens up, be fully present with it
– and then **act from the NOW.**

A man with glasses and a beard, wearing a black graduation gown, is speaking at a podium. He is looking slightly to the right. The background features a large, stylized graphic of a person's head and shoulders, and a leafy branch on the left. The text is overlaid on the lower part of the image.

5. Follow Your Heart:
Do what you love,
love what you do.



6. Always be in **dialogue with the universe.**



7. Create a level 4 holding space supporting your journey.

8. Balance your talking-doing ratio.



**9. Identify the crack—the opening to the future—
in organizations, society and self**





10. Use different languages with different stakeholders—connect to them in terms of what they care about.



11. If you want to change others, you need to meet them where they are and be open to be **changed first.**

12. Co-initiate through local leadership from the heart.





13. Use sensing journeys that help people to see the system from the **edges** and use collective sensing mechanisms to see the system **from the whole**.



14. Create **holding spaces that support the team at the top (and emerging leaders) to lead their individual and collective transformation journey.**



15. Prototype by acting from the now and regular review cycles (support structures)

16. Co-evolve the system by using the prototypes as seeds through linking micro- with macro-level leadership





17. Never give up. Never give up. **You are not alone.**

Four Levels of Responding to Change

*Manifest
action*

1. Reacting: quick fixes

*Process,
structure*

2. Redesigning: policies

Thinking

3. Reframing: values, beliefs

*Source
of energy,
inspiration
and will*

4. Regenerating: sources of
creativity and self



ENTERING THE AGE OF DISRUPTION

1. How to reinvent our economy?

(relink financial capital with real economy)

2. How to reinvent our democracy?

(relink government with citizens/communities)

3. How to reinvent our education?

(relink learning with the learner's essential self)

→ **Who are we as human beings?**

(relink self and Self)

Resources and Literature

- Scharmer, C. Otto (2007). Theory U: Leading from the Emerging Future As It Emerges. The Social Technology of Presencing, Cambridge, MA: SoL Press.
- Senge, P., C. O. Scharmer, J. Jaworski, and B. S. Flowers. (2004). Presence: Human Purpose and the Field of the Future, Cambridge, MA: SoL Press.
- www.presencing.com (put yourself on the Presencing Institute mailing list that will announce Otto's forthcoming book on Society 4.0: From Ego- to Eco-system Economies)
- www.ottoscharmer.com