



## Art of Dialogue

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This handbook bases on different other scripts and handbooks, mainly the Companion compiled and edited by Helen Titchen Beeth and Steve Ryman in January 2016 for [www.artofhosting.be](http://www.artofhosting.be) and the Art of Hosting work book for the training in Finland 2012, both shared in the NING discussion <http://artofhosting.ning.com/forum/topics/handouts-workbooks>. Furthermore there's content from the site <http://liberatingstructures.com/> and the journaling exercises are taken from <https://www.presencing.com/tools/guided-journaling>. The Design For Wiser Action template is taken from <http://aoh-vorarlberg.weebly.com/design-for-wiser-action.html>.

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# The World Café

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Picture a room full of people, all sitting in groups of 4 or 5 around small tables, in rapt conversation with each other around the same question – a question that is engagingly relevant to their lives or their work. After 20 minutes or so, something unusual happens: all but one person at every table get up, move randomly to another table, sit down again and carry on talking, continuing the conversation around that same question. 20 minutes later, it happens again – people move on to sit in another constellation, and continue to talk. At the end of this round, groups are invited to share the insights that have arisen from the conversation at their tables. These are noted, displayed, captured for further action. This is the essence of the World Café.

This is just one description of how a World Café conversation can unfold. There are many possible variations: a different question can be used for each round, with each building on the previous. The conversations can be ‘harvested’ in between each round instead of at the end, especially where this helps the build up. Perhaps there is time for only two rounds, or perhaps there might be four. The possibilities are almost endless.

## When to use World Café

World Café fits very well in the divergent phase of any process, and can serve equally well for convergence and harvesting, provided the questions are crafted appropriately. It is particularly effective in surfacing the collective wisdom of large groups of diverse people. The small-table format ensures that the voices of all participants (even the most timid) can be heard in a short time, regardless of the size of the group, and that the full range of perspectives in the room can be surfaced for the whole group to see. When used early on in a longer process using multiple conversation formats, World Café is a great way of breaking the ice and giving people the appetite to engage with people they do not know.

The café format is very flexible and adapts to many different purposes - information and knowledge sharing, relationship building, reflection, exploration and action planning.

## 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.

### **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

### **Find out more**

For a more detailed explanation of the World Café and instructions on how to host one, see:

<http://www.theworldcafe.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Cafe-To-Go-Revised.pdf>

The World Café website:

<http://www.theworldcafe.com/>

The World Café community:

<http://www.theworldcafecommunity.org/>

# Open Space Technology

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Imagine going to a meeting where there is no preset agenda, only an invitation in the form of a question that is burningly relevant to your work or your life, and the knowledge that you will meet others who are as passionate about the topic as you are. Together with the other participants you will take full responsibility for ensuring that you get to talk about what you want to talk about. Individuals post sessions on the large blank agenda on the wall and everybody moves freely between self-organising conversations in break-out rooms or small circles for most of the duration of the meeting. Towards the end, everybody gets back together to share the fruits of their conversations and announce any action that they have decided to take as a result.

In Open Space, participants create and manage their own agenda of parallel working sessions around a central theme of strategic importance. With groups of 5 to 2000+ people, Open Space can work for different durations: a session of 2 hours, a one-day workshop, or a three-day conference.

## When to use Open Space

Open Space works best when the group shares an issue of real concern, the work to be done is complex and urgent, the people and ideas involved are diverse, and the passion for resolution (and potential for conflict) are high. Designed to unleash the self-organising capacity of groups of any size, Open Space is an ideal method to use in the divergent and emergent phases of a longer process using different methodologies. People generally love the sense of spaciousness and freedom afforded by Open Space.

## 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.

### **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

### **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

## Find out more

General introduction:

[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open\\_Space\\_Technology](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_Space_Technology)

A more detailed explanation of Open Space Technology and how to host it:

<http://openspaceworld.org/wp2/open/>

A brief users' guide to Open Space Technology:

[http://www.openspaceworld.com/users\\_guide.htm](http://www.openspaceworld.com/users_guide.htm)

The Tao of Holding Space, by Chris Corrigan:

<http://www.chriscorrigan.com/parkinglot/the- tao-of-holding-space/>

# Appreciative Inquiry

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Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a strategy for intentional change that identifies the best of 'what is' in order to pursue dreams and possibilities of 'what could be'. It is an intentional move away from the 'problem-based' perspective towards a cooperative search for strengths, passions and life-giving forces that are found within every system.

Appreciative inquiry is often offered as a comprehensive, structured change process in organisations and communities. When used in this way, it goes through four successive phases: 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 Art of Hosting practice rarely applies the full AI process. Rather, it has adopted the spirit of Appreciative Inquiry, which leans towards possibility and an appreciative mindset, often with a transformational impact. The phase most commonly applied in hosted processes is the discovery phase, often through conversations or semi-structured interviews in pairs or triads.

## 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

## General flow of an Appreciative Inquiry process:

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

### Discovery:

- Identifying organizational processes that work well.

**Dream:**

- Envisioning processes that would work well in the future.

**Design:**

- Planning and prioritizing those processes.

**Delivery:**

- Implementing the proposed design.

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

At the center 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 organization?

**When to use Appreciative Inquiry**

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 also be used as a way of opening a meeting or conversation by identifying what already works. What do you most value about yourself, your colleagues / neighbours, your work, your organisation / community? It is most often used in the divergent phase of a hosted process.

**Find out more**

Appreciative inquiry commons: <https://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/>

Appreciative inquiry Europe network: <http://aicommunity.net>

# Collective Story Harvesting

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Storytelling is one of the most powerful knowledge management tools of the Art of Hosting community. Contained in our stories is both the experience and learning that will grow our capacities to use the Art of Hosting practice in ever more complex spaces. As the depth and scale of our work increases, our practice stories offer us guideposts for innovation, process development and how to create robust containers for conversations that really matter.

During August and September 2010 we began to experiment in Art of Hosting trainings with combining storytelling and harvesting to build our capacity in both these mediums; we were *hosting the harvest*. Collective harvesting enables us to track many arcs of a single story simultaneously, meaning we can practice targeted listening and group learning, while offering a gift to the story holders, as well as the group as a whole in the form of collective meaning making. Group harvesting is an ideal way to surface the many insights, innovations and a-ha's that exist beneath the surface of our stories and to take learning around our practice to a deeper level.

## How does collective harvesting of practice stories work?

First, you need a good story about a change process that was run using Art of Hosting principles and practice – ideally one that has enough complexity, scale and duration to make it interesting. In our Art of Hosting community, we have the stories of the European Commission, healthcare projects in Columbus, Ohio and Nova Scotia, the UK FinanceLab and Annecto in Melbourne, Australia as some key examples of this type of story, but any systemic story will do.

It is best to have those directly connected to the story on hand to tell it, and it can be more interesting to hear from more than one person involved in the story. More voices add depth and richness, as well as a variety of points of view.

The story does not need to be an often-told one, or polished in any form. In fact, this process can be used to help polish a story and give the storytellers input on how to focus and refine the story to be told to different audiences.

We've found that group harvesting takes time – at least 90 minutes is the minimum time needed. If you are working with a group of harvesters during a training, or with people who haven't done this type of process before, then keeping the storytelling to around 30 minutes is advisable, otherwise it is easy for listeners to become overloaded. If you are working with a practice team or your purpose is to create

maximum learning around a story, then you may want to work on the interplay between story, harvest and learning for a half day, a day or even longer.

### Preparing for collective harvesting:

First check with your storytellers and make them an invitation. Stories respond to invitation and when a heartfelt invitation is present, often a story will come out in a whole new way and offer new learning to those telling it. A group harvest is a gift to those telling and those harvesting, and should be offered as such.

Next, decide on the arcs you would like to harvest. Ideally this could be agreed with the storyholders and the listeners, depending on where they want to focus their learning.

As in any Art of Hosting process, you are planning for the harvest. Take as much time as you need to discuss exactly what you want to get out of this process and what will happen to the harvest afterwards. You'll need at least one person harvesting each arch you've chosen and more than one can harvest the same arch simultaneously. Here are some to choose from:

- Narrative Arc: The thread of the story – people, events, stages. You might also harvest facts, emotions and values that are part of the story, etc.
- Process Arc: What interventions, processes, applications, discoveries happened?
- Pivotal Points: When did breakthroughs occur, what did we learn?
- Application: What can we learn from this story for application in our own or other systems?
- Taking Change to Scale: What can we learn from this story about taking change to scale?
- Questions: What questions arise from this story that we could ask of any system?
- Synchronicity & Magic: What happened during this story that pointed to synchronicity and the magic in the middle?
- Specific theme: Harvest the story using a specific theme, like collaborative leadership, the art of participation, etc, and see what it tells you
- Art of Hosting pattern arc: The 6 Breaths: Where did each breath occur during the story? The 5th organisational paradigm: Where did new forms of governance and working occur? Core team/calling team: What did we learn about holding the centre of this work? There may be others as well.
- Principles: What principles of working can be gleaned from this story? What did we learn about participatory practices? What principles of complex living systems were reflected in this work?
- The StoryField: How did the field of the system's story change? Can you name

the story or metaphor the system started with and what it moved to?

If you have other talents in your group around graphic facilitation/visuals, poetry, music, mindmapping, art, etc. you may also want to invite a harvest in this form. Each of these will add a greater richness, diversity and enjoyment to the harvest.

## **General flow of a Collective Story Harvesting:**

### **Framing & Introduction:**

- Welcome people to the session. Make the invitation publically to the storytellers. Explain the arcs and ask for volunteers.

### **Storytelling:**

- Ask the storytellers to tell the story and the group to harvest. Be clear about the time allocated for the storytelling.

### **Collective harvest:**

- Give the storytellers materials to do their harvest of the harvest. Ask each of the harvesters to report in on what they found. Take at least as long for this as for the storytelling. Each of the harvests will have more depth than can be told during a first round. It might be helpful to have more than one round of harvest, or for the rest of the group to question each harvester to draw out additional insights.

### **Response from the tellers:**

- What were the gifts to you from this group harvest? What are you taking away from this session?

### **Response from the group:**

- What were the gifts to you from this group harvest? What are you taking away from this session?

### **Closing the session:**

- Thank you to the storytellers and the harvesters. Any final remarks about what will happen to the harvest now that it has been heard. Is there enough here to return to it again and see what else surfaces? Do you want to come back as a group and hear the next version of the story?

### **Materials and set-up:**

Ideally create a large circle with tellers as part of the circle. You may need some small tables for those harvesting onto flipchart, or they may be fine harvesting onto the floor. You'll need plenty of coloured pens and other art supplies may also be helpful.

You may want to have recording equipment on hand if you'd like to video the story and the results. It's also helpful to photograph graphic harvest.

### **Find out more about collective story harvesting**

More resources are available on the Art of Hosting community website (scroll down to the section on Collective Story Harvest):

<http://artofhosting.ning.com/page/core-art-of-hosting-practices>

# Circle Practice

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Circle, is one ancient form of 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. Peer Spirit Circle is also a modern methodology that calls on this tradition and helps people gather in conversations that fulfill their potential for dialogue, replenishment and wisdom-based change.

## What is Circle Good For?

One of the beautiful things about circle is its adaptability to a variety of groups, issues and timeframes. Circle can be the process used for the duration of a gathering, particularly if the group is relatively small and time for deep reflection is a primary aim. Circle can also be used as a means for “checking in” and “checking out”, or a way of making decisions together, particularly for decisions based on consensus.

## Four Agreements of Circle

- Listen without judgment
- Offer what you can; ask for what you need
- Silence is also part of the conversation
- Respect confidences

## 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)

## Middles

- Use a listening tool (talking piece, listening piece)
- Harvest (make visible what has occurred, including the energy and relationships)
- Reflect

## Ends

- Check-out (even a word or two on what just happened, what is different now)
- Close the space (closing thought or observation)

- Release people from this intense listening and learning back to a less formal social space

### **Principles of Circle:**

- Rotate leadership
- Take responsibility
- Have a higher purpose that you gather around

### **Practice of Circle:**

- 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

# Wicked Question Game

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“If I had an hour to solve a problem I'd spend 55 minutes thinking about the problem and 5 minutes thinking about solutions.” (Albert Einstein)

The Game is all about deepening a question, turning it more wicked. It's played in groups of 5, three seating, two standing besides them. The three that sit have a conversation about their own questions by only asking questions. The two standing ones can intervene by taking one of the three seating ones out and take a seat.

It's a great learning about one's own questions, unchallenged assumptions and world views. About how to host, and how to intervene. About to know, when it's enough.

Objective: find the question behind the question

## General flow:

### Introduction (10-15 minutes)

- The rules are explained
- Every participant has 2 minutes to find an open question that is currently relevant to him/her and writes it on a moderation card
- Teams of 5 are formed, they take 3 chairs and get together
- 3 are sitting on chairs in a circle to participate in the game, 2 are standing next to them to observe
- The observers can at any time switch places with somebody sitting to participate in the game

### Question phase (20-30 minutes)

- One of the questions written on a moderation card is read out to start the game
- The other sitting participants can react to this question with another open question
- At any time, another sitting participant can read his/her question

### Closing & reflection phase (15-20 minutes)

- When the time is up or the participants decide the game is over, it's over
- Every participant writes the question which is currently most relevant to her/him on a moderation card
- The initial question and the resulting question can be read out and/or pinned on a pin board
- You can make a round on “How did you do? What did you observe?”

## Rules

- It is only allowed to converse in open questions (what, how, why, who, ...)
- It is not allowed to give answers or ask rhetorical questions
- Every sitting participant can at any time contribute a question
- The questions are posed to the circle, not to specific participants

# 25/10 Crowd Sourcing

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Rapidly Generate and Sift a Group's Most Powerful Actionable Ideas (30 min.)

What is made possible? You can help a large crowd generate and sort their bold ideas for action in 30 minutes or less! With 25/10 Crowd Sourcing, you can spread innovations “out and up” as everyone notices the patterns in what emerges. Though it is fun, fast, and casual, it is a serious and valid way to generate an uncensored set of bold ideas and then to tap the wisdom of the whole group to identify the top ten. Surprises are frequent!

## Five Structural Elements – Min Specs

### 1. Structuring Invitation

- Invite participants to think big and bold and discover the most attractive of their ideas together by asking, “If you were ten times bolder, what big idea would you recommend? What first step would you take to get started?”

### 2. How Space Is Arranged and Materials Needed

- Open space without chairs or tables
- Participants will be standing and milling about
- Index cards, one for each participant

### 3. How Participation Is Distributed

- Everyone is included and participates at the same time
- Everyone has an equal opportunity to contribute

### 4. How Groups Are Configured

- Individually to generate bold idea and first step and write on index card
- Everyone standing to pass cards around
- Pairs to exchange thoughts
- Individually to score the card participants have in their hand
- Whole group for sharing highest final scores and ideas

### 5. Sequence of Steps and Time Allocation

- Explain the process. First, every participant writes on an index card his or her bold idea and first step. Then people mill around and cards are passed from person to person to quickly review. When the bell rings, people stop passing

cards and pair up to exchange thoughts on the cards in their hands. Then participants individually rate the idea/step on their card with a score of 1 to 5 (1 for low and 5 for high) and write it on the back of the card. When the bell rings, cards are passed around a second time until the bell rings and the scoring cycle repeats. This is done for a total of five scoring rounds. At the end of cycle five, participants add the five scores on the back of the last card they are holding. Finally, the ideas with the top ten scores are identified and shared with the whole group. 3 min.

- Demonstrate one exchange-and-scoring interaction using a sample index card to clarify what is expected during the milling, namely no reading aloud of the cards, only passing the cards from person to person so that each person has one and only one card in hand. The process can be confusing for some people. 2 min.

### General flow:

- Invite each participant to write a big idea and first step on his or her card. 5 min.
- Conduct five 3-minute exchange-and-scoring rounds with time for milling (and laughing) in between. 15 min.
- Ask participants to add the 5 scores on the back of the card they are holding
- Find the best-scoring ideas with the whole group by conducting a countdown. Ask, "Who has a 25?" Invite each participant, if any, holding a card scored 25 to read out the idea and action step. Continue with "Who has a 24?," "Who has a 23" .... Stop when the top ten ideas have been identified and shared. 5 min.
- End by asking, "What caught your attention about 25/10?" 2 min.

# Guided Journaling

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Guided journaling leads participants through a self-reflective process following the different phases of the U. This practice allows participants to access deeper levels of self-knowledge, and to connect this knowledge to concrete actions.

## Purpose:

Guided journaling leads practitioners through a process of self-reflection that moves through the U-process. This process allows participants to step into a deeper level of reflection than in an un-guided journaling process, and identify concrete action steps.

## Uses & Outcome:

- Access deeper levels of self-reflection & knowledge.
- Learn how to use Journaling as a reflective tool.
- Connect self-reflection to concrete action steps.

## Set Up:

### People & Place

Journaling Practice can be used in groups of any size. The exercise follows the co-sensing phase meaning that participants have already moved through the left side of the U-Process. It is important that the room is quiet and no noises or other distractions in the environment interrupt the participants.

### Time

A minimum of 45 minutes is required. Depending of the context this journaling process can take up to 60-90 min.

### Materials

Pen and paper for each participant.

## Process:

### Step 1 Preparation

Prepare a quiet space that allows each participant to enter into a process of self-reflection without distractions.

### Step 2 Guided Journaling Questions

Read one question after the other; invite the participants to journal guided by the respective question. Go one by one through the questions. Move to the next question when you sense that the majority of the group is ready. Don't give

participants too much time. It is important to get into a flow and not to think too much.

### **Guided Journaling Questions:**

1. Challenges: Look at yourself from outside as if you were another person: What are the 3 or 4 most important challenges or tasks that your life (work and non-work) currently presents?
2. Self: Write down 3 or 4 important facts about yourself. What are the important accomplishments you have achieved or competencies you have developed in your life (examples: raising children; finishing your education; being a good listener)?
3. Emerging Self: What 3 or 4 important aspirations, areas of interest, or undeveloped talents would you like to place more focus on in your future journey (examples: writing a novel or poems; starting a social movement; taking your current work to a new level)?
4. Frustration: What about your current work and/or personal life frustrates you the most?
5. Energy: What are your most vital sources of energy? What do you love?
6. Inner resistance: What is holding you back? Describe 2 or 3 recent situations (in your work or personal life) when you noticed one of the following three voices kicking in, preventing you from exploring the situation you were in more deeply:
7. Voice of Judgment: shutting down your open mind (downloading instead of inquiring)
8. Voice of Cynicism: shutting down your open heart (disconnecting instead of relating)
9. Voice of Fear: shutting down your open will (holding on to the past or the present instead of letting go)
10. The crack: Over the past couple of days and weeks, what new aspects of your Self have you noticed? What new questions and themes are occurring to you now?
11. Your community: Who makes up your community, and what are their highest hopes in regard to your future journey? Choose three people with different perspectives on your life and explore their hopes for your future (examples: your family; your friends; a parentless child on the street with no access to food, shelter, safety, or education). What might you hope for if you were in their shoes and looking at your life through their eyes?
12. Helicopter: Watch yourself from above (as if in a helicopter). What are you doing? What are you trying to do in this stage of your professional and personal journey?
13. Imagine you could fast-forward to the very last moments of your life, when it is time for you to pass on. Now look back on your life's journey as a whole. What would you want to see at that moment? What footprint do you want to leave behind on the planet? What would you want to be remembered for by the

- people who live on after you?
14. From that (future) place, look back at your current situation as if you were looking at a different person. Now try to help that other person from the viewpoint of your highest future Self. What advice would you give? Feel and sense what the advice is and then write it down.
  15. Now return again to the present and crystallize what it is that you want to create: your vision and intention for the next 3-5 years. What vision and intention do you have for yourself and your work? What are some essential core elements of the future that you want to create in your personal, professional, and social life? Describe as concretely as possible the images and elements that occur to you.
  16. Letting-go: What would you have to let go of in order to bring your vision into reality? What is the old stuff that must die? What is the old skin (behaviors, thought processes, etc.) that you need to shed?
  17. Seeds: What in your current life or context provides the seeds for the future that you want to create? Where do you see your future beginning?
  18. Prototyping: Over the next three months, if you were to prototype a microcosm of the future in which you could discover “the new” by doing something, what would that prototype look like?
  19. People: Who can help you make your highest future possibilities a reality? Who might be your core helpers and partners?
  20. Action: If you were to take on the project of bringing your intention into reality, what practical first steps would you take over the next 3 to 4 days?

### **Step 3 Reflection on the Practice**

Split up the group into pairs, and invite participants to reflect on their experience. Again, mention that journaling is private and that each participant decides what she or he wants to share.

### **Principles:**

1. Journaling is a personal process. Never ask participants to share their journaling notes in public.
2. After completing a journaling practice you may create an opportunity to reflect on the experience of journaling. Again: emphasize that participants decide what they want to share.
3. Journaling means that you think through the writing not to think and reflect, and then write up the reflection. With the instruction emphasize that participants just start writing and see what emerges.

### **Resources:**

C. Otto Scharmer, (2009) Theory U: Learning from the Future as it emerges. Berrett-Koehler: San Francisco. Chapters 21.

# Harvesting

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Here are some examples of the many ways to collect the results of important conversations and to make sense of them. Be creative and adapt them to your contexts and needs.

## Harvesting a check-in circle by dedicated harvesters:

When you open a process and invite a group to check in, for example in circle, it is usually delicate to ask people to write on cards because you need them to become present to themselves and to the process first. A good solution is for a pair of dedicated harvesters to capture in turn the contribution from everyone. They should ideally sit next to each other with a stack of cards and a marker each so they can complement each other and avoid duplications. After the circle they may display the cards on a board or a flipchart and cluster the contributions by meaning to surface the patterns.

## Cards Harvest after a World Café or in Circle:

After a Café session, you may invite each person in the room to identify their key insights or questions inspired by the conversation they have just taken part in. A good way of then collecting the cards/insights on a board or a wall paper is to ask anyone to start with one (and only one) item and for the others to attentively listen and add to this item something similar or close. This way, some natural clusters of meaning are created by the participants themselves. Ideally, as a host, let the group make sense themselves or have a dedicated host by the board helping with the clustering (to avoid getting trapped into the content). You can propose the same process in circle with cards dropped on the floor and clustered in real time.

## Sharing results collected on flipchart sheets:

One of the most often used ways of converging the reflections after any type of process (Open Space, World Café, etc). The hosts of the sessions or spokespersons of the groups bring their flipchart into the group (usually in circle) and speak in turn what their key findings are (issues explored, solutions identified, next steps). Keeping the discipline of the speakers when time becomes short can be a challenge!

## Exhibition / 'Gallery Walk' after an Open Space session:

With large groups, the flipchart technique described above will probably take too

long. An alternative is an exhibition style in one or two rounds where each session host is invited to very briefly (30 seconds to a minute max.) share their key insights, as a way of pitching their session for more people to join the more in-depth sharing moment that follows. Once each session host has spoken, you apply Open Space principles again (the 'law of two feet' and people can go to learn from and contribute to the session(s) of their choice. This enables the host to enrich his/her harvest with new perspectives.

### Collective mind map:

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, visualise, structure and classify ideas, and as an aid in study, organisation, problem solving, decision making, and writing (Wikipedia).

The collective mind map is a quick and simple way to create a shared overview of issues and opportunities relevant to a particular subject or challenge. The mind-map is led by a host and always has a clear focus that can be captured in a "burning" question.

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

The host explains the procedure for making a collective mind map and presents the ground-rules:

- 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.

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 host, 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.

Two scribes draw up the actual map, or else one person familiar with the mind mapping software, optionally assisted by another person. 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.

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 - sticky dots they can place on the themes or issues they see as most important. Voting clearly indicates which themes or issues have the highest leverage for further action.

### **Live clustering**

Imagine you have invited a group to share (through Appreciative Inquiry) the success stories they are most proud of in their work and you want to distil out of those stories the strengths demonstrated.

At the end of the interview phase, invite each person to write on a card the key strength from his/her story. You then invite people to circulate in the room to find others with items that are same or similar. Participants will quickly self-organise into groups of different sizes and in a completely unpredictable way. People enjoy this process and it is effective with groups of any size - a group of 100 people can organise themselves in 2 to 3 minutes.

Once the groups are stabilised, go from one group to another (use a mike if necessary) and ask them to speak their key concept to everyone and maybe add some nuances in the groups. You may want to invite the groups to stick their key concept and all their cards on a board.

If this exercise is part of a process designed to surface key challenges or possible improvements or key developments needed, you can add a next step by inviting people to reflect in their groups about what can be done in the area they have identified.

### **Harvesting templates: Open Space, Pro Action Café, etc.**

Pre-defined templates can be suggested for session hosts to collect the key results of Open Space or Pro Action Café sessions. The template can be made available on a sheet of flipchart. If laptops are available, prepare an electronic template into which results can be input in real time. The results can then be presented by the hosts to the plenary, projected on screen and inserted into the report of the process. Give good thought to the information you want to gather, and include questions that will invite this.

### **Self-harvested check-out circle:**

A good, swift way of checking out of a process is to invite participants to identify their key learning from the process, write it on a card, and drop it on the floor in front of them. In this way you can see when everybody is ready and then hear

what is on the card (and nothing more). This allows a group of 100 people to check out in less than 10 minutes. And you can collect all insights afterwards.

### **Taking photos during a participatory process:**

As a host, taking pictures helps to focus one's attention on the process and to better sense what is happening as the process unfolds. It also helps to memorise people's faces. It is strongly recommended to systematically photograph all pieces of harvest, in case they go astray. If you take pictures of people while they are in conversation, always ask everyone for permission and mention the use you intend to make of them.

### **Creating a newsletter / harvest letter / report of the process:**

This always has a very positive impact on the participants. It can also inform those who could not be there. Above all, it will be an invaluable source of information for follow-up. Depending on the context and the needs, you may produce a shorter version with the key insights (sort of executive summary) and an extensive version with all detailed results. If you intend to provide such a document, make sure the hosting team includes dedicated harvesters present throughout the process, so that the newsletter can be delivered as soon as possible after the event.

### **Landscape**

A Landscape is a visual representation of a hosted conversation process. It shows both the what and the how of the process. To many practitioners, this is one of the signatures of the Art of Hosting.

Drawing a draft landscape during the design phase can help the hosting team visualise the logical flow of a process and how the steps build on each other.

A landscape can be a work of art, or it can be very simple. The purpose is to have a visual representation of the inner logic of the process. Any graphics should support the content, not overshadow it.

A landscape piques people's curiosity about the process as soon as they enter the room. It supports presentation of the process at the start, and provides a visible, dedicated space for harvesting the results of conversations.

### **Graphic recording**

Graphic recording – also known as strategic illustration - is an advanced harvesting

technique which consists in graphically representing the outcomes of conversational processes in real time. It enhances the attention and retention of participants and highlights important insights and patterns which can be reflected back to the group to seed their next reflections. Graphic records are also a vivid memory of an event.

# Design For Wisser Action - Template

