

# PARTICIPATORY PRACTICE

## APPROACHES

Many of the tools on these cards are from The Art of Hosting, a body of practice and work that has been alive in the world for more than 20 years. It began from seeds, which seem to have sprouted and grown in several places at the same time. Connections between people working with conversational processes for change, including Monica Nissen, Tøke Møller, Tim Merry, Meg Wheatley, and the founders of World Café and Peer Spirit Circle, to mention a few, began to form, and the Art was named as it grew.

Art of Hosting is a truly co-created and co-owned practice. There is no central organising body or accreditation. It is a self-organising network held by some principles and practices. It is always evolving. It takes shape in practitioners in different ways, even within the same practitioner, over time.

These cards are intended as a prompt for practitioners who have participated in the Art of Hosting in Scotland, to support their practice.

# WORLD CAFE

The World Café is a method for creating a network of collaborative dialogue around questions that matter.



World Café assumes that:

- 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.
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- 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
  - Ask the table host to share key insights, questions, and ideas briefly with new table members, and then let folks move through the rounds
  - After you’ve moved through the rounds, allow some time for a whole-group harvest of the conversations.

# FOUR FOLD PRACTICE



The Four Fold Practice is a foundational framework and practice in the Art of Hosting. In the centre of the Four Fold Practice is **purpose**, the invisible leader - the reason for coming together to learn and work together in the first place. Have a strong purpose that attracts those people that care to the work.

## **Be present**

Host yourself first - be willing to sit in the chaos - keep the space open - sit in the fire of the present...

## **Practice conversation**

Be willing to listen fully, respectfully, without judgement and thinking you already know all the answer – practice conversation mindfully...

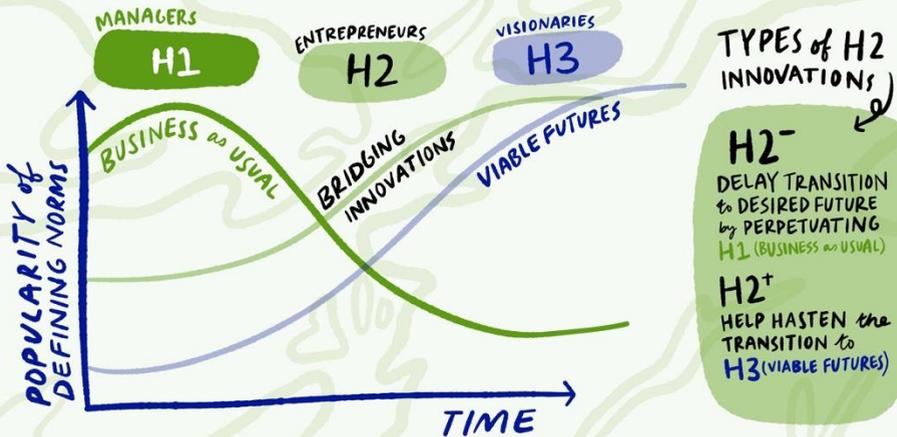
## **Host conversations**

Be courageous, inviting and willing to initiate conversations that matter - find and host powerful questions with the stakeholders – and then harvest them...

## **Community of practitioners**

Co-create and co-host with others, blending your knowing, experience and practices to work in authentic partnership.

# THREE HORIZONS



The three horizons (or '3H') model is a way of thinking about systems change and moving towards desired futures.

H1: Explore the present. What's working well? What are the challenges or limitations? Harvest ideas.

H3: Imagine the future. What does it look like? What values or principles guide this future? Harvest ideas.

H2: Explore the transition. What innovations are happening? Which ones might delay the transition (H2-) and which might help us get there (H2+)? Harvest ideas.

Connect the three horizons in the tangible harvest. Discuss what current activities support the changes we want to see, what innovations need supporting or evolving, and what is no longer sustainable. This can become a pathway or plan.

# OPEN SPACE TECHNOLOGY

WHOEVER  
COMES are  
the RIGHT  
PEOPLE



WHENEVER  
it STARTS is  
the RIGHT  
TIME



LAW of  
TWO  
FEET



WHATEVER  
HAPPENS is  
the ONLY THING  
that COULD HAVE



WHEN it's  
OVER it's  
OVER



The goal of Open Space Technology is to engage deeply and creatively around issues of concern. The agenda is set by people with the power and desire to see it through.

The guiding principles are described in the graphic, and the four roles:

Host—announces and hosts a workshop

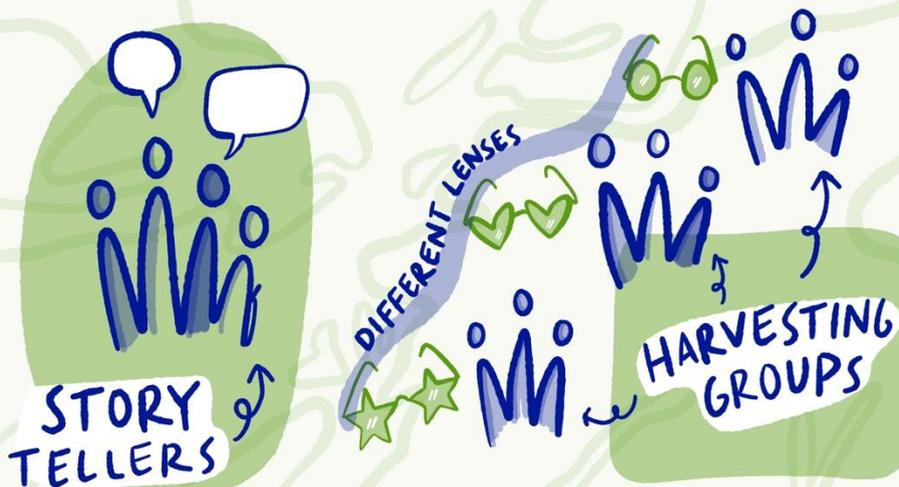
Participant—participates in a workshop

Bumble bee—goes between workshops, cross-pollinating

Butterfly—takes time out to reflect

- Invite 'convenors' with issues of concern to come into the circle, write the issue on paper and announce it to the group. They add a time and place to the paper and place it on a matrix agenda on the wall. Continue until there are no more agenda items.
- Participants go to the agenda wall and 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.
- These reports will be harvested and returned to the larger group.
- Host a closing circle where people are invited to share comments, insights and commitments arising from the process.

# COLLECTIVE STORY HARVEST



*"Collective Story Harvest is a storytelling process to unveil multiple facets, aspects and insights hidden deeply in the experiences of individuals, communities, teams, organisations or social systems:"* – CoLab International.

- Find an invite your storytellers to speak on a common thread or theme
- Identify lenses through which to listen to the stories (e.g. hearing opportunities, challenges)
- Support storytellers to develop their stories, making them aware of the lenses that will be used by the listeners
- Invite participants
- Break into storytelling groups and introduces selves to each other, invite each participant in the group to listen through a different lens
- Storyteller introduces themselves and tells story (10-15 minutes)
- Participants listen with their lenses
- Groups reconvene into groups of each lens (e.g. all the participants listening for challenges would meet in one group, all participants listening for opportunities in another), to explore commonalities across different stories for that particular lens (30 minutes)
- Invite whole group to convene for further harvesting, gathering what's been learned from all stories and lenses and the greater insights uncovered through the process
- Closing circle

# POWERFUL QUESTIONS



*The art of powerful questions is a foundational skill for working in a more participatory way and supporting groups with a wide variety of experience, interests and mindsets to find common ground together - Mary Alice Oliver*

The purpose or intention – of the meeting, of the practices, of the questions themselves – are at the heart of powerful questions.

Three dimensions of powerful questions to consider are

- the scope or scale of the questions – big enough to inspire new thinking, not so broad as to close down conversation
  - assumptions in the questions – notice assumptions and make visible/intentional
- construction of the questions – open, as present as possible, active language

Generally, it is best to co-create questions with a community.

# CIRCLE

LISTEN  
*with*  
ATTENTION



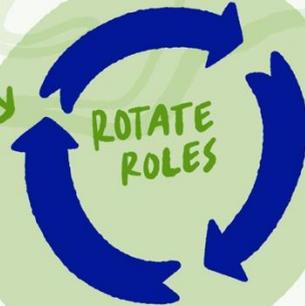
SPEAK  
*with*  
INTENTION

Circle is adaptable to a variety of groups, issues, and timeframes. Circle can be used for the duration of a gathering, particularly if the group is small and time for deep reflection is a primary aim. Circle can also be used for checking in and checking out or for making group decisions, particularly consensus decisions.

- Intention shapes the circle and determines who will come, how long it will meet, and what kinds of outcomes are to be expected
- It's helpful for the host or volunteer to begin with a gesture that shifts people's attention from social space to council space
- 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 may, when appropriate, holds objects that represent the intention of the circle.
  - Circle agreements can help in setting up deeper circle discussions
- A talking piece is often used as part of check-in, check-out, and whenever there is a desire to slow down the conversation

# APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

STORYTELLING  
→ TRIOS



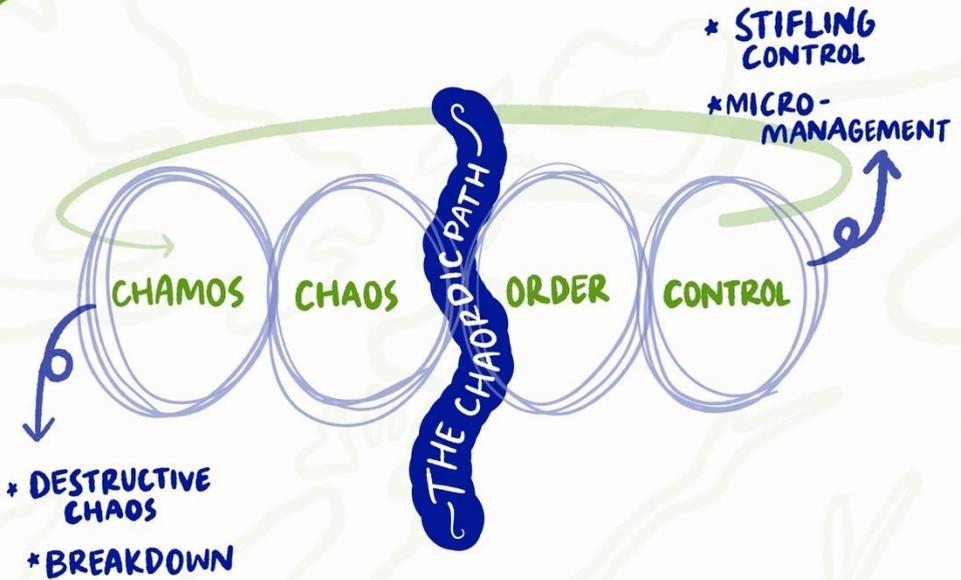
DEFINE DISCOVER DREAM DESIGN DELIVER

Born out of an Appreciative Inquiry approach, AI storytelling trios focus on the positives gained from an experience, and engages with powerful questions, and with the concept of living systems.

Storytelling trios offer a way to build relationships and discover the gifts and wisdom of lived experience that people carry. The shared process can open a space of appreciation, deeper relationship and trust.

- Start with a question with the potential to uncover the positive conditions or qualities of something
- Split into groups of three, each person taking one of the three roles
- Storyteller responds to question with a story; listener listens in silence (they can offer non-verbal cues) and harvests the positive conditions/qualities; witness notices the interaction and harvests positive actions and qualities
- Each story should last takes 15 minutes: 10 for the story to be told, 3 for listener reflection and 2 for witness reflection.
- Repeat three times and then feed back to main group in response to the question (not about the content of the stories)

# CHAORDIC PATH



The Chaordic Path, first described by Dee Hock, is a way to understand what is happening in the world, in our communities and organisations and within each of us. The chaordic path is the story of our natural world, as form arises out of chaos in nonlinear, complex, living systems. "At the edge of chaos" is where life innovates. The art is balance, not forcing either chaos or order.

## **Order-Control: the place of management**

The practices of management lie between order and control where things are predictable and stable. It is the place where 'more of the same' is needed, e.g. landing an airplane safely, operating on a patient, etc. It is where predictability is called for and where procedures and standards are clearly defined and need to be adhered to.

## **Chaos-Order: the place of leadership**

The practice of leadership, and particularly participatory leadership, lives in the place between chaos and order. When facing new challenges that cannot be met in the same way we are currently working, we need to learn new ways of operating. We need to invite others to share diverse knowledge, to innovate, and sense the way forward. The chaordic path is the path between chaos and order.