



How can we lead systemic change?

- Reading feedback from peers who missed last session
- Diving in activity
- Introduction to sustainability leadership skills & process
- Empathic listening exercise
- Coaching circle
- Debrief & closing

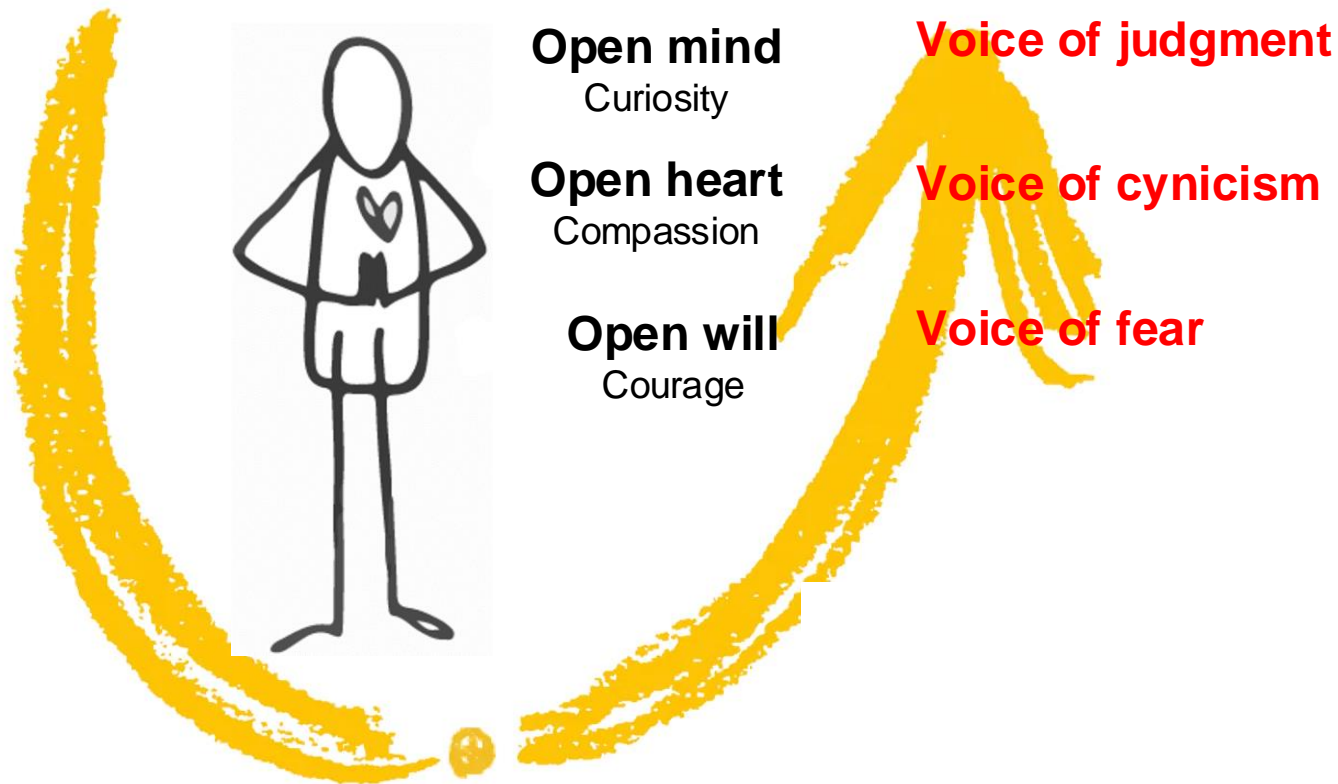
What capacities does leading require?

- According to Peter Senge & co (2015)
 - seeing the larger system
 - Systems lens – tragedy of the commons, iceberg model
 - shifting from reacting to co-creating the future
 - U process, iceberg model
 - fostering reflection and generative conversation
 - U process, Coaching circle

Systems leadership process



It only works if we cultivate 3 openings and fight 3 enemies.



This requires deep listening and generative conversations



1. Automatic

I listen from my mental habits. I reconfirm what I already know



2. Factual

I listen to content from other points of view. I notice new and disconfirming data.



3. Empathetic

I listen to others with curiosity and open heart. I see through the eyes of the other. I experience an emotional connection.



4. Generative

I listen from the emerging field of future possibility. I hold space for something really new to emerge. I am connected to something larger than myself. I experience a shift in identity and self.



Coaching circle

A key method of theory-U, also called case clinic or co-development

Coaching circle – Aim, principles and set up

▪ Aim

- Move from concepts of sustainability leadership to practice and application of Theory U principles
- Use collective wisdom to address a **current concrete important and personal** (= in which you are a key player/decision maker) leadership challenge and find new perspectives on this challenge

▪ Principles

- Trust the process
- Enter a non judgmental (also towards oneself!) and curious mindset
- Don't give advice, don't try to «fix» the problem
- Listen deeply
- Speak in “I” form
- Respect confidentiality

▪ Set up

- Groups of 4-5 persons
- 60 minutes in total

Coaching circle – Process (1)

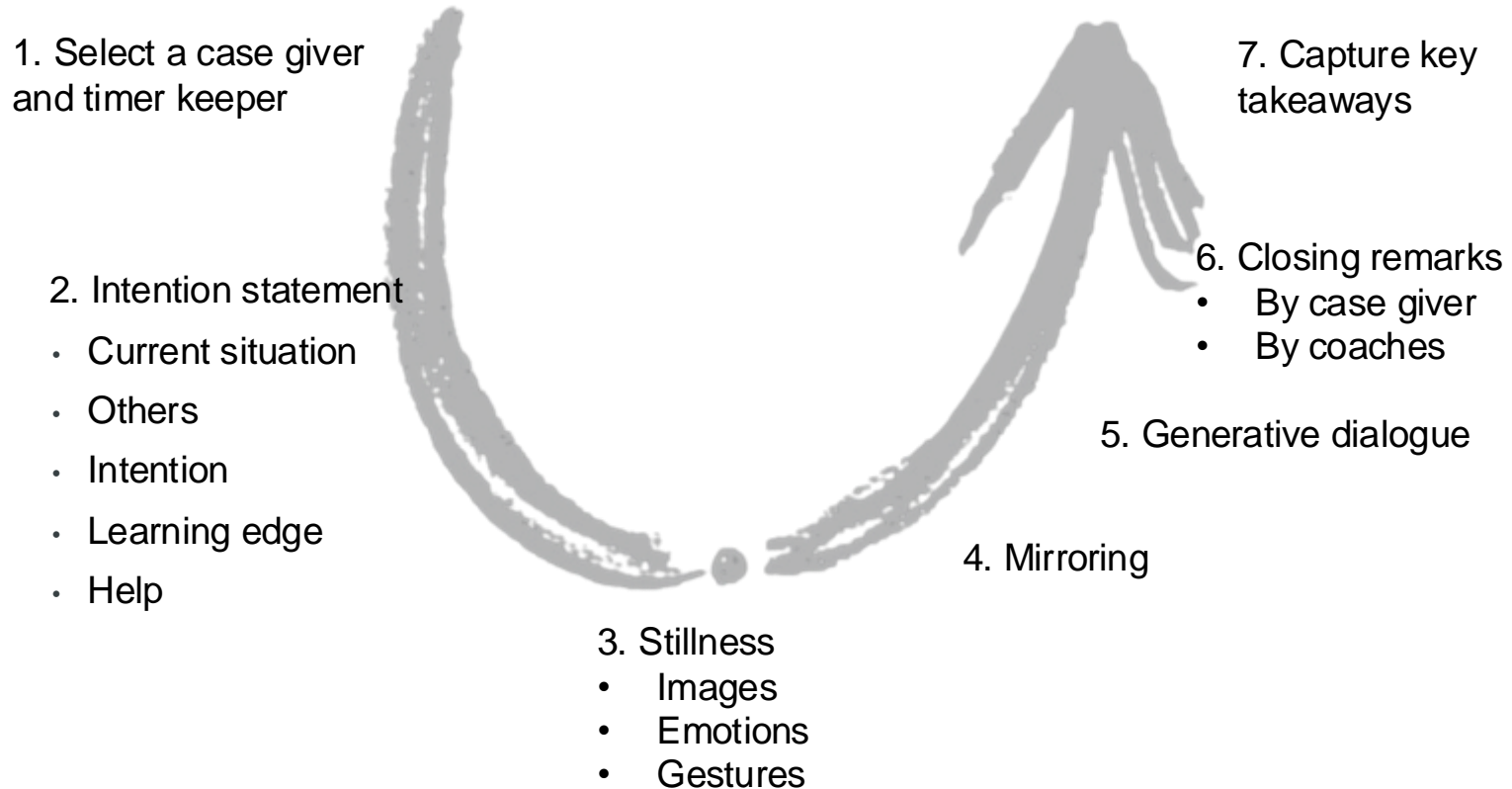
- **Step 1 Select a case giver and a time keeper** (8 mins.)
 - Write the title of your challenge that is **current, concrete, and important, and in which you are a key player/decision maker** (everyone)
 - Present in a few words your challenge to the group
 - Vote on a piece of paper for the case that you feel most drawn to. You can vote for yourself as well.
 - Based on the voting, confirm with the chosen case giver that he/she is willing to expose his/her case.
 - Choose a time keeper
- **Step 2: Intention statement** (10 mins.). The case giver describes the case using the following questions:
 - **Current situation:** What are the key challenges or questions?
 - **Others:** How might others view this situation?
 - **Intention:** What future are you trying to create?
 - **Learning edge:** What do you need to let go of, and what do you need to learn?
 - **Help:** Where do you need input or help?

Coaches may ask clarifying questions if needed.

Coaching circle– Process (2)

- **Step 3: Stillness** (2 mins.) Connect to the resonance of the story
 - Listen to your Open Mind: What **images/metaphors** arose?
 - Listen to your Open Heart: What **emotions** do you sense, and where are they in your body?
 - Listen to your Open Will: What **gestures** might represent the essence of what you are hearing?
- **Step 4: Mirroring** (10 mins.)
 - Each coach shares what came up during the silence or while listening to the case.
 - After listening to all the coaches, the case giver responds to what they said.
- **Step 5: Generative dialogue** (20 mins.)
 - Reflect together on the remarks of the case giver and move into a generative dialogue on how these observations can offer new perspectives on the case giver's situation and journey.
 - Go with the flow of the dialogue. Build on each other's ideas. Stay in service of the case giver without pressure to fix or resolve their challenge.
- **Step 6: Closing remarks** (8 mins.)
 - By case giver: How do I now see my situation and way forward? What actions would I like to take?
 - By coaches: Share a final reflection and what you have learned, and express your gratitude
- **Step 7: Capture key takeaways** (2 mins.)
 - Write down what you learned (individually)

Coaching circle– A mini-U Process



Listening self-assessment

Take some time to reflect on your quality of listening during the coaching circle. What percent of time did you feel engaged in each level of listening? What triggered shifts from one level of listening to another?



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2. Factual

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3. Empathetic

I listen to others with curiosity and open heart. I see through the eyes of the other. I experience an emotional connection.



4. Generative

I listen fully open to what's going on. I hold space for something new to be born. I experience a shift in identity and self.

Take-aways

- Sustainability-related issues display complex dynamics.
- Addressing this complexity calls for a systemic leadership posture.
- Theory U offers a mindset and tools to practice this systemic leadership posture on concrete matters.
- System leaders need to develop key capacities, including:
 - System analysis
 - Deep listening
 - Generative dialogue
 - Creativity
 - Collective leadership
 - ...

Tools – free to (re)use!

- **Harvest game:** experience a problematic system dynamic, and explore how to change it.
- **Iceberg model:** analyze complex issues, to identify better ways to address them.
- **Coaching circles:** support each other in addressing leadership challenges.

To go further

- Articles/books
 - Meadows, 2009, [Thinking in systems – a primer](#) (chapter 5, p.116-121 on the Tragedy of the commons)
 - Senge et al, 2015, [The Dawn of Systems leadership](#)
- Tools
 - Harvest game protocol in Booth Sweeney, Meadows, & Martin Meher, 2010, [The Systems thinking Playbook for Climate Change](#) (p.67-75)
 - [The iceberg model canva](#)
 - [Codevelopment \(case clinic\) protocol](#)
- Videos
 - [What is the tragedy of the commons](#) (5mins)
 - [A systems story](#) (5mins)
 - [The iceberg model](#) (7mins)
 - [Leverage points](#) (7mins)
 - [Systems leadership](#) (15mins)
 - [Theory U](#) (3 mins)
 - [Otto Sharmer on the 4 levels of listening](#) (13 mins)

Thank you!

We are at your disposal
for any questions after the
workshop

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