

Theory U: Leading From the Future as It Emerges

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Three Types of Complexity

Dynamic complexity:

Cause and effect are distant in space and time

⇒ **Whole system approach**

Generative complexity:

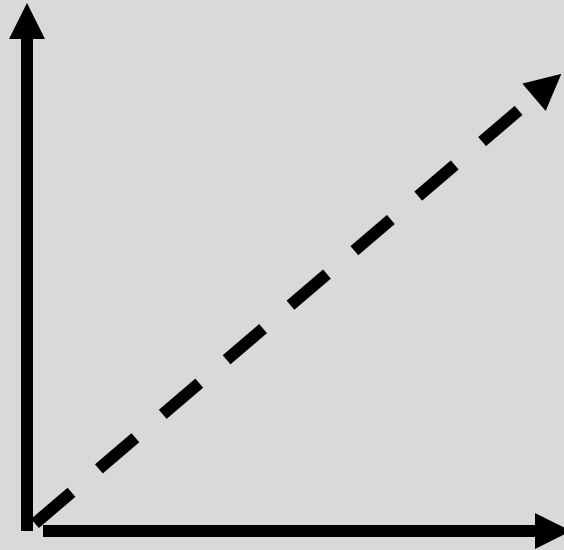
Disruptive patterns of innovation and change

- solution not known
- problem not able to be defined/may change as you go
- don't know actors to convene in early stages

Social complexity:

Actors have different views and interests

⇒ **Multi-stakeholder approach**



Three Types of Complexity

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Generative complexity:

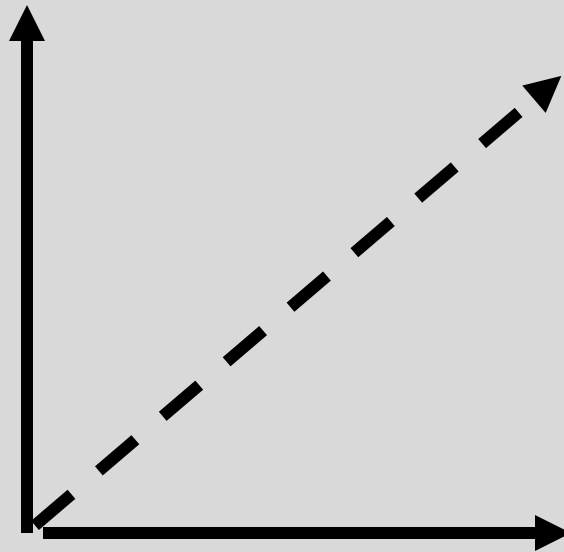
Disruptive patterns of innovation and change

⇒ **Sensing and presencing approach**

Social complexity:

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⇒ **Multi-stakeholder approach**



Four Levels of Responding to Change

*Manifest
action*

1. Reacting: quick fixes

*Process,
structure*

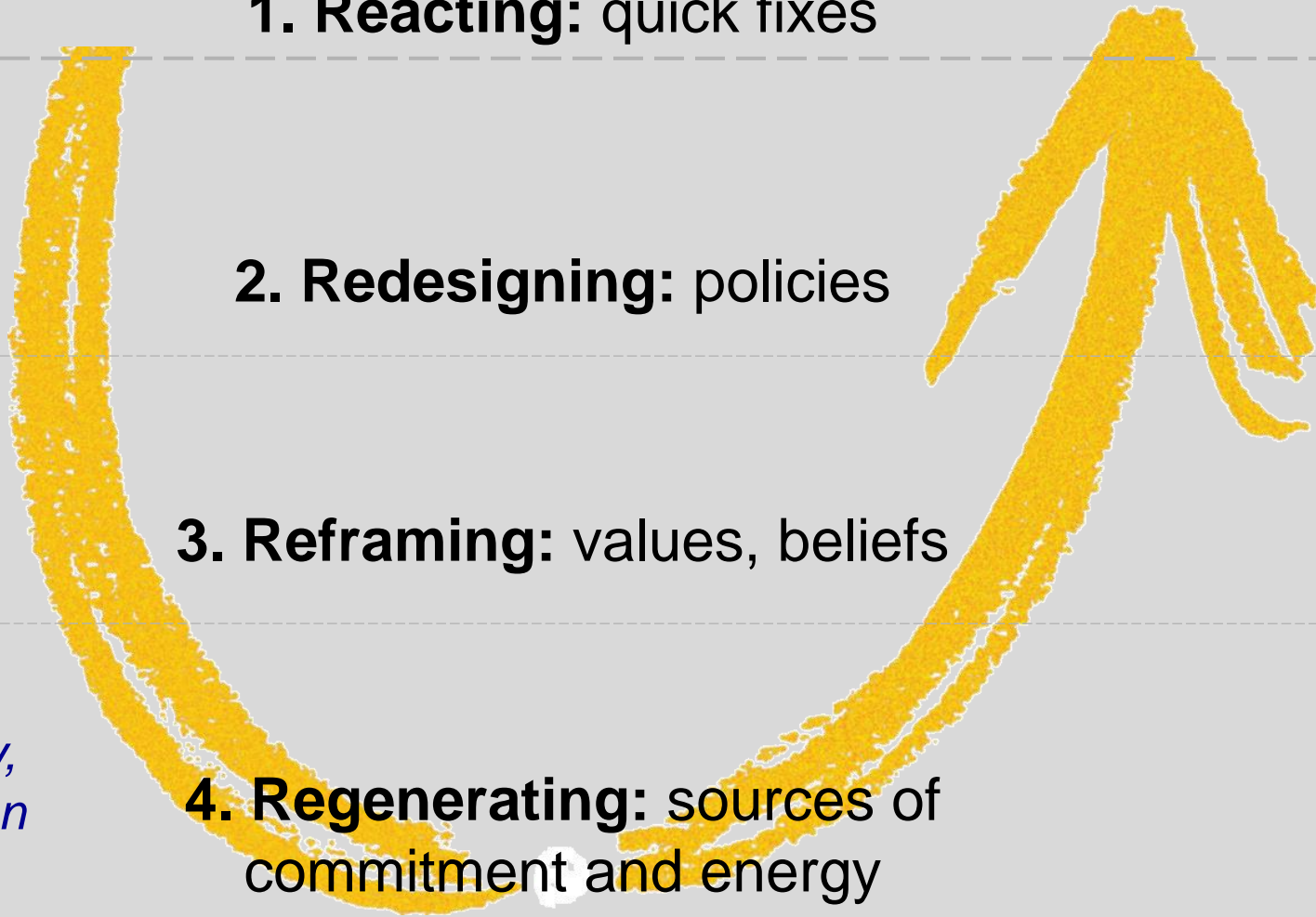
2. Redesigning: policies

Thinking

3. Reframing: values, beliefs

*Source
of energy,
inspiration
and will*

4. Regenerating: sources of
commitment and energy



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)

Sense-connect to highest future potential/possibility

Presence – bring the future into the now

The Blind Spot of Leadership

Results:

What



Process:

How



Source:

Who

Blind Spot: Inner place
from where we operate/
the level of consciousness

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

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

3 Movements of the U

Downloading

**Observe,
observe,
observe**

**Act in an
instant**

**Retreat and reflect:
Allow the inner knowing to
emerge**

Leadership: capacity to shift and focus collective attention

A Map for Multi-stakeholder Systems Change

Downloading and denial
(patterns of the past)

Embodying:
Institutionalizing the new in
processes and practices

Debate:
Seeing the problem
and blaming others

*Open
Mind*

Enacting:
Prototyping the new by
linking head, heart, hand

Dialogue:
Seeing multiple
perspectives including your
own part in creating the
issue

*Open
Heart*

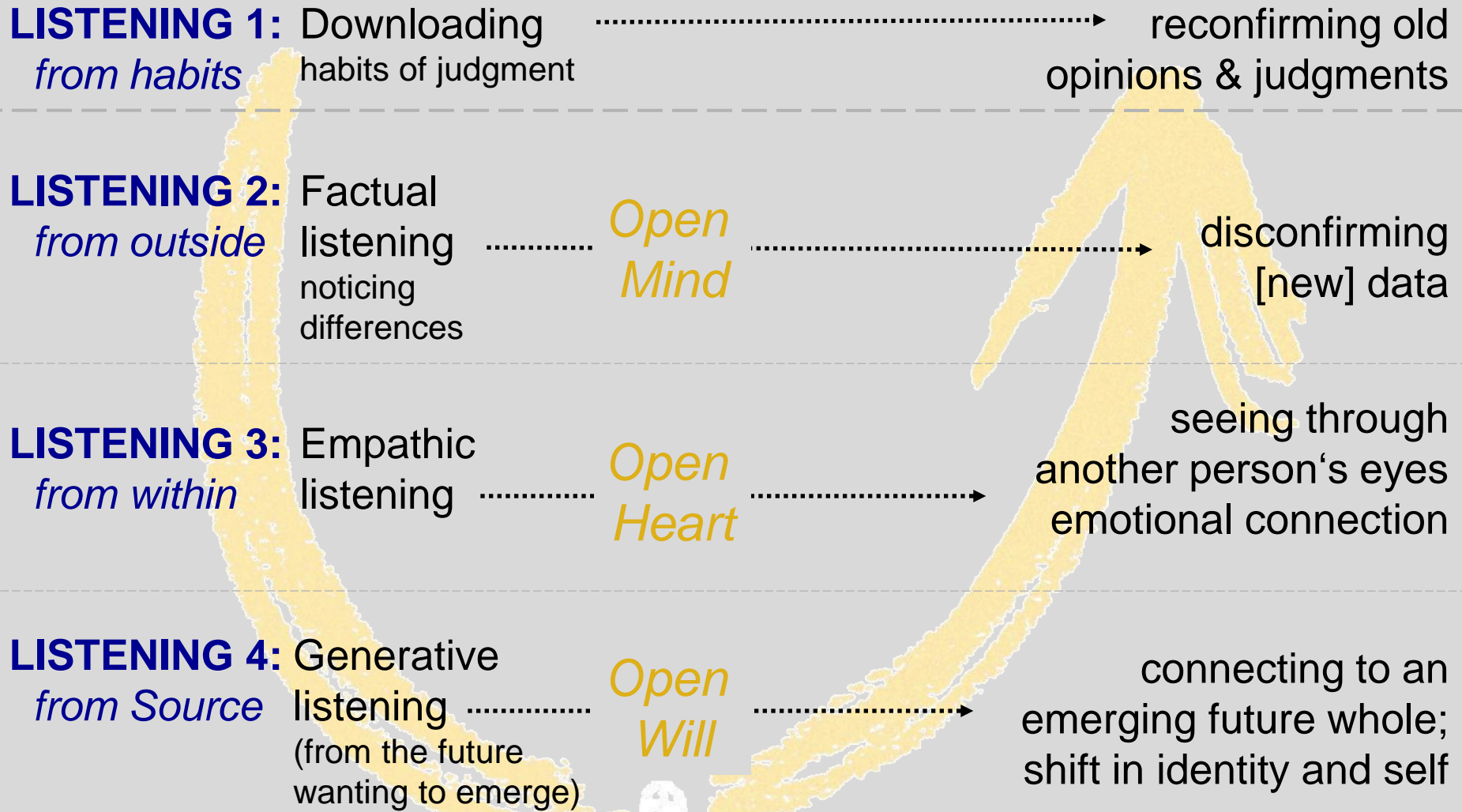
Envisioning:
Crystallizing vision
and intention

*Open
Will*

Connecting to Source:

Uncovering Common Will – Shifting from “me” to “we”

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

redirecting

enacting

VoC

Sensing
from the field

*Open
Heart*

Crystallizing
vision and intention

letting go

*Open
Will*

letting come

VoF

Presencing
connecting to Source

Who is my Self? What is my Work?

Resources and Literature

Scharmer, C. Otto (2007).

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www.presencing.com

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