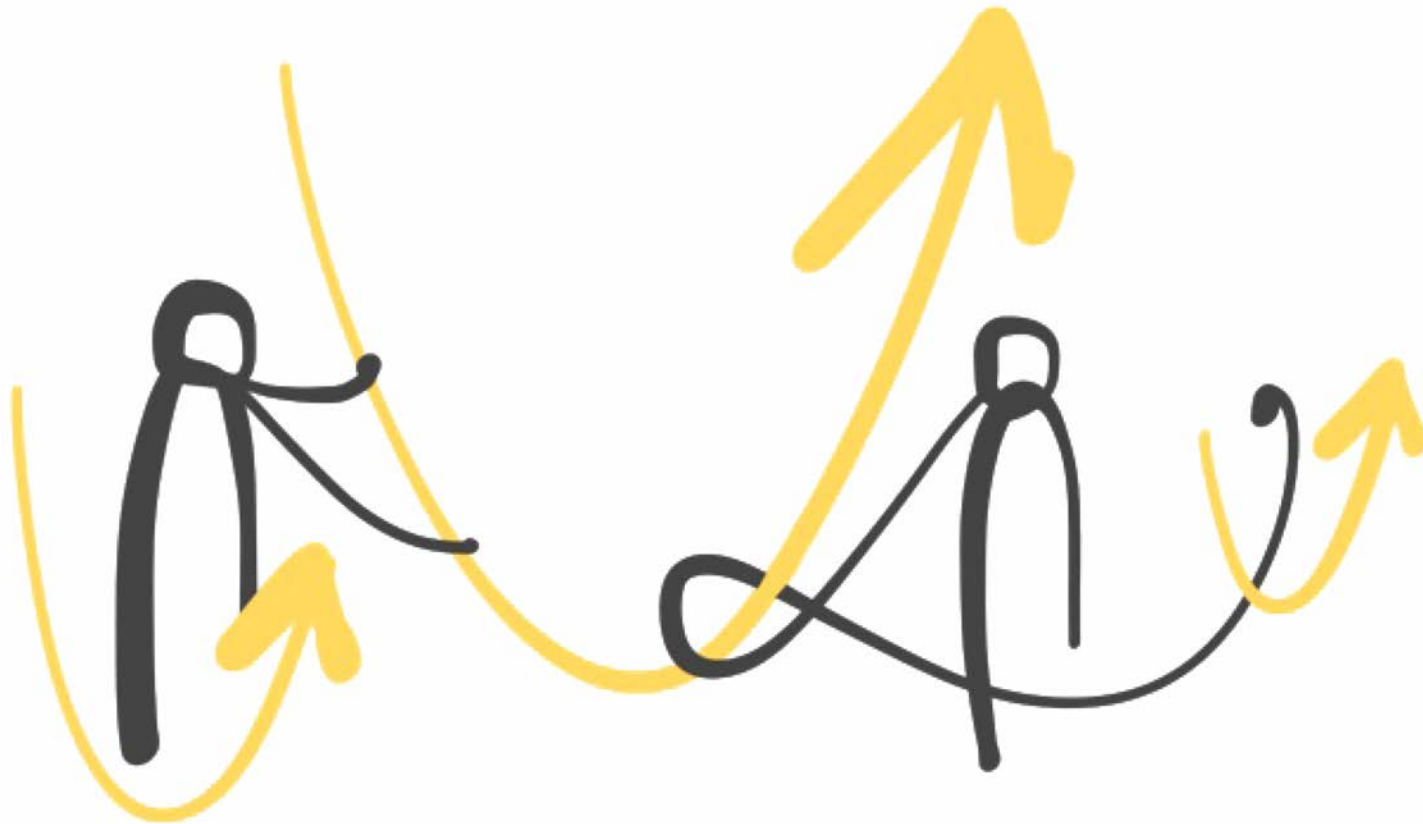


1. PRACTICE DON'T PREACH



Use the Listening Assessment Tool daily and/or spend four minutes each evening reviewing when during the day you engaged in Listening 3 (open mind and heart) and Listening 4 (open mind, heart, and will). If you cannot identify a single instance of deep listening, take note of that too. If you do this exercise for a month, your effectiveness as a listener will rise dramatically – without a single dollar spent on further training or coaching. All it takes is the discipline to focus on that four-minute review process every single day.

2. BLACK BELT OBSERVER and LISTENER



Take four minutes each evening and review the day as if you are looking at yourself from outside. Pay attention to how you interacted with others and what other people wanted you to do or suggested that you do. Do this nonjudgmentally. Just observe. Over time, you will develop an internal observer that allows you to look at yourself from someone else's point of view.

3. CONNECT to INTENTION, OPERATE as an INSTRUMENT

Peter Senge and Robert Fritz, composer, filmmaker and organizational consultant, devised this practice, which is called the Creative Tension Exercise. In its classical form, it works as a guided meditation in three steps: First ask (1) What do I want to create? And 2) What does the current reality look like by contrast? Then 3) Picture both images together (e.g., as a split screen) and note the creative tension between them.

We have found it useful to modify this exercise slightly in the U context this way: during the first step, focus on your future state in your journey—and on what the emerging future is calling you to do. During the second step, do not only concentrate on how the current reality differs from your desired future, but try to figure out where in today's reality you find the seed elements of the future. Then, in the third step, picture the creative tension in a three-dimensional space. Move between the poles. Go into the seed elements (with your mind and heart), attend to the cultivation of their soil and evolve with them toward the desired future state, and return from there to current reality, and so forth.



4. WHEN REALITY OPENS (THE CRACK OPENS) BE FULLY PRESENT



The most important practice at this stage is listening. Listening not only to your inner voice but also to what other people around you really tell you. Once you sense the invitation to your calling – once a “messenger” shows up with an invitation to something you can’t not do – respond with “yes” first and only later figure out how to do it (follow your feeling first, then bring in your rational mind).

5. DO WHAT YOU LOVE, LOVE WHAT YOU DO

The road to accessing one's creativity includes the stages of:

1. Nothing much happening
2. Boredom
3. Noticing an impulse that emerges from around or within yourself
4. Staying with it
5. Moving with it to bring it into reality "as it desires" (Buber)

It is difficult to learn how to do these things when you are managed by a tight system of exterior activities, rewards, and controls. The same goes for companies: much of corporate motivational and reward system is more dysfunctional than helpful because it imposes a culture of reward-driven behavior rather than a culture of doing the right things because they are right. So the practice here is about creating environments that allow people to do what they love and love what they do. Both things are important. Love what you do; fully appreciate what life offers you. Do what you do with love – and you will be amazed what life gives back.



6. DIALOGUE with UNIVERSE

Here is a practice that may help you connect to a larger perspective:

1. Take three minutes at the end of each day to write down the suggestions the world has made to you during the day without judging them as good or bad.
2. Write one or two core questions that follow from these observations and that relate to current challenges in your work.
3. The next morning, take five or ten minutes to write down the ideas that come to mind regarding the core questions (and observations) you put on paper the night before. Go with the flow of writing when a stream of ideas comes through.
4. Complete the journaling by exploring the possible next steps: What would it take to further investigate/test/prototype these possibilities?

This practice is a safe place to explore new or challenging ideas and will significantly increase your capacity to read weak signals and to evolve your concepts.

7. CREATE a LEVEL 4 HOLDING SPACE

Many years often lie between forming an initial idea and finally moving it into action, bringing it into reality. So what does it take to survive that period? It takes a handful of people who know and support you and who hold similar intentions. The practice here has to do with forming and maintaining your initial holding space, the handful of people who connect with your intention and provide you with the staying power to keep going.



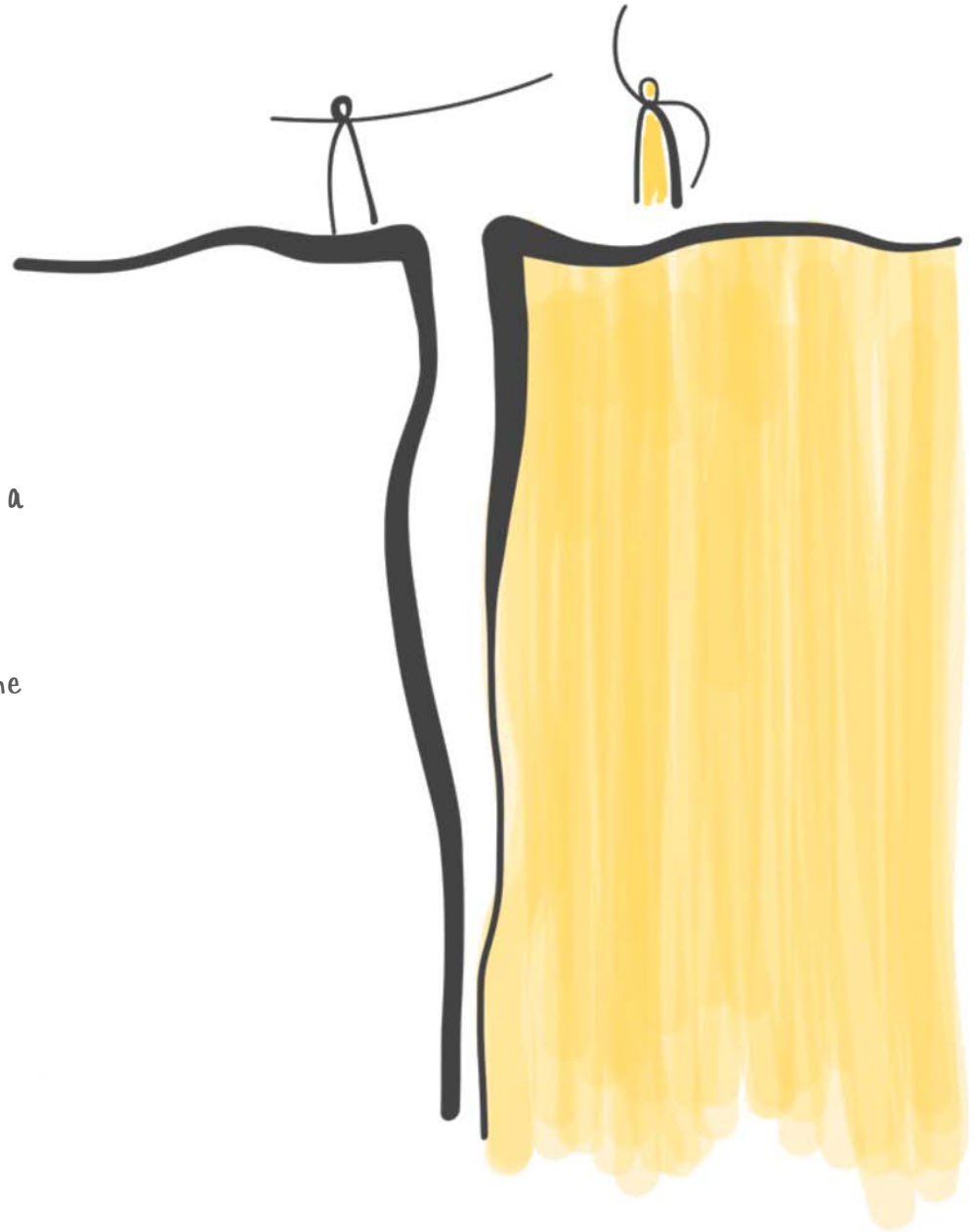
8. BALANCE TALKING & DOING

MORNING PRACTICE

- Rise early (before others do), go to a place of silence that works for you (a place in nature is great, but you also may find other places that work for you), and allow your inner knowing to emerge.
- Use a ritual that connects you with your source: this can be a meditation, prayer, or simply an intentional silence that you enter into with an open heart and open mind
- Remember what it is that has brought you to the place in life where you are right now: Who is your Self? What is your Work? What are you here for?
- Make a commitment to what it is that you want to be in service of. Focus on the outcome that you want to serve (the larger whole).
Focus on what you want to accomplish (or be in service of) on this day that you are beginning right now.
- Feel the appreciation that you are given the opportunity to live the life that you have right now. Empathize with all of those who have never had all of the opportunities that led you to the place you are now. Feel the responsibility that comes with those opportunities, the responsibility that you have to others, to all other beings, to all of nature—even to the universe.
- Ask for help so that you don't lose your way or get sidetracked. Your way forward is a journey that only you can discover. The essence of that journey is a gift that can come into the world only through you, your presence, your best future self. But you can't do it alone. That's why you ask for help.



9. IDENTIFY the CRACK



Go on a learning journey to explore the crack – the opening to the future – where the current system hits a wall that requires profound new ways of operating. In exploring that institutional or systemic crack, look for individuals that on the one hand are relevant problem owners of the challenge and on the other hand bring the quality of heart for exploring emerging possibilities.

10. USE DIFFERENT LANGUAGE with DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS



This really starts with your own context. Pick your various key stakeholders and have a dialogue conversation in which you put yourself into their shoes and look at your own role from their point of view. Before each interview, take your moment of stillness and intention-setting to open up. Here is a set of four questions that people who come into new organizational leadership roles have used to sense their context (modify questions as needed):

- What is your most important objective, and how can I help you realize it? (What do you need me for?)
- What criteria will you use to assess whether my contribution to your work has been successful?
- If I were able to change two things in my area of responsibility within the next six months, what two things would create the most value and benefit for you?
- What, if any, historical tensions and/or systemic barriers have made it difficult for people in my role or function to fulfill your requirements and expectations? What is it that is getting in our way?

II. BE OPEN to BEING CHANGED FIRST

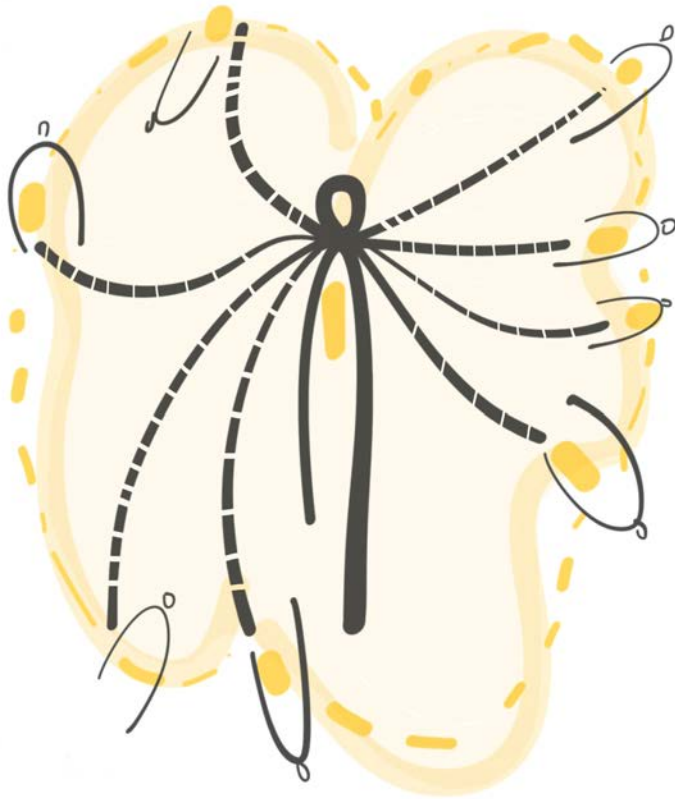
Without the capacity to suspend your Voice of Judgment, all efforts to get inside the place of most potential will be in vain. Suspending your VOJ means shutting down (or embracing and changing) the habit of judging based on the experiences and patterns of the past in order to open up a new space of exploration, inquiry, and wonder. Take an object (such as a seed) or a situation and observe with undivided attention for at least five minutes. When you notice your mind wandering to other ideas or thoughts, correct your course and return to the task of pure observation.



12. CO-INITIATE through LOCAL LEADERSHIP from the HEART

Checklist for co-initiating or sparking common intention among diverse core players:

- An intention to serve the evolution of the whole.
- Trust your "heart's intelligence" when connecting with people or exploring possibilities that may seem unrelated to the strategic issue at hand. Be open-minded to other ways of framing the real issue or opportunity (different key stakeholders will emphasize different aspects and variables).
- Connect with people professionally and personally: try to connect with their highest future sense of purpose (Self and Work), not just with their institutional role and responsibility.
- Include, when convening a core group meeting, executive sponsors and key decision makers who have a deep professional and personal interest in exploring and shaping the opportunity.
- Include inspired activists in the core group: people who would give life and soul to make it work. Without this personal passion and commitment, nothing radically new will ever come into being.
- Include people with little or no voice in the current system.
- Include a competent support team (to the degree necessary) to build an enabling infrastructure
- Shape place, and context to convene this constellation of people for co-inspiring the way forward.



13. USE SENSING JOURNEYS to HELP SEE SYSTEM from EDGES, and COLLECTIVE SENSING MECHANISMS to SEE SYSTEM from WHOLE

Ask yourself: Given the sense of the future that you want to create, what are the people and places of most potential that could teach you most about that future and how to make it work? Deep-dive journeys are usually best when conducted one-on-one or in small groups of up to about five people. They work through the practices of shadowing, dialogue conversations, and if possible, in ongoing activities. The preparation and debriefing are done in a disciplined, structured, and timely fashion. Each team member of a deep-dive journey keeps a journal; each team has a camera and Web space for real-time documentation and cross-team sharing; to speed up the process, the teams should also receive both strategic and operational support in setting up their learning journeys.



14. HOLDING SPACES THAT SUPPORT the TEAM at the TOP... and EMERGING LEADERS



Here is a checklist for a foundation workshop, the kickoff event that for the first time convenes all the prototyping team members and connects them with the core group of champions that initiated and is sponsoring the project initiative. As always, there is more than one possible design that can make the foundation workshop a success. But this checklist of desired outcomes may be useful for testing the design you come up with. To create focus and commitment, clarify:

- What: what you want to create
- Why: why it matters
- How: the process that will get you there
- Who: the roles and responsibilities of the players involved
- When, where: the road map forward

Additional goals:

- To uncover common ground by sharing the context and story that brought us here.
- To spark inspiration for the future that the team wants to create.
- To use "Mini-training" in dialogue interviews and deep-dive best practices.
- To plan the action for deep-dive journeys: by identifying core people, organizations, and contexts that need to be explored and visited (a target list of the places with the most potential).
- To give people an experience that embodies a first feel of the future that the project wants to create.

15. PROTOTYPE by ACTING from the NOW

Just as the inner enemies on the way down the U deal with the VOJ (Voice of Judgment), VOC (Voice of Cynicism), and VOF (Voice of Fear), the enemies on the way up the U are the three old ways of operating:

- Executing without improvisation and mindfulness (blind action-ism)
- Endless reflection without a will to act (analysis paralysis) and
- Talking, talking without a connection to source and action (blah-blah-blah)

The three enemies share the same structural feature: instead of balancing the intelligence of the head, heart, and hand, one of the three dominates (the head in endless reflection, the heart in endless networking, the will in mindless action).

A practice that accesses this deeper source of intelligence would integrate four activities:

1. Focusing (clarifying intention)
2. Total immersion in the task at hand
3. Breaking the flow, switching context, relaxing, and paying attention to what emerges (shifting the locus of attention)
4. Noticing, staying with, and following the spark that begins to emerge - and then prototyping it quickly (iterate, iterate, iterate).



16. CO-EVOLVE the SYSTEM by USING PROTOTYPES as SEEDS LINKING MICRO and MACRO...



The process of prototyping strategic microcosms itself is a mini U that starts with clarifying intention, forming a task team; taking deep dives to connect to and engage with other practitioners, partners, and places that matter; returning and sharing everything that has been learned; reflecting and listening to the inner source of inspiration and knowing; jointly crystallizing the immediate next step; and then going back to involve other players in the practical next steps forward. The trick is to move through the U not once but many times, maybe even daily.

17. NEVER GIVE UP. YOU ARE NOT ALONE.



Share your questions and connect with others who are on a similar journey of transforming institutions, society, and self at www.presencing.com/vlab/overview