

# A gospelofchange: Process Mindfulness

So this is my style, right? Work-in-progress-way-out-loud. If you have thoughts, comments or questions hit me up at:

gospelofchange

@

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me

Goal: each individuals become capable of acting beyond the capacity of any one person (to influence the group norms(governance and meta-governance))Getting Relevant info, useful place at appropriate time (for the betterment of the whole(7Generations))

## Setup: Wait but Why?

Wen think or do? Agreement Certainty Matrix

9WHYS communication matters

Critical Uncertainties of communication

Let's make communication a dumpster fire with TRIZ:

Bandwidth vs throughput

5 Stone Age tools

Conflict: are the "Solutions"

Theory of change at human scale with PANARCHY

LS

Interaction patterns to decentralize conversations(should this be right after TRIZ?)

A problem better throughput doesn't solve is decoherence

Invitation/guiding inquiry

But what about people outside of synchronous coms?!

Maps of Meaning: Artifacts for shared thinking and exporting ideas

Resolution: how we are learning

LS Stages of Development

Sit-Rep of the LS Community of Practice

Adjacent Communities

A Gospel of Change: Collective Wisdom as an Agnostic Ecology of Practices

**Missing  
Principles**

Relational Coordination  
Attributes

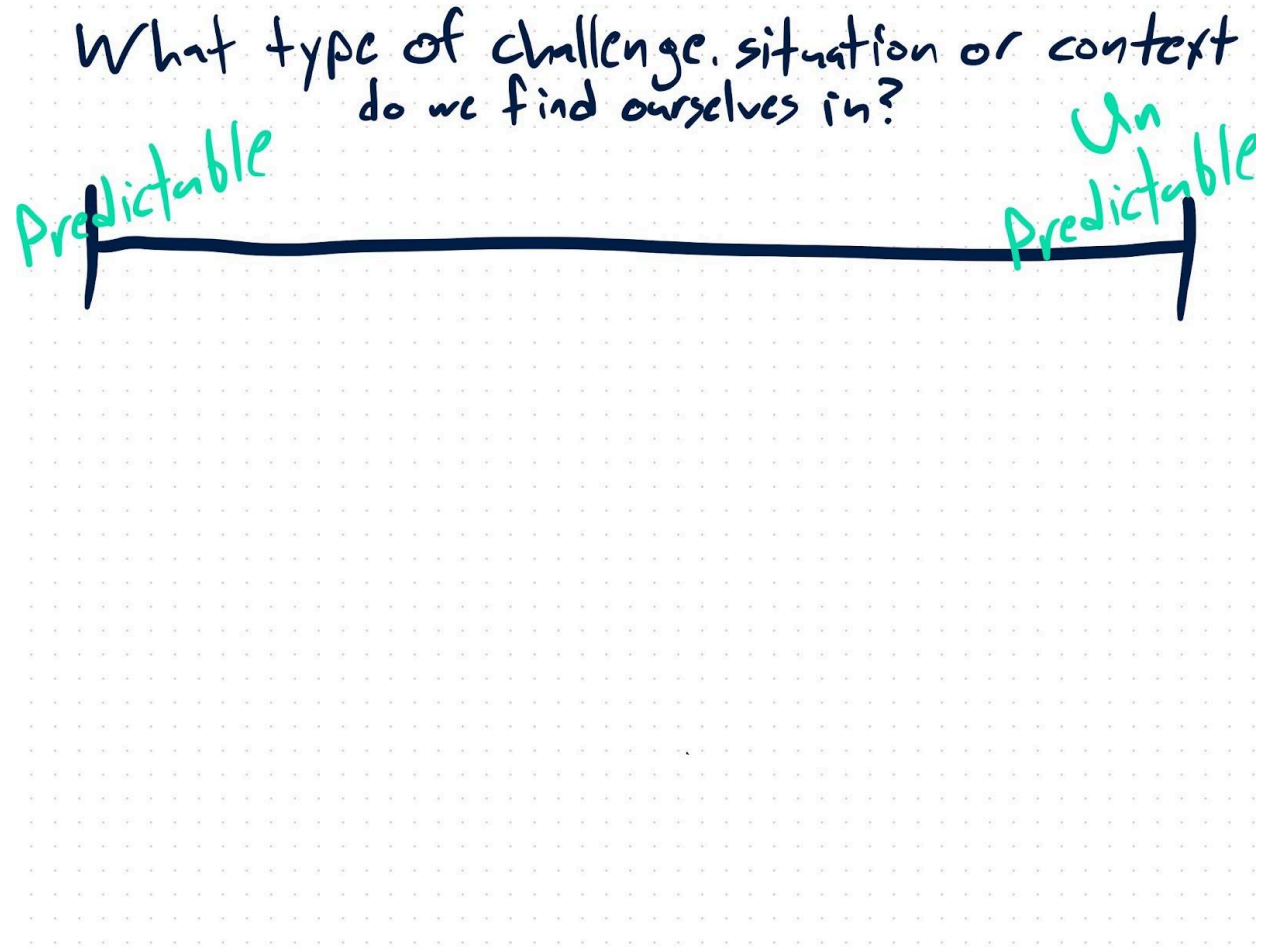
## Sometimes communication matters more than doing stuff

### Agreement Certainty Matrix

Process Mindfulness is not a meditation but an impractical framework that will encourage you to waste some time thinking about, planning and organizing communication to figure out how you want to get something done, instead of actually going to get something done.

Curious though isn't it? That sometimes you can just shoot from the hip and go get shit done, and yet others you need to stop, think and sometimes you know, make a god-damned plan.

How do you know when you need to do one or the other?



I'd encourage you to Think Slow for just one minute. Considering your situation, question or challenge. Where are you on a spectrum with "predictable" on the left extreme and "unpredictable" on the right.

If you're with anyone, find a partner and discuss where each of you believe you are in just one minute per person. If you're with a larger group of people, join with another pair. Paraphrase your partner to the new pair, invite them to do the same and see if you can synthesize your perspectives as one answer in just 4 minutes. If you're with more people, go around to each set of four and collect their answers in a minute or less.

If you're all over the place, consider playing that game again. But if you're more or less tightly clustered, divide your spectrum into 4 segments.

The one on the farthest left is Clear, proly fine to just get shit done.

The next one is Complicated, lots of pieces moving around, I mean if you nerds all locked right into this answer and know how the things fit together, get after it! If not however I'd do whatever your version of Googling shit is because expertise and analysis is advisable here. Take note that if you fuck up and jump to getting things done(GTD) without the requisite expertise here, you'll kick yourself to the far right bucket called Chaos.

Chaos being chaos, the relationships between cause and effect are changing all the time. Ironically in this context the DOing mode is your godsend. With all this flux in play, it doesn't make any sense trying to go all smarty pants and figure things out, just keep moving, capture the high ground and stay in radio contact.

The last ¼ is... Complex. Complex, lots of unknown unknowns at play, you'll need to uncover things as you go. Probe, Sense and Respond is your search algorithm. Take your time and create some slack to look back and reflect after your last test.

Now there's a lot of nifty insights in this simplified variation of the Agreement Certainty Matrix, but that will do to make this point:

It depends.

Okay yeah except for Chaos mode, chaos mode always works, but it will sometimes waste a bunch of energy and yeah, drag things into chaos, which sometimes sucks, because sometimes you just want to chill right? But if you kick ass in Chaos and those around you don't, well then there may be some strategic advantage to Chaos.

But yeah, it depends on the context, as to what is the correct course of action. Pay attention, take notes and ask around, somebody or perhaps the sum total of some-bodies will have the insight of whether you can stick with action mode or if thinking about HOW to think about things and get things done is good use of time.

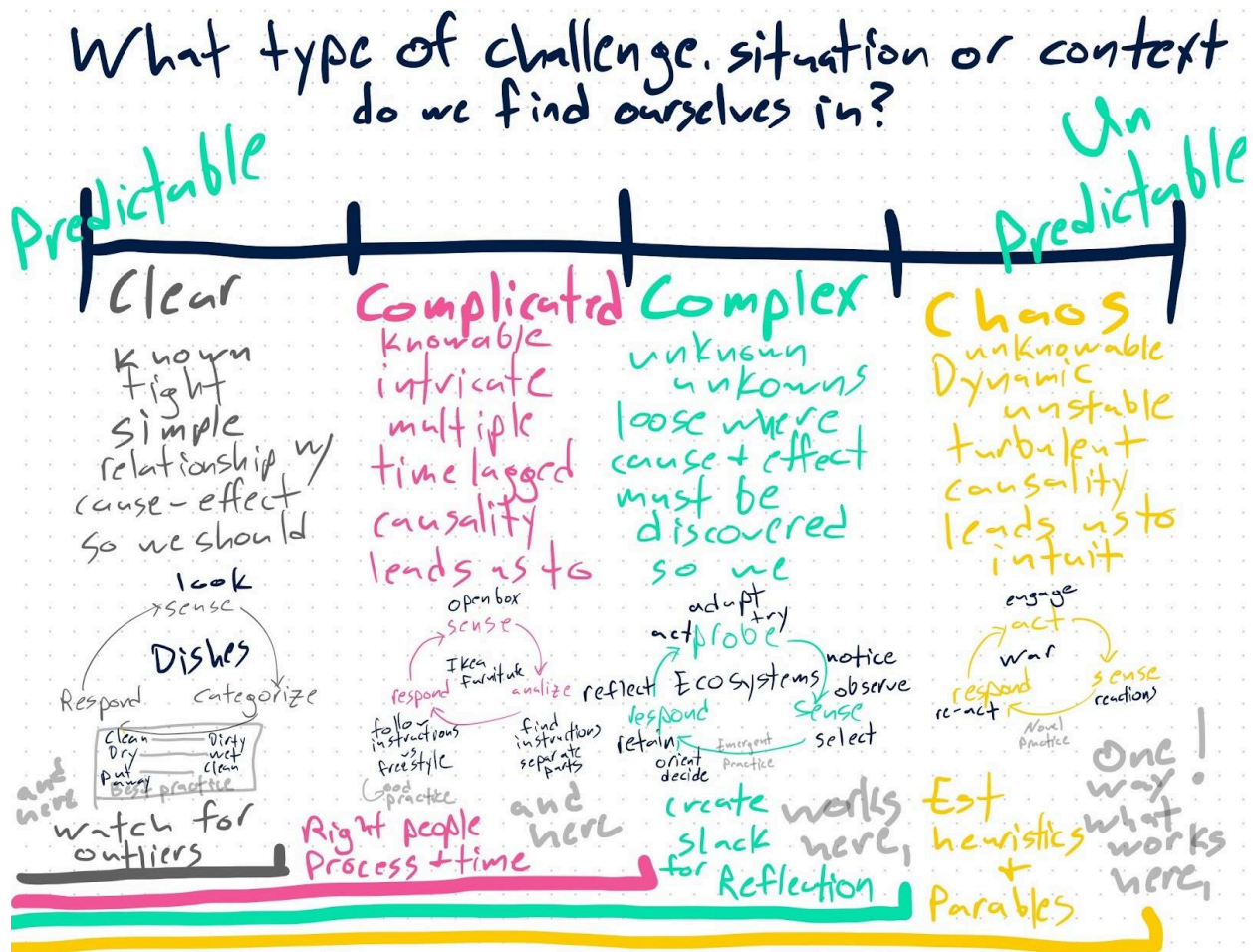
This is Process Mindfulness.

#### ~~4th Industrial Revolution?~~

~~Process mindfulness is a radical departure of our cultural understanding of leadership from Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey to squad wealth and group as hero.~~

~~The future of leadership is coaching and facilitation~~





## 9 WHYS conversations matter into Critical Uncertainties

Human culture, coordination and collaboration is built mostly out of communication. Whether that be body language, facial expressions and physical signaling, language, conversation and symbols, or more complex forms of software powered stigmergic social computation. I'm going to focus on language and conversation, because that's where I've been able to find purchase and I see an enormous amount of work to be done that might actually be faster, cheaper and easier to implement than the other two. If you can turn this conceptual exploration into software, good for you, and I'm sure all be interested, but it's not where I'm skillful so LFG

So why does that (shit language, conversation and symbols) matter?

As group creatures humans we are responding collectively to our environmental challenges and opportunities. This seems so obvious but it is extraordinarily complex and challenging.

So why is it hard?

Blind men and elephants. There is way more information than it is possible to get a grasp on all at once. Even if you add time to the mix and could get a grasp on the whole elephant, you then have yet another impossible challenge, discerning which part of it is relevant for what is happening now amidst the combinatorial explosion of possibilities.

What makes these impossibilities significant?

First is this is a route to epistemic humility.

What makes epistemic humility important?

It may just help us shut the fuck up long enough about what we believe is THE thing in order to listen to one another

Why should we listen to one another?

In order to min-spec sending in order to accelerate the rate of flow of information across the group social/superorganism

What might that increased flow of information help us do?

We may just be able to address those impossibilities if we can solve the wicked question of both getting information from each blind man and receiving one another's information.

If we could answer that wicked question, what might we get?

Relevant information getting to where it is needed at the appropriate time

So what if we do that?

We might drastically decrease the difficulty around deciding what to do

And now what happens if we can decide what to do?

Then we may just be able to do the fucking thing that needs to be done

The Byzantine General's Information Theory

Second is that a problem well understood is half solved

What are the most critical and uncertain factors of getting the appropriate information where it needs to be at the appropriate time?

This question lights up the technical part of my brain that wants to think about things very analytically. It wants to evoke big smart person things like the Byzantine General's Problem and then Parallax with Information Theory

The Byzantine General's Information Theory:

Did my information get to where it was intended to go?

Was it understood how I intended it to be?

The present answer to both questions is:

probably not 😞

What would have to be true in order for them to be a solid "fuck yes"?

All this to qualify what I believe is that the most critical factor can probably be simplified to status. This may not solve the "was it understood as I intended?", but the chances are significantly greater the higher the status of the sender of information.

This is of course extraordinarily problematic because everyone on the face of the earth knows it to be true. So we play mostly at hierarchies and measuring dicks which takes up a lot of space in the channel of information flow. Coming back to our blind men and the elephant, this is the approximate equivalent of them spamming the feed with clickbait not about what they are sensing but why they should be listened to. This downward spiral into degeneration is an essential ingredient in what Tristan Harris describes as the Social Dilemma and it fucking sucks that yet again it is true.

So if (social) status of the sender is critical to getting the relevant information to the right place at the appropriate time, then what's uncertain about it?

I think like so often in life, the answer is in the question:  
relevance of information.

If this is not the most uncertain thing in the universe then I don't know what's relevant. 🥁🥁💥

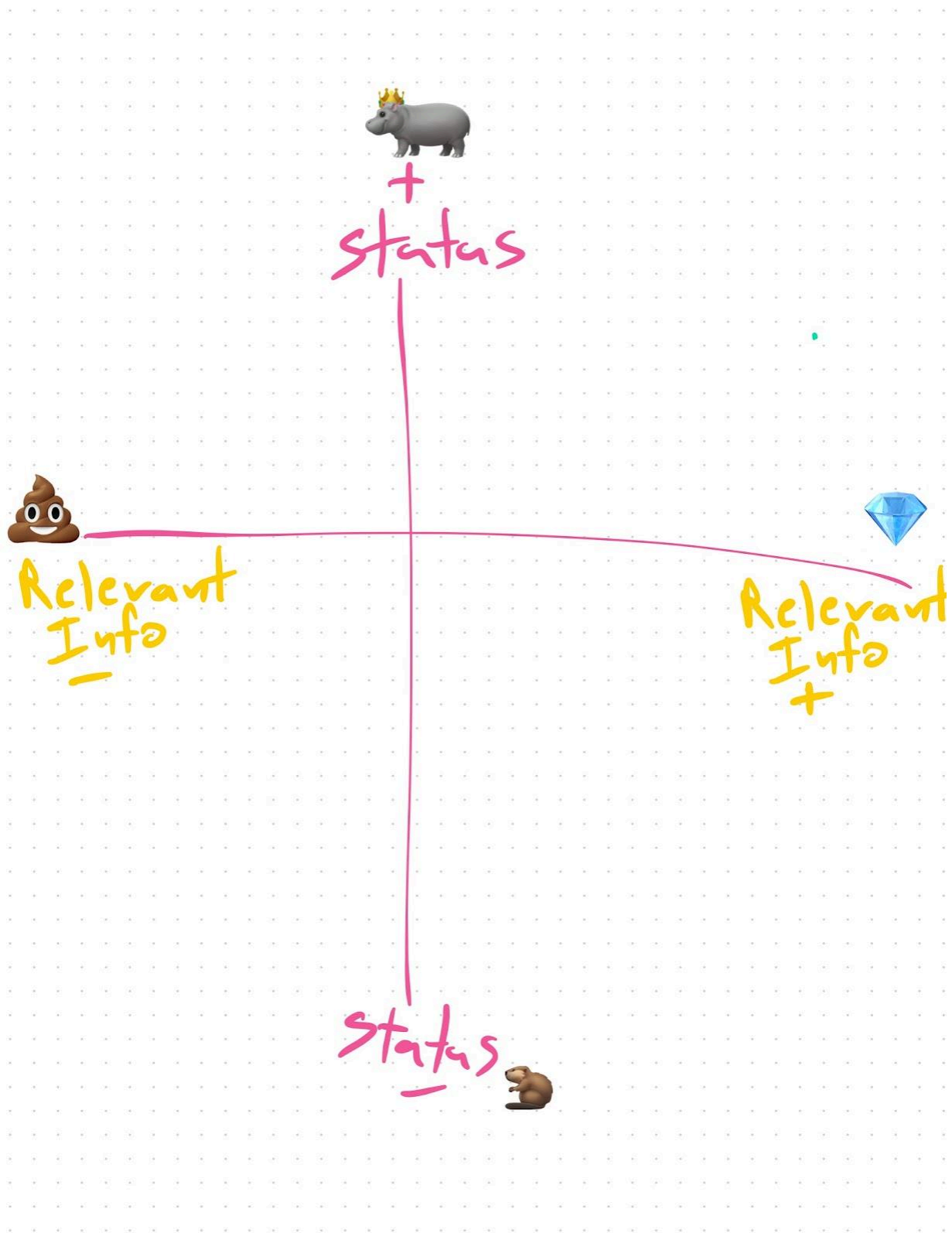
But in all seriousness it is damned near impossible to tell in advance what information is relevant to whom. Lucky hunches may be about the best we can do in advance of running the actual check. The crucial questions here have everything to do with context and the receiving end:

Relevant to whom?

For what purpose?

In the context that every person on the entire planet is playing the status game this becomes not only impossible to sort out but a bona-fide pit of vipers.

But okay we've got critical=status and uncertain=relevance. Ordinarily we'd plot these on a 2x2 matrix and make sense of these four scenarios like so:



What happens when my status is high but the relevance of my information is shit?  
I mean we kind of did this one in the 9WHYS:

Social dilemma, clickbait, unfortunately I don't follow the mainstream media so I have no idea who this is at the moment and don't feel like embarrassing myself with some disgustingly out of date reference.

Never mind, keeping up with the Kardashians, Reality TV, Sports TV, Politics TV, TV, you get the idea. Massive output of fucking useless information. I love the thought experiment of what this landscape is going to look like in 5 years of GPT-infinity powered steroids. The skills of how to ignore and who to trust and how to validate who you trust is not some jackhole spoofing them is going to get some serious alpha.

Let's just call this the "Social Dilemma" Missed slammed dunk that still shatters backboard

Next up, Omega with irrelevant information. This one seems funny but it is certainly not. Conspiracy theocracy. Incel's Unite. Vulnerable minds hijacked and repeating what their "research" has found. Even if you think you're smart enough to play the game well, you should be more terrified of this category than all others combined.

Let's call it the "Zombie Apocalypse" half court airball that blasts you in the face

Next up. Alpha's with relevant information. Dear God, let us pray for benevolence. There is something so folksy and charming and comforting about this scenario. FDR, ~~Abraham Lincoln~~, ~~JFK~~, ~~Mahatma Gandhi~~, ~~MLK Jr~~, The Rock, Elon Musk 😂. Wouldn't it be nice? If Dad would just come home in the nick of time to save the farm from alien robot monsters from the future of outerspace? Edris Elba all



Naruto/Goku/Ichigo/Gilgamesh returns from gaining new special powers just in time to save Uruk from the bull of heaven. Simba/Arjuna accepts his role to return as warrior/king. Somehow this one seems less probable than ever.

Let's call it "Hero Savior" game winning 3

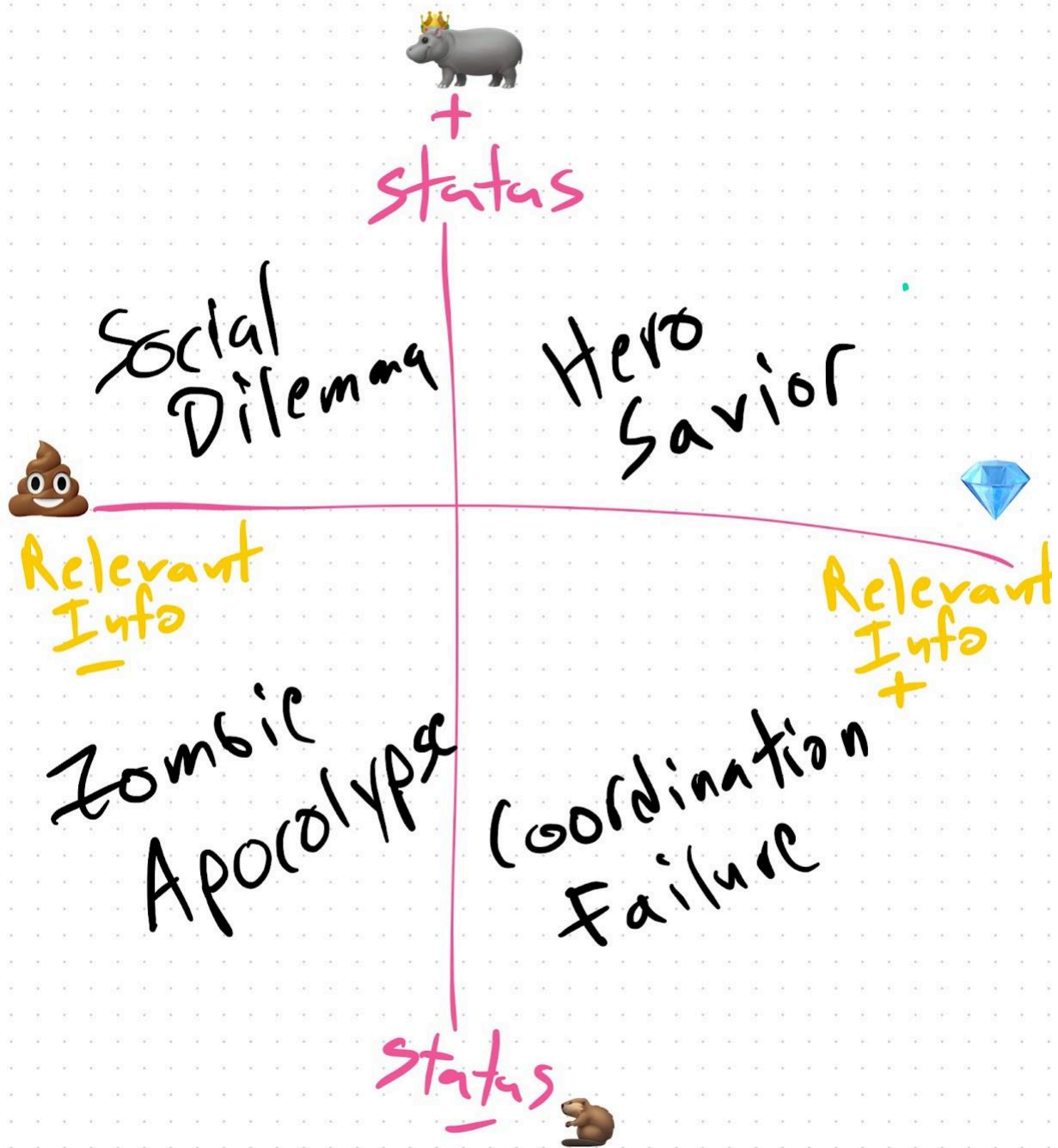
Last but not least where I believe most of us find ourselves. Pieces of the puzzle fucking lost in a sea of bullshit. Pearls thrown to swine. Signals drowned in noise. Needles in the haystack. Whispered sutras. When relevant information is held by hands of those without the social status that garners being paid attention to, I believe we all suffer. How much possibility lies behind locked doors that folks everyday humans are holding the keys to?

Let's call it "coordination failure" the blocked shot.

Alright that's fine and dandy but so fucking what?

Ordinarily we'd brainstorm coping strategies for each of these scenarios, what do we do in order to survive in each one of them. This is wise and worthy so let's do it even if I think its kinda stupid.





Social Dilemma:

Shut the fuck up and get the fuck out. No joke. This is not a game worth playing and existing in places where this is the vibe only legitimizes it. Or of course, no holds barred win at any cost, and I mean ANY cost, beg, borrow, lie, cheat, steal, or kill for all anyone cares. Be warned, everyone else is also playing as rough as they can as well. Good luck.

Zombie Apocalypse:

Take your pick between build your own mountain fortress, desert oasis or nuclear bunker. At some point hords of unwashed will evolve to fascism and decide anyone who doesn't think like them is the enemy. The other option is to assimilate completely.

Hero Savior:

Either become the hero of more than normal stature who's destiny is directly linked to that of their people, or find them. Just like they do with the Dali Lama and shit.

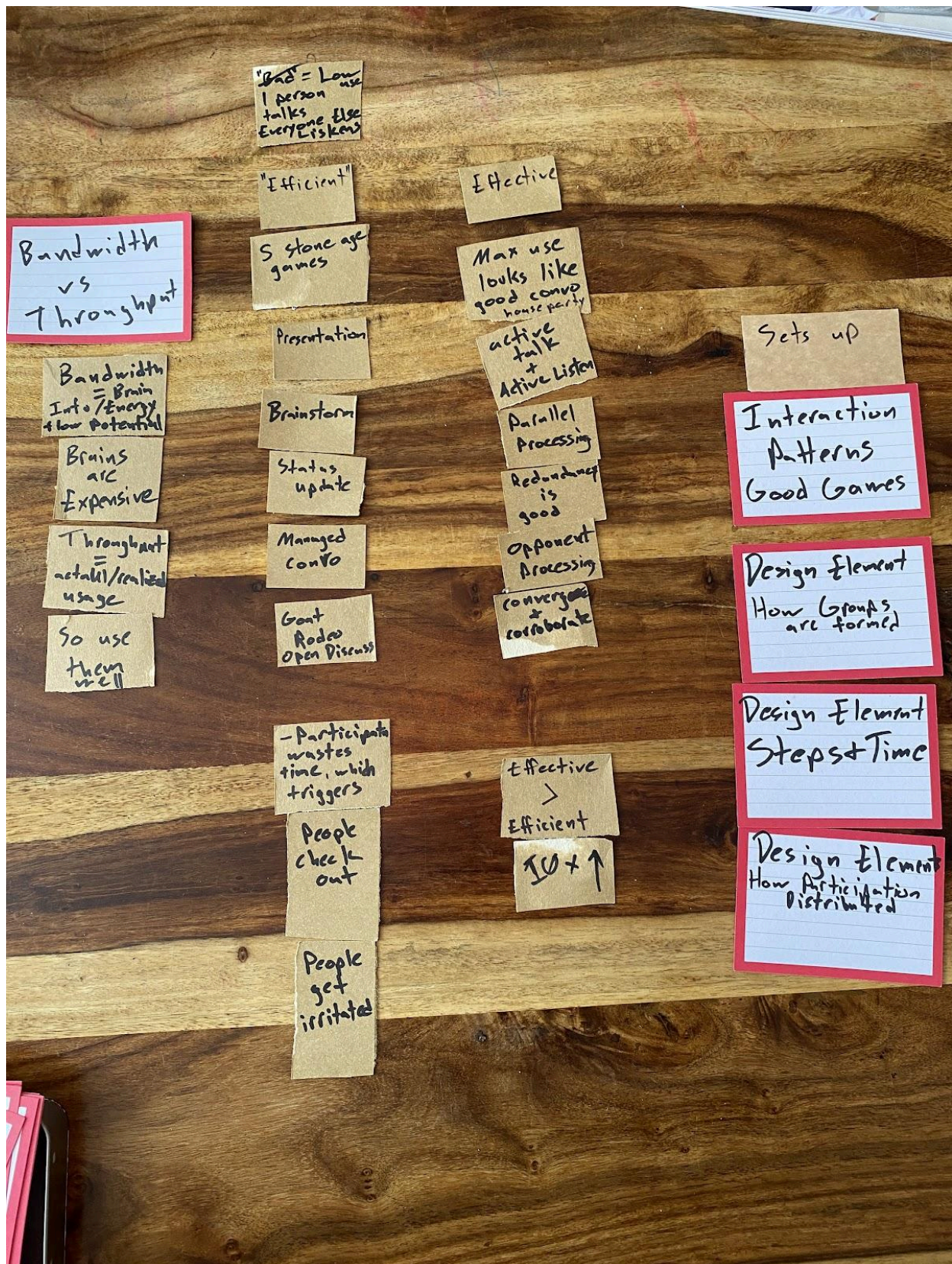
Coordination Failure:

Understand your puzzle piece and find the others

The structure of our conversations Fucks us and thus is a vector  
for solutioning (5 stone age tools) vs Category of  
LS(decentralized conversations) TRIZ



## Bandwidth vs Throughput



## Bandwidth= Brain info/energy flow potential

So bandwidth is a particular type of potential, in this instance for flow. It's a broad technical term but I'm going to use it to talk about max potential to be used of human time attention information energy processing.

## Brains are expensive

Human time attention information energy has enormous creative potential but requires a lot of invested energy as well. At the micro/individual scale a brain accounts for something like 2% of body mass but uses almost 20% of calories. This is a huge evolutionary choice that must carry big upside to justify. That's on the day to day, but think about how it takes 25 years for a brain to "fully develop." That's bananas. We're reproductively ready at 15ish but brains don't mature until a decade after that. This all on its own is fascinating but I'm past the point. Booting up brains is crazy expensive.

At the macro organizational scale as well, labor is one of a primary business costs of most any company. Despite that Labor and entrepreneurship show up twice in the factors of production (land labor capital and entrepreneurship).

## Throughput is actual/realized of potential

In relation to the bandwidth, or total potential, there is an actual usage of that we refer to as throughput. The concept here is percentage of total. When we gather together or pool human time attention information energy, how much of that potential are we actually using.

## So use them well

So it rains/accumulates at the rate people/brains gathered together for a duration of time equals our bandwidth or total potential of human time attention information energy processing pool. When you think about the calories and years sunk in rearing and payroll costs and global integrated supply chains to support all of the above the sunk cost of time together is mind boggling. Now compare that bandwidth as potential with the throughput of actual utilization and its enough to make you cry. The literal opportunity costs that we just go flushing down the toilet every day would make our ancestors furious.

And that consideration is before any evaluation about the worthiness of what we're there paying attention to, the downward vs upward spirals. We're just talking about what fraction of the possibility we're burning the entire planet to create are we actually using?

This I'm going to refer to as "the throughput problem" going forward

Now just to be clear I'm talking about real time, synchronous communication. I'm going to polarize everyone and say I believe that this is the attention that matters most to me. There's lots to be said about async, but I haven't given near as much a thought about it. The argument I'm building is about brains and the people they're in, when they are gathered together at the same time.



## Lowest throughput =1 person talks everyone listens

When we think about this throughput problem it comes from one primary input that has a few different flavors: one person talks, everyone else listens.

I'm sure why this happens is interesting, but I don't really care enough to dig into it. I speculate that this is a hominid thing, having something to do with prestige hierarchies. I bet there is a relationship to our individual limitations in language processing and the way that we don't multi-thread communication. You can either talk, or you can listen, but not both at the same time. You can only consciously process one source of communication at a time as well, so for the sake of keeping everyone on the same page, lets just listen to whoever is talking at any given moment.

This is kind of a weird thing that we do when we gather together, that while it seems pretty normal is actually hard to accomplish. It requires judges to have that wooden gavel thing, raised podiums, architecture like cathedrals or amphitheaters to create passive amplification, electronic amplification with microphones, speakers, screens, lights and production to pull off. Not to mention someone to capture everyone's attention at once and then to keep and maintain it.

This is going to seem contra to my main point but fuck it. Think about all of the time that people spend together in one time and place, at the train station, in the park, on the bus, in the cafe, at the grocery store, even at work, how often are we all paying attention to one person talking?

Hardly ever and yet there is a sort of set of games we play that are hyper insidious where we all share attention as one person talks and everyone else listens, leading to the most tragic throughput imaginable.

## 5 stone age tools

There are 5 Stone Age tools for communication and 5 of them fit the pattern of 1 Talks/Everyone Listens. We call them Stone Age tools with a wink and a nudge, but there is a kernel of truth there. We have likely been using these tools since the Stone Age. They are so deeply ingrained that they are somehow omnipresent. Unless you make some conscious effort and exercise an intention, some Process Mindfulness, you'll default into 1 of them with near absolute certainty.

While I hate them with a passion, let me qualify that for all things there is a season. At times these structures are appropriate, however this an exception, not the omnipresent rule.

First we need to make a distinction between the informal and the formal. Many conversations happen in the informal, you're at a bbq or event after the church service, what do you see? Likely any number small group conversations, pairs, trios, foursomes, and maybe even larger circles of 6 that soon divide up into smaller groups. Now contrast that to the church service itself, the toast, or the meeting at the office. This thing that happens has one big pattern that expresses itself in 5 ways:

Broadcast mode: one person talks, everyone else listens AKA 1-TO-MANY-COMMUNICATION  
Now sometimes this is proper, but rarely, and yet nearly all formal conversations take this format. In five different ways

## 5 Stone Age Tools

### Presentation

# Presentation

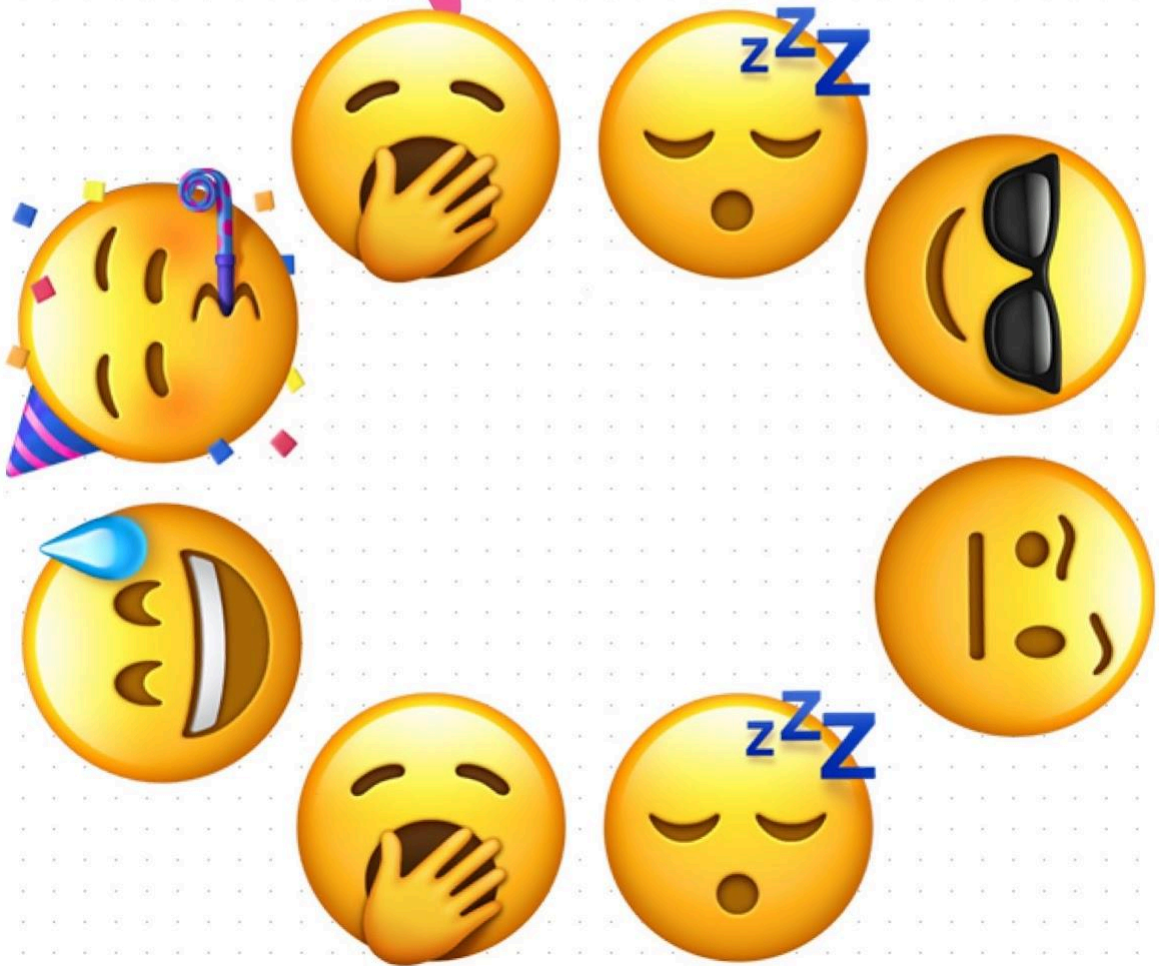


Stand there and lose contact with 50-80% of people, but take solace in the 20% that seem to hang on every word. Those who speak are often at the top of the hierarchy.



Status Update

Status  
update



Like a micro presentation, where everyone takes a turn boring one another with information that is 20%- 30% relevant. We often do this to please an authority figure who finds the information of all parties relevant.

## Managed Conversation

# Managed Discussion



Someone asks questions that others answer. This inverts the hierarchy because the one who asks is often in the authority role.

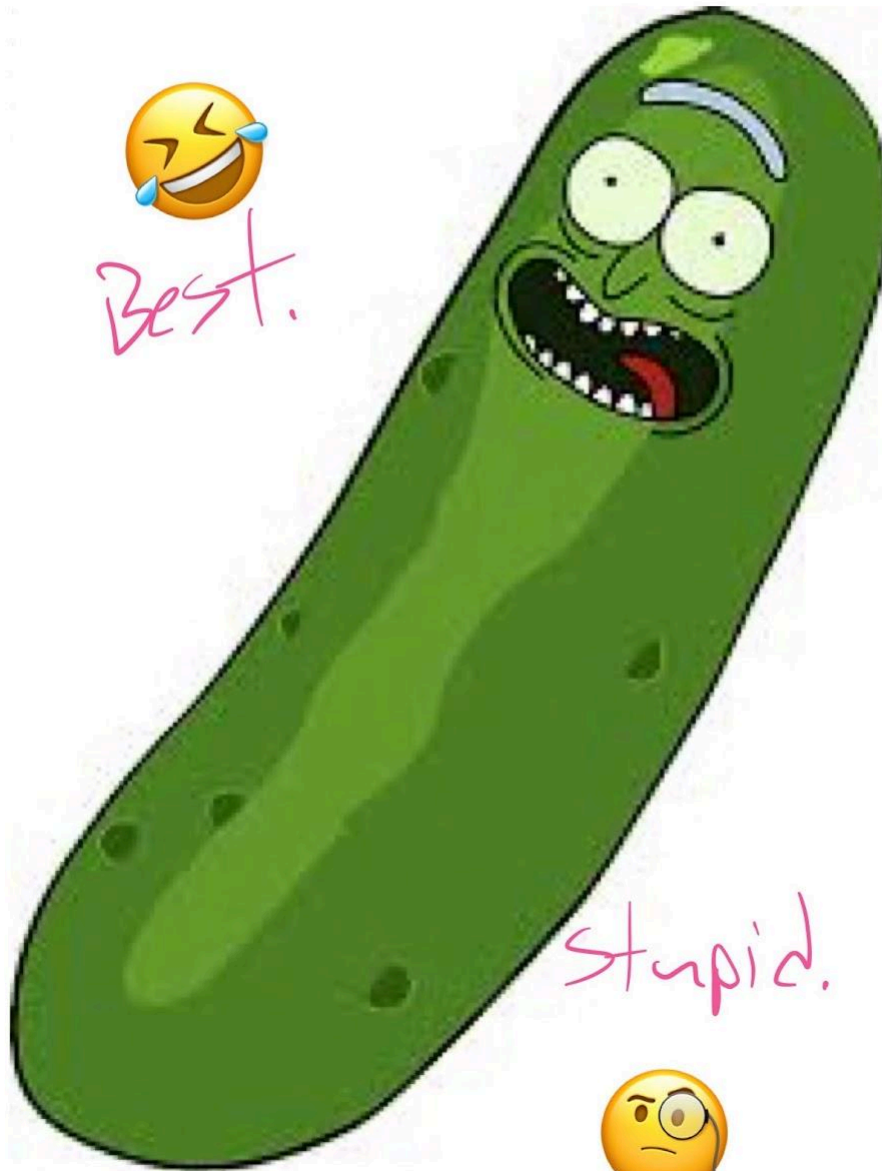


brainstorm

# Brainstorm



Best.



Stupid.



Throwing spaghetti against the wall and argue about which one sticks and what we should do

goat rodeo/unstructured group discussion

Free  
x  
All

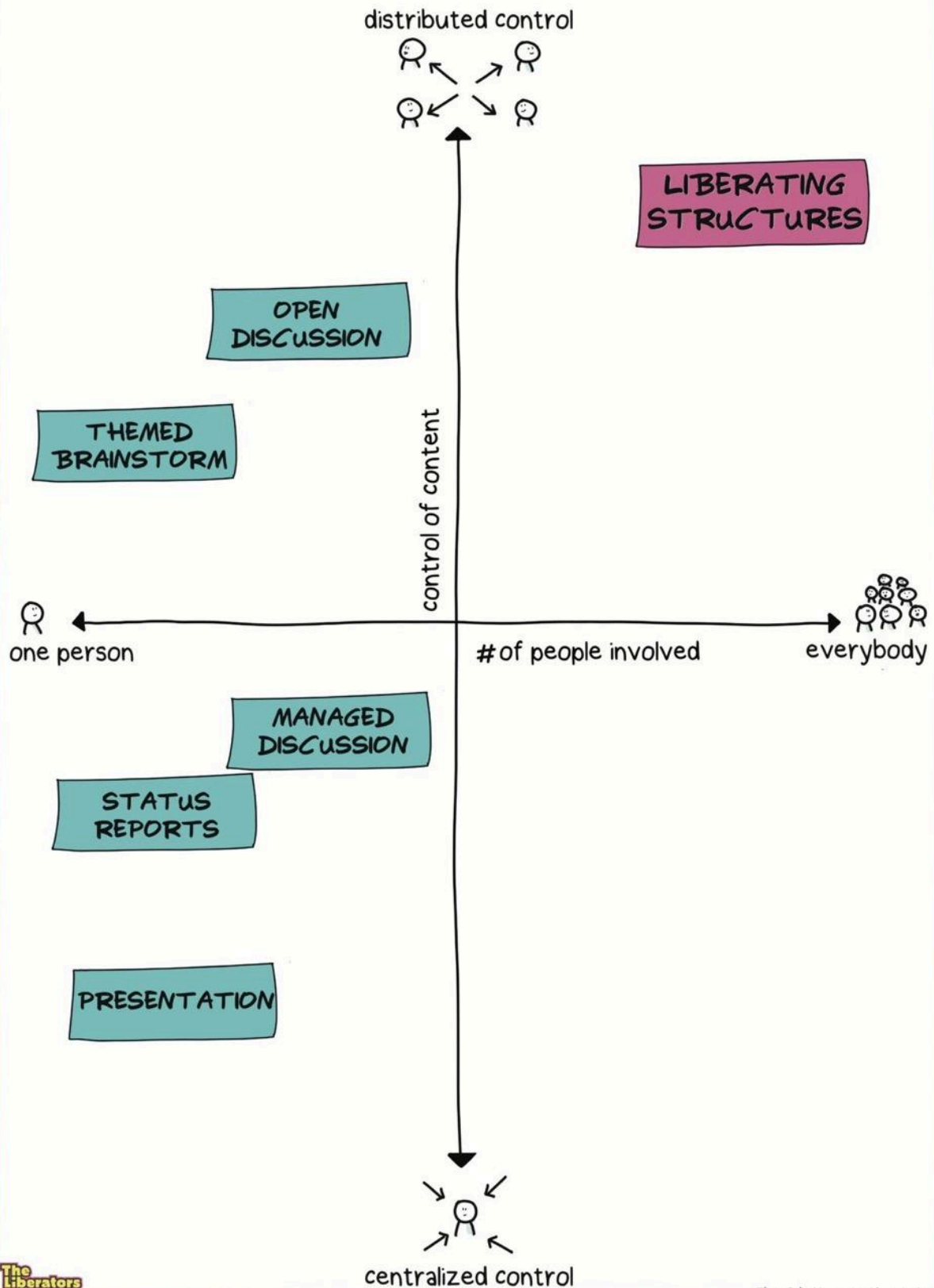


The tyranny of structurelessness is real. Those who assert dominance speak up, those who know better stay silent.





# LIBERATING STRUCTURES

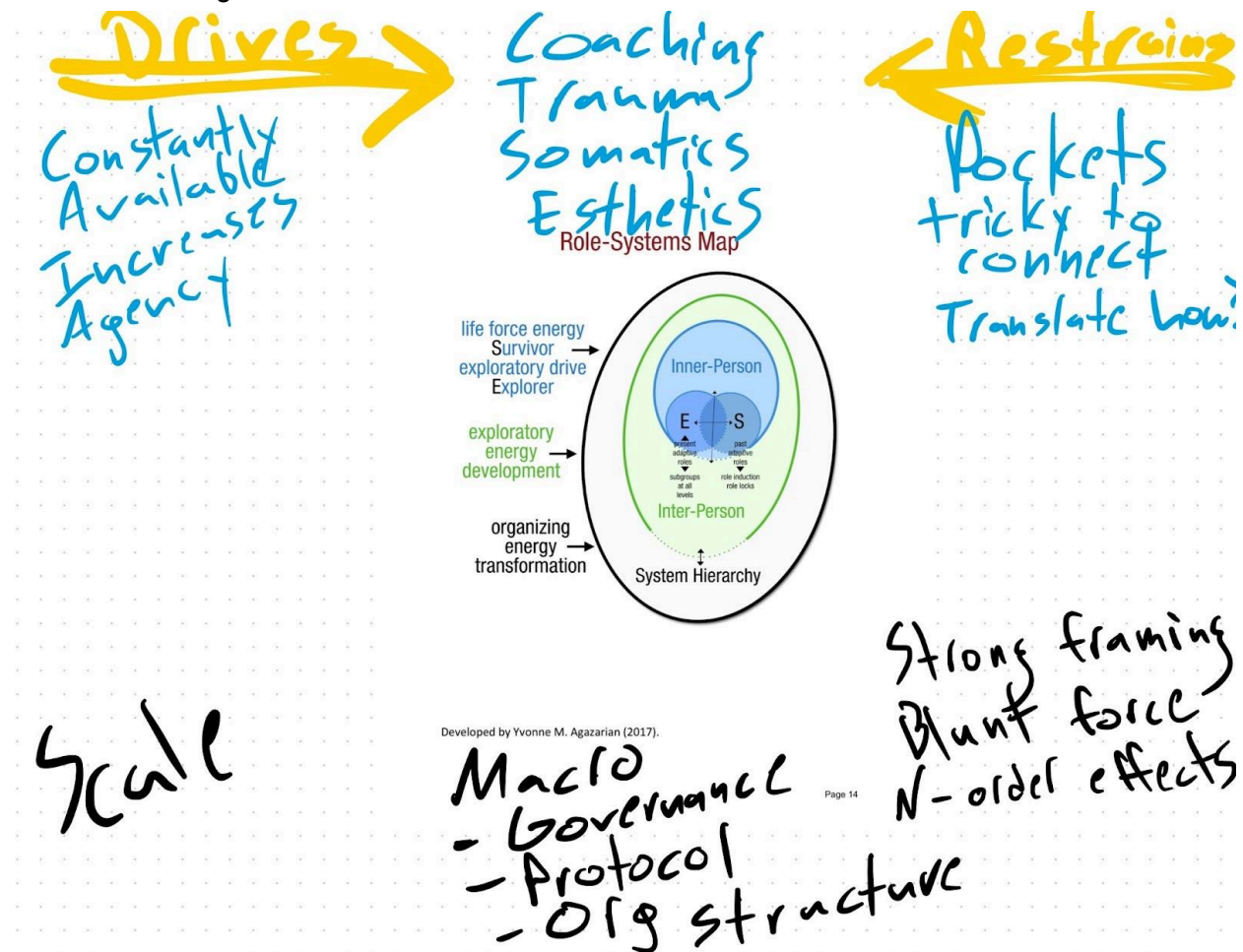


## Panarchy + Force fields and a meso theory of change

Hopefully by now I've made a compelling case for when thinking about communication is appropriate, why communication matters and what makes it challenging. Now what in god's name do we do about it?

Well I suppose that all depends on where you believe change can and should happen. I swear I'm not trying to dodge the question, I just really want to set the shit out of this setting.

micro-macro scales  
theories of change



There seems to be two camps about change. They often argue even if they recognize that they need one another.

Personal Transformation

VS

## Large scale systems Transformation

With personal transformation the offer and attraction is that it is more or less universally available. These changes in perspective and values, can increase personal agency and lead to different choices, which is a great invitation to new possibilities. So there has been a very meaningful increase in the spread of coaching/therapy, somatic and esthetic work.

Unfortunately, these pockets of change can have quite different expressions and are tricky to connect. While at the same time the industry of advertisement is exceptionally skilled at co-opting these values and their esthetics, further fueling criticism from all directions as well as cynicism. How does personal transformation swell into large scale transformation when it is so easily divided?

And then there are the top down thinkers who rightly recognize that if they can get close enough to the center of the systems that govern our world they can have a large scale influence on the whole of society. So they pursue power and resources through government, industry and technology. Unfortunately even seeking this route has extraordinarily strong framing effects on the thinking of those walking it. Large scale systems are blunt tools that create more unforeseen consequences than intended effects. To play the game of influence is to adapt to it's values.

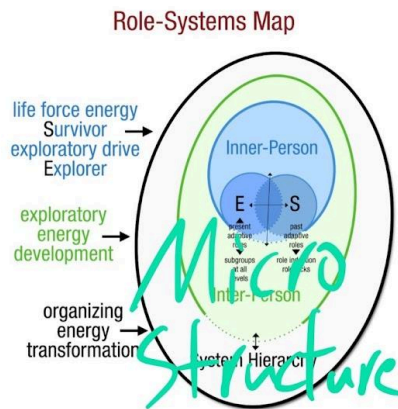
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**Drives** →

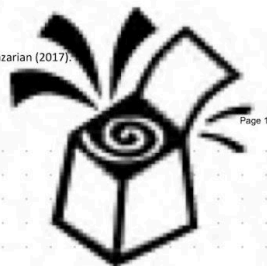
Strong  
Area of  
Effect  
upgrades  
Personal  
Skill

Easy for  
1-2 people  
to influence  
vibes

Modularity  
swells  
Adapting to  
Particulars  
of  
Context



Developed by Yvonne M. Agazarian (2017).



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← **Restrains**

Some will  
lose if  
Influence  
is Distributed

Deeply  
Ingrained  
Norms  
Culture  
Imaginaris

Current  
Institutions  
might fight  
rather than  
change or die

This site, the project and people associated with it would like to offer a third way, of the middle system at the inter-personal scale. We believe that Micro Structures like Liberating Structures are a particularly good place for most people to start (but aren't mad if you find other ways). The offer is that the middle is immediately connected to BOTH the personal AND large system scale. In addition, at the interpersonal scale it is easy for one or two people to influence the vibes of an entire group. Liberating Structures have an area of effect upgrade on personal communication skills. Micro-Structures are also modular and infinitely recomposable, so their influence can adapt to the particular needs of specific contexts and swell to the large system scale.

The challenges though are cultural, in that group norms and imaginaries seem and feel deeply ingrained. It feels weird and risky to invite them to change. Plus, some people that benefit from those norms will certainly stand to lose, if influence is distributed by LS. At the large scale as well, there are challenges with scapegoating. Organizations have cultures that might choose to exclude differences rather than integrate them. Failing to do so these organizations and the individuals might become very aggressive as they realize their evolutionary niche leads to extinction. Not everyone will want to cross the valley after all.

#### IF AFTER BANDWIDTH/THROUGHPUT

I believe that this meso scale of intervention/change is the vibe because, while individuals can suggest LS to change the pattern of interaction away from 1-to-many, it requires the consent of the group to accomplish. So with that how do we solve as many of these challenges at once?

#### Principles and Relational Coordination

### Liberating Structures

LS are perfectly imperfect. They intentionally miss things that many find important. ~~Take decision making for example. The closest LS comes is 15% Solutions, What? So What? Now What? and 25-10 Crowdsourcing. 33 LS and the closest to DM is "what can you do for and by yourself?" "Connect data and inference to ideas" and "nobody gets all the info and no idea gets seen by all ranking." So what gives? Are LS pushing consensus? I'd say that LS are pushing us to radically rethink the way we communicate and collaborate towards decentralization.~~

LS are practices. LS are instructions for how to have different conversations. Procedural knowledge, the knowing of how-to rather than propositional knowledge, the knowing of thoughts or theory. We say that LS work in practice, but do they work in theory? All this to say that LS are much easier to use than they are to explain.

All this setup has been one attempt to frame up and assist by describing the problems that they solve. Next what we'll do is lay out some of the attributes and principles that form the "why" they work.

## Relational Coordination

each individuals become capable of acting beyond the capacity of any one person (to influence the group norms(governance and meta-governance)) Getting Relevant info, useful place at appropriate time

By increasing the frequency, timeliness, relevance of communication while focusing it on problem solving (vs blame) towards shared goals. As knowledge is shared mutual respect are cultivated.

## Measuring relational coordination

| RC dimensions                    | Survey questions                                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Frequent communication        | How <i>frequently</i> do people in each of these groups communicate with you about [focal work process]?                     |
| 2. Timely communication          | How <i>timely</i> is their communication with you about [focal work process]?                                                |
| 3. Accurate communication        | How <i>accurate</i> is their communication with you about [focal work process]?                                              |
| 4. Problem solving communication | When there is a problem in [focal work process], do people in these groups blame others or try to <i>solve the problem</i> ? |
| 5. Shared goals                  | How much do people in these groups <i>share your goals</i> for [focal work process]?                                         |
| 6. Shared knowledge              | How much do people in these groups <i>know</i> about the work you do with [focal work process]?                              |
| 7. Mutual respect                | How much do people in these groups <i>respect</i> the work you do with [focal work process]?                                 |

What seems to be going on relational coordination10 Principles

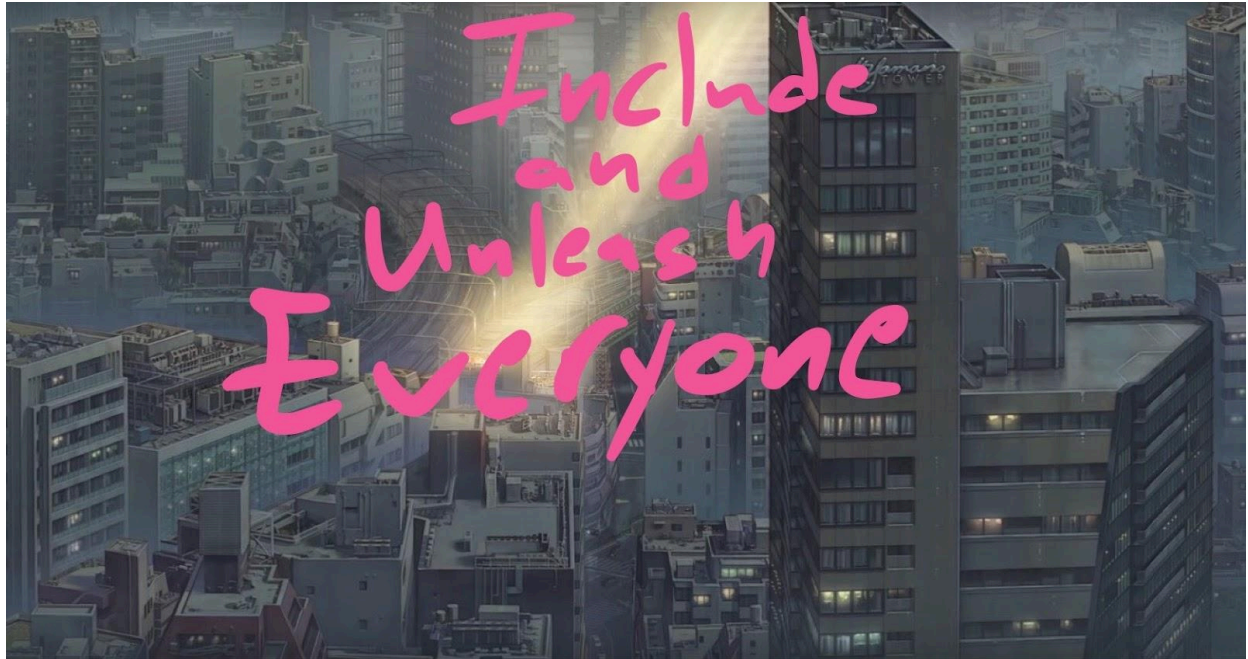


| <b>Principle</b><br>When LS are part of everyday interactions, it is possible to: | <b>Must Do's</b><br>Often valued and espoused but not often practiced. LS make it possible to START or AMPLIFY these practices.                                                                                                      | <b>Must NOT Do's</b><br>Often unnoticed, or "autopilot" behaviors. LS make it possible to STOP or REDUCE these practices.                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1. Include and Unleash Everyone</b>                                            | Invite everyone touched by a challenge to share possible solutions or invent new approaches together. Actively reach across levels, beyond the usual suspects.                                                                       | Appoint a few to design an "elegant solution" and then tell all others to implement it after the fact. Confront resistance with hours of PPT presentations. Force buy-in. Separate deciders from doers.                  |
| <b>2. Practice Deep Respect for People and Local Solutions</b>                    | Engage people <i>doing the work</i> and familiar with the local context. Trust and unleash their collective expertise and inventiveness to solve complex challenges. Let go of the compulsion to control.                            | Import <i>best practices</i> , drive <i>buy-in</i> , or assume people need more training. Favor experts and computer systems over local people and know-how.                                                             |
| <b>3. Build Trust As You Go</b>                                                   | Cultivate a trusting group climate where speaking the truth is valued and shared ownership is the goal. Sift ideas and make decisions using input from everyone. Practice "nothing about me without me." Be a leader and a follower. | Over-help or over-control the work of others. Praise and pretend to follow the ideas of colleagues. Indirectly, respond to ideas from others with cynicism, ridicule, criticism, or punishment.                          |
| <b>4. Learn by Failing Forward</b>                                                | Debrief every step. Make it safe to speak up. Discover positive variation. Include and unleash clients as you innovate. Take small risks quickly, reducing time between iterations.                                                  | Focus on doing and deciding. Avoid difficult conversations and gloss over failures. Punish risk-takers when unknowable surprises pop up.                                                                                 |
| <b>5. Practice Self-Discovery Within A Group</b>                                  | Engage groups to the maximum degree in discovering solutions on their own. Increase diversity to spur creativity, broaden potential solutions and enrich peer-to-peer learning. Encourage experiments on multiple tracks.            | Impose solutions from the top. Let experts "educate" and tell people what to do. Assume that people resist change no matter what. Substitute laminated signs for conversation. Exclude frontline people from innovating. |

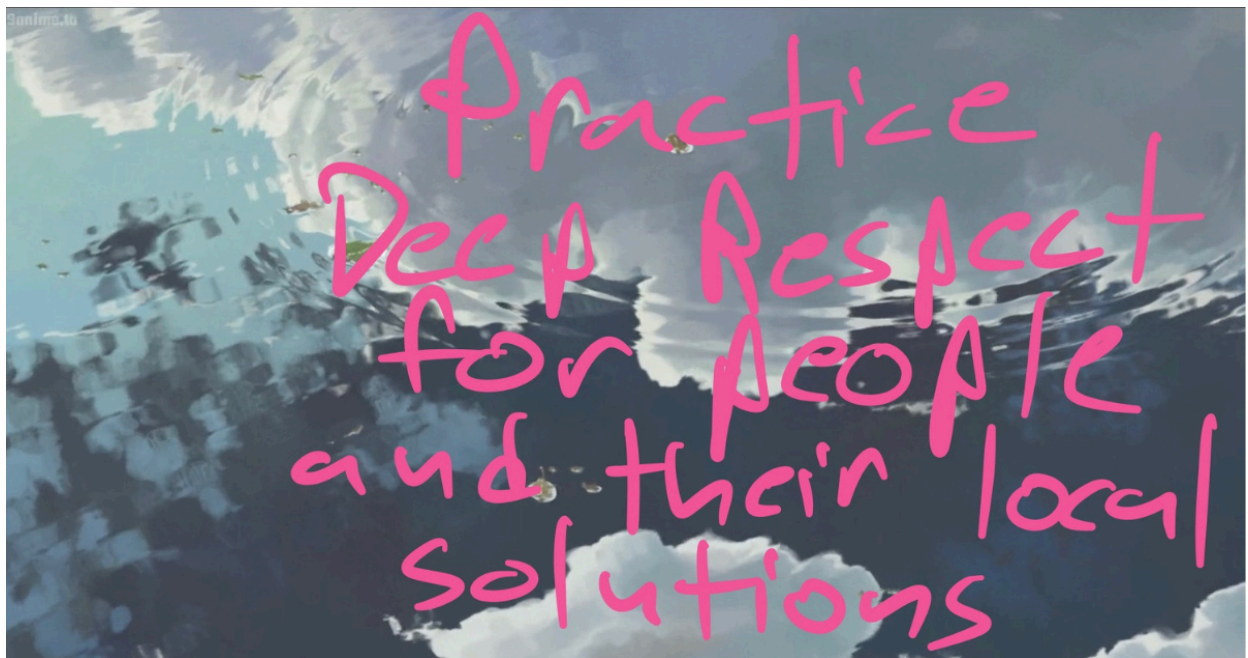
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|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>6. Amplify Freedom AND Responsibility</b>               | Specify minimum constraints and let go of over-control. Use the power of invitation. Privilege fast experiments over playing it safe. Track progress rigorously and feedback results to all. Invite the front line to create local performance metrics. Celebrate mistakes as sources of progress. | Unleash people without structure such as a clear purpose or minimum specifications. Let rules and procedures stifle initiative. Ignore the value of people understanding how their work affects one another. Keep frontline staff in the dark about group performance data. |
| <b>7. Emphasize Possibilities: Believe Before You See</b>  | Expose what is working well. Focus on what can be accomplished now with the imagination and materials at hand. Take the next steps that lead to the edge of creativity and renewal.                                                                                                                | Focus on what's wrong. Wait for all the barriers to come down or ideal conditions to emerge. Work on changing <i>the whole system</i> all at once.                                                                                                                          |
| <b>8. Invite Creative Destruction To Enable Innovation</b> | Convene conversations about what is keeping people from working on the essence of their work. Remove the barriers even when it feels like heresy. Make it easy for people to deal with their fears.                                                                                                | Avoid or delay stopping the behaviors, practices and policies that are revealed as barriers. Assume obstacles don't matter or can't be removed.                                                                                                                             |
| <b>9. Engage in Seriously-Playful Curiosity</b>            | Stir things up — with levity, paradoxical questions, and improv — to spark a deep exploration of current practices and latent innovations. Make working together both demanding and inviting.                                                                                                      | Keep it simple by deciding in advance what the solutions should be. Control all conversations. Ask only closed yes or no questions. Make working together feel like drudgery.                                                                                               |
| <b>10. Never Start Without Clear Purpose(s)</b>            | Dig deep for what is important and meaningful to you and to others. Use <i>9 Whys</i> routinely. Take time to include everyone in crafting an unambiguous statement of the deepest need for your work.                                                                                             | Maintain ambiguity by using jargon. Substitute a safe short-term goal or means-to-an-end for a bold reason to exist or a deep need. Impose your vision of the future on others.                                                                                             |

[Include and Unleash Everyone](#)





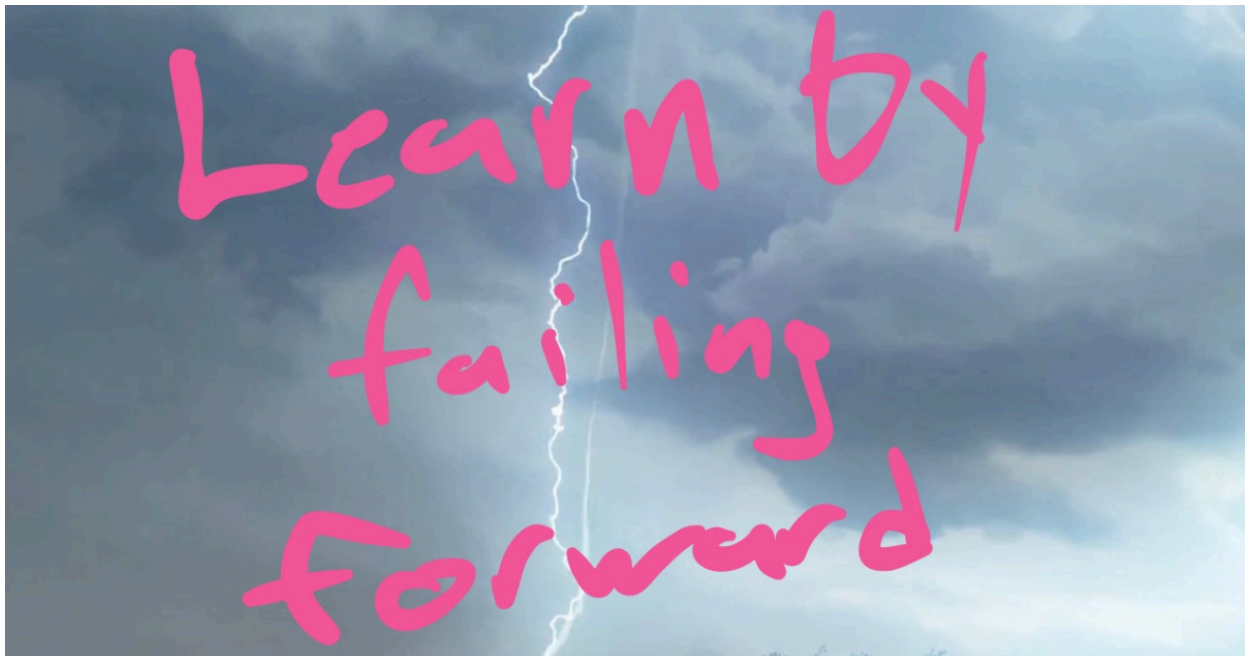
[Practice Deep Respect for People and their local solutions](#)



[Build Trust as you go](#)

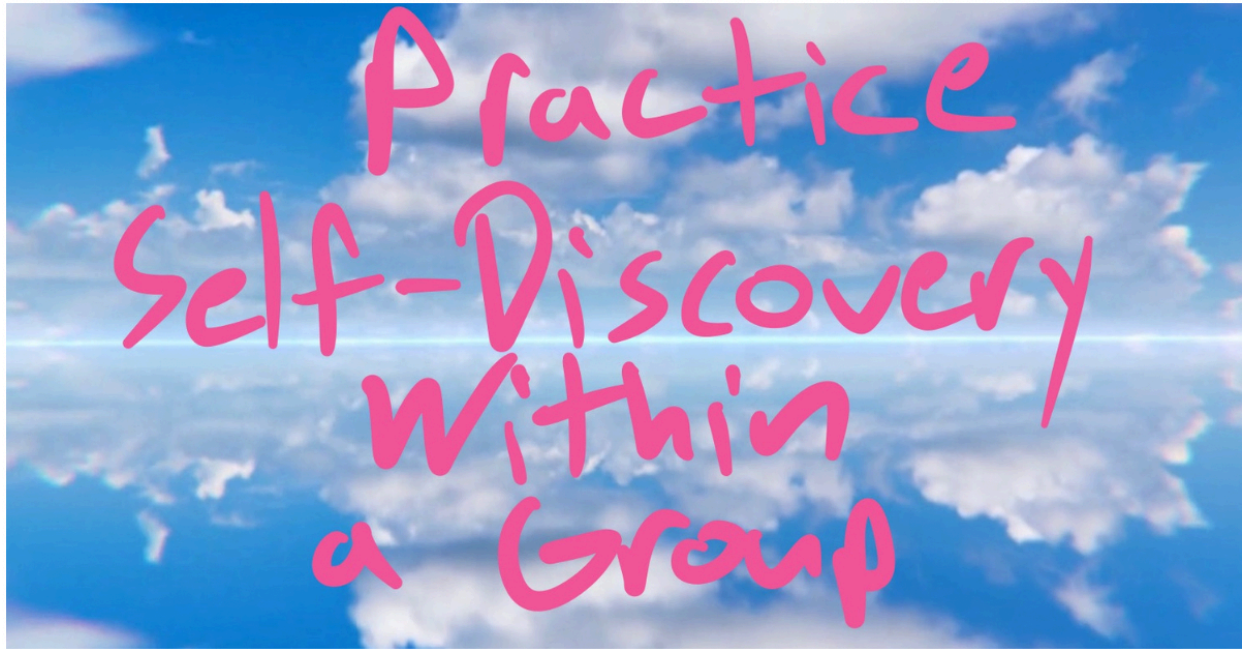


[Learn by failing forward](#)



[Practice Self-Discovery Within a Group](#)





Amplify Freedom and Responsibility



Emphasize Possibilities: Believe Before You See

Emphasize  
Possibilities:  
Believe Before  
You See

[Invite Creative Destruction To Enable Innovation](#)

Invite Creative  
Destruction  
To Enable  
Innovation

[Engage in Seriously Playful Curiosity](#)





Never Start Without a clear Purpose



What is noteworthy about these principles is that they were observed from practice. This means that if these sound like good things you want to have in your life then learning, practicing and using Liberating Structures is all you need to get them.

Expertless

Results Focused

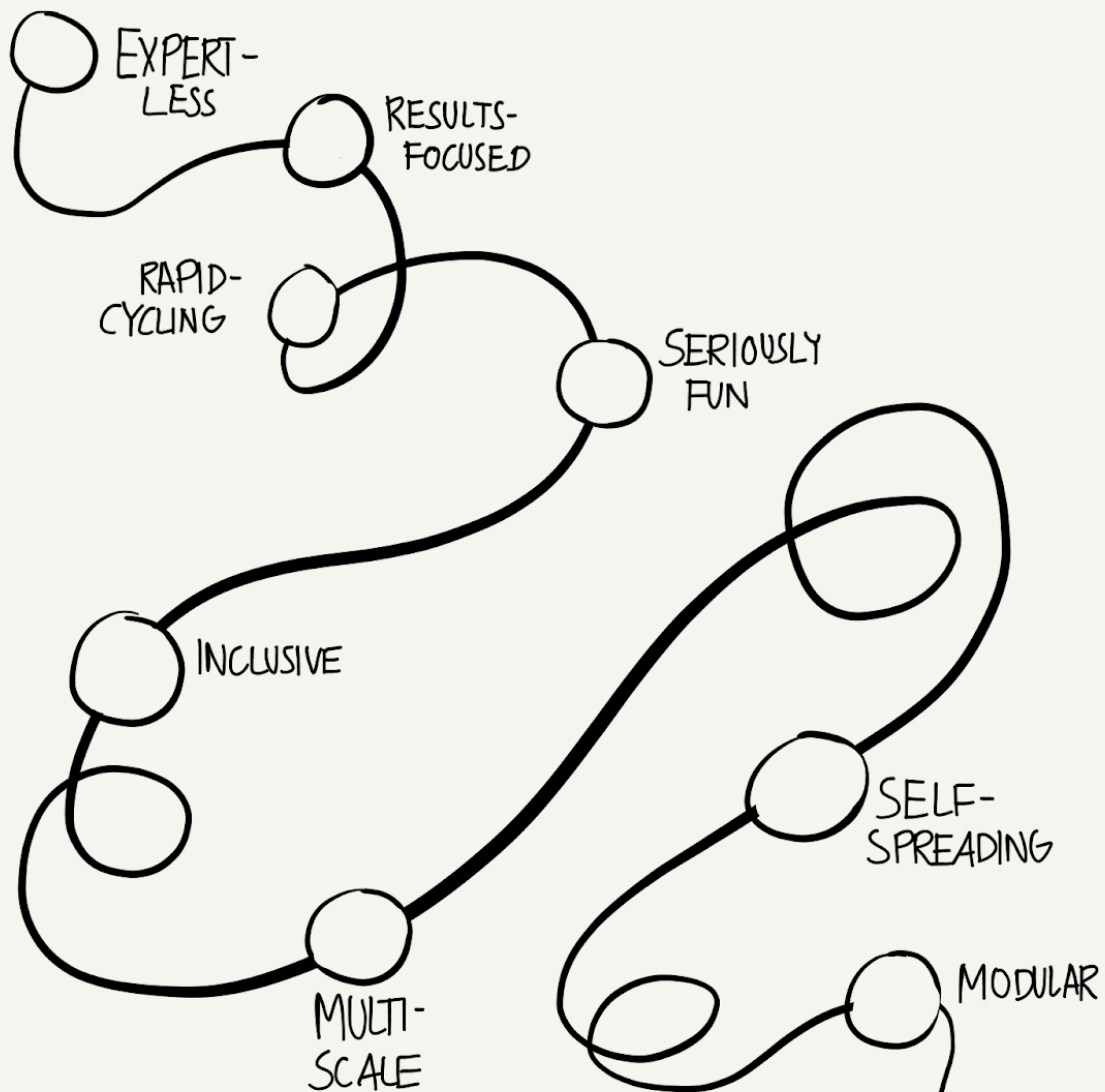
Rapidly Cycling

Seriously Fun

Inclusive  
Multi-Scale  
Self-Spreading  
Modular



# ATTRIBUTES of LIBERATING STRUCTURES ↺



# Attributes of Liberating Structures

|                                                                                                   |                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  Expert-less     |  Inclusive      |
|  Results-focused |  Multi-scale    |
|  Rapid cycling   |  Self-spreading |
|  Seriously fun   |  Modular        |



1. **Expert-less:** requires only a few minutes to introduce; novices can succeed after a first experience
2. **Results-focused:** likely to generate better-than-expected purposeful results
3. **Rapid cycling:** fast iterative rounds are very productive
4. **Seriously fun:** boosts joy, freedom & responsibility
5. **Inclusive:** together, everyone is invited to shape next steps
6. **Multi-scale:** works for everyday solutions, projects, strategy, movements
7. **Self-spreading:** simple to copy without formal training
8. **Modular-Minimalist:** the parts can be combined & recombined endlessly

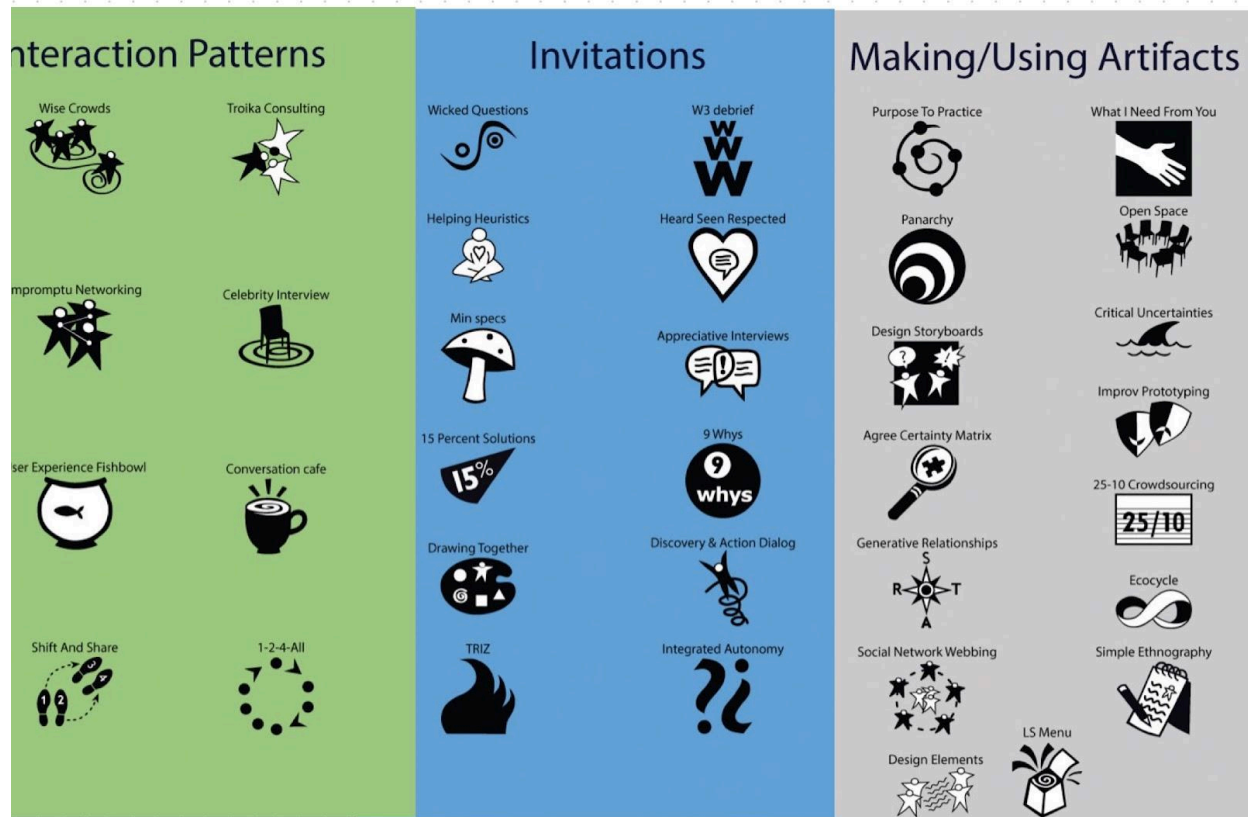
Licensed via Creative Commons

## 3 ways: Each LS+ bucket how it helps

LS do that by

There are three flavors of LS,

- 1 decentralize conversations to include and unleash everyone
- 2 guide conversations to engage in seriously-playful curiosity
- 3 create artifacts of conversations to practice self-discovery within a group



The easiest, and by easy I mean requiring the least skill to duct tape in place is to decentralize conversations. Shifting the dynamic of a group's conversation from 1-to-many towards many-to-many solves this bandwidth issue raising participation to +50%

Instructions for conversations

Emphasizing: How participation is distributed, groups are formed, steps and time become

1-2-4-All

Impromptu

Troika(Helping Heuristics)(Simple Ethnography)

Conversation Cafe

UX Fishbowl

Celebrity Interview

Shift and Share

Lean Coffee/Open Space Technology

Discovery Action Dialog

25/10

WINFY

The limitations of interaction. On different “ladders/vectors of inference”

Now What?

So What?

What?



Trying to express why so much communication sucks 🧵



The data that is relevant to each person varies, leading us on these different ladders of inference that vector to points of why-the-data-matters and thus varied conclusions about what to do in response to that stuff

In unstructured group discussions, it's easy to get into a tug of war to win which ladder the group talks about.

We do this thing where we go

“yeah but...”

communicating both a contradiction

yes=agree + but=no

and engaging only superficially with one another

Not only are we on different ladders/vectors, but we're also at different levels of those ladders all the time

P1 ● what

P2 ● so we should now what

P1 ● yes, but so what

P3 ● yes, but what

P1 ● yes, but now what

P4 ● yes, but now what

P2 ● yes, but so what

P1 ● yes, but what

Etc

This makes getting the information of one complete ladder out in the middle take FOREVER.

What are the consequences of this confusion and the delays it causes? In terms of externalities, incalculable. That's not true nerds have calculated time and time again how much time and money is wasted in ineffective meetings but I don't really care about those. They're an administrative problem, sure with n-order consequences I do care about but whatever, I'm concerned with how that shit feels. And holy shit does that vibe suck.

My favorite Liberating Structure “What? So What? Now What?” solves this by inviting the group to stay focused together on the same level at a time

First we all dump all the What's on the table

Then we offer all the So What's

And then we get all the Now What's out in the open

The trixy bit is that this is really hard to do, humans seem hardwired to jump to conclusions: we want to go straight to Now What?

Now that I've got all your information and you've got mine, we've got a better chance to cohere around the ones we can all see are more significant, agreeing to pursue those or to choose the maximalist adventure and do all of the things

So What can you do to improve the chances of getting at least one ladder out there?

Speak your whole coherent ladder in a micro 🗣️

I see/hear/notice...

Which seems significant because... (implication/need)

So I propose...

Anybody else?

Now What about everyone else in the room?

Take notes to capture and assemble the ladders that are coming in pieces

Then run a checksum when you have their whole thing:

If I get you, you're seeing...

Which is important because...

So you think we should...

Did I get you?

Or ask for the missing ingredients you need to assemble a ladder

So I get that you are seeing \_\_\_\_\_

And that you believe that we should \_\_\_\_\_, but what's the reason that gets you there?

Or go maximalist and go for

What? 1-2-4-All

So What? 1-2-4-All

Now What? 1-2-4-All

## Invitation: Process mindfulness to guide the conversation

Scenes/

Place, purpose, (principals) participants, structures practices vs P2P

(roles)/moves

What to talk about and directionality

## SCENES(IntentionS): Preparation and planning

Place:

Set and setting

Context, context, context

Purpose:

What do we want to have happen?

Participants:

Authority

Resources

Expertise

-

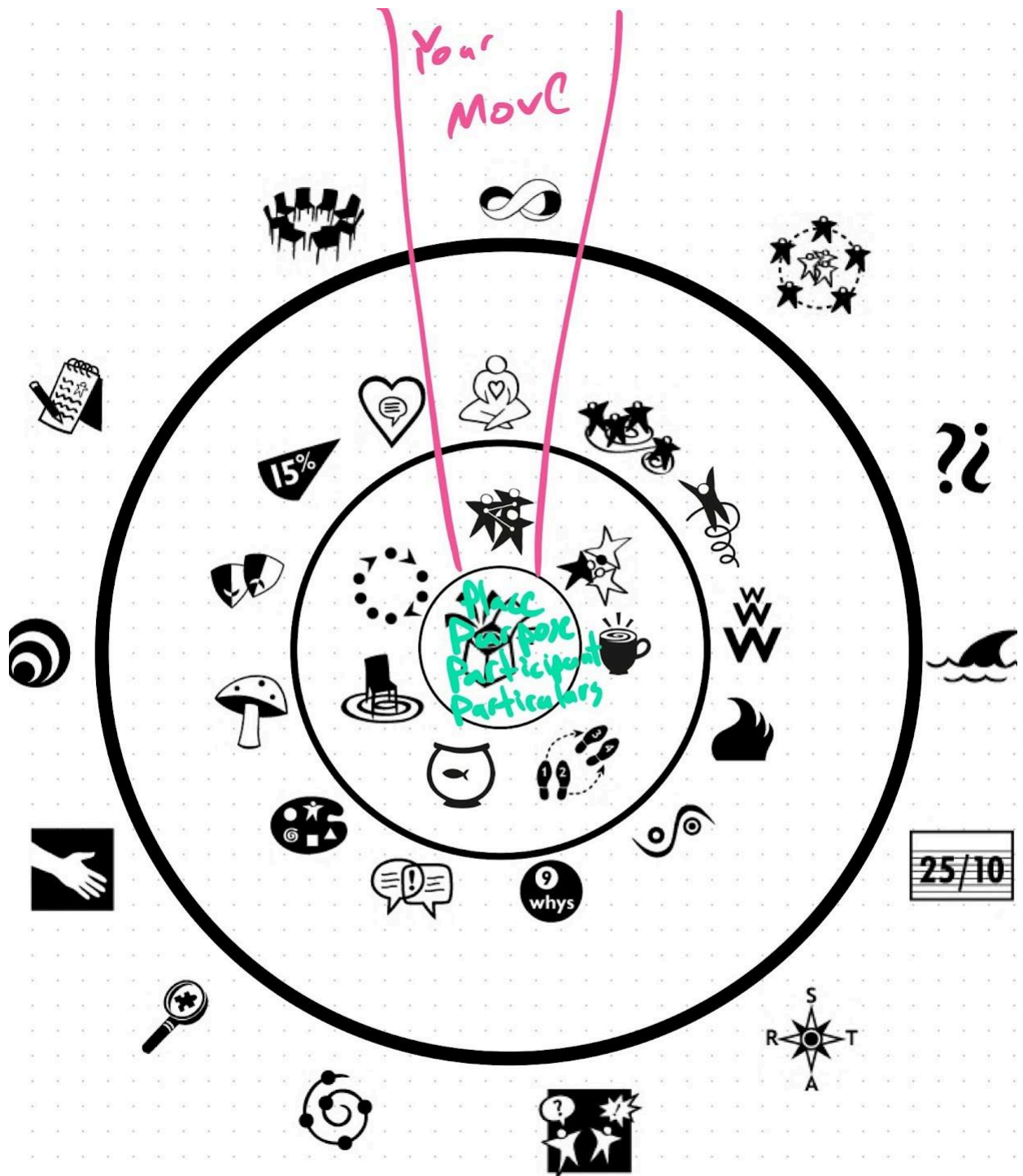
Information

Need(affected by decision/solution)

Parameters:

If the interaction patterns help us figure out how to organize/decentralize conversations effectively then Invitations form the questions and prompts that help us figure out what we should talk about in the context of those conversations. This requires more skill than just the interaction patterns. It also requires us to know and/or investigate the context our conversation is happening in. The upside of the trade-off of this needed skill and preparation is that this skill is extra widely applicable. Being able to guide a conversation is being able to guide all conversations.

In order to do this effectively we need to have a sense of where we're coming from, where you're going in a conversation and what steps, topics and discussions are required for you to get there.





Directionality???

9WHYS

Appreciative Interviews

Wise Crowds/Troika

Helping Heuristics

Heard Seen Respected

TRIZ

Wicked Questions

Integrated Autonomy

DAD

15%

W3

Min Specs



Limitation of synchronous interaction: making the case for  
Semi-synch human stigmergy

But what about the people who are not in the room?

Using and Creating Artifacts: shared frames/patterns of reference  
to accelerate the spread of information

# Making/Using Artifacts

Purpose To Practice



Panarchy



Design Storyboards



Agree Certainty Matrix



Generative Relationships



Social Network Webbing



Design Elements



LS Menu



What I Need From You



Open Space



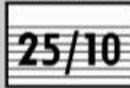
Critical Uncertainties



Improv Prototyping



25-10 Crowdsourcing



Ecocycle



Simple Ethnography



# Invitations

Wicked Questions



W3 debrief



Helping Heuristics



Heard Seen Respected



Min specs



Appreciative Interviews



15 Percent Solutions



9 Whys



Drawing Together



Discovery & Action Dialog



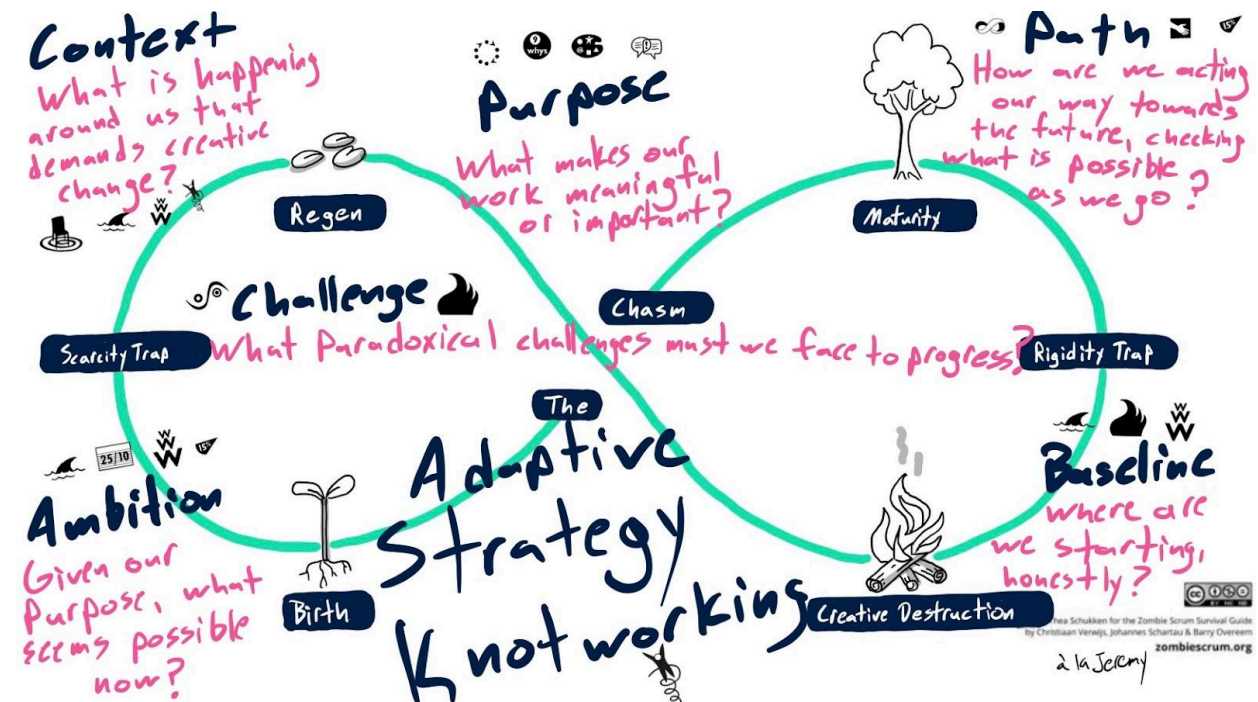
TRIZ



Integrated Autonomy



Drawing Together



Into The weeds

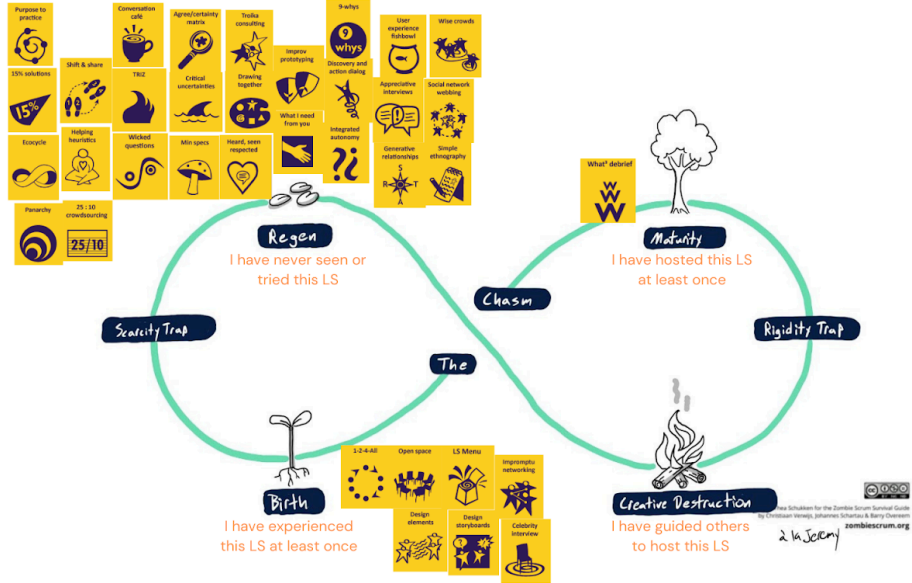
## LS Stages of Development

### LS Development Phases |... ||... |||... ||||

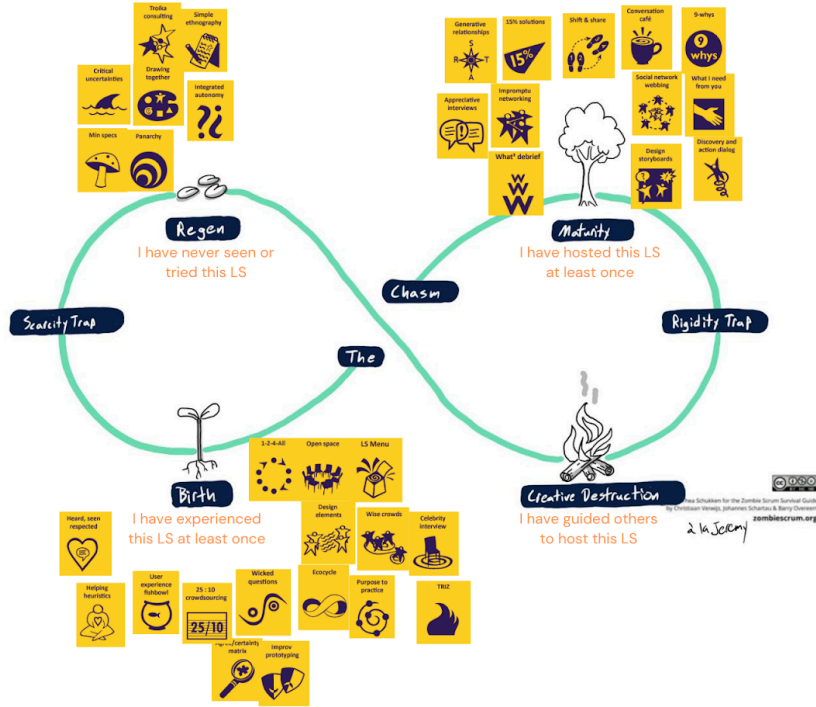
| # LS<br>in use | USER                                                       |   | MAESTRO                       | GROWTH FOCUS                                                                                                                                                                          | TIPS & FEARS                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 0              | Despairing<br>Cynic<br><i>Unconscious<br/>Incompetence</i> |   | Authority,<br>Expert          | Guide exploration & self-discovery toward practical results. <i>LS as tools that play well with other change efforts.</i>                                                             | Focus on noticing what how structure liberates & confident first steps. <b>Fear:</b> <i>will I look foolish or unprepared?</i>                                     |
| 5              | Cautious<br>Optimist<br><i>Conscious<br/>Novice</i>        |   | Facilitator,<br>Teacher       | Focus on clarifying purpose, including unusual suspects, and design skills (stringing & inviting). <i>LS as inclusive &amp; engaging alternatives to conventional methods in use.</i> | Design effective meetings + find LS co-leaders. <b>Fear:</b> <i>can we generate better-than-expected results w/o pre-cooked goals/agendas/visions?</i>             |
| 15+            | Rapturous<br>Super-User<br><i>Conscious<br/>Competence</i> |   | Coach, Co-Designer            | Focus on expanding your repertoire & use in diverse settings + messy challenges. <i>LS as generating innovative results while shifting relational patterns &amp; habits.</i>          | Focus on spreading LS & 5 micro-design elements. Expand to action research & strategy. <b>Fear:</b> <i>is it possible to prevent snapback to old habits?</i>       |
| 33...          | Maestro<br>Minimalist<br><i>Unconscious<br/>Competence</i> |  | Self-Authoring<br>Participant | Transfer design expertise to the group. Enter new domains & reach across multiple scales. <i>LS as pattern for simultaneously &amp; mutually shaping next steps and the future.</i>   | Connect users & challenges across domains. Invent new LS. <b>Fear:</b> <i>as LS becomes the routine way we work together, have I designed my own obsolescence?</i> |



**Rakshith(Kuttss) + 31/05/2023**



**Rakshith(Kuttss) 09/08/2023**



## Sit-Rep of the LS Community of Practice

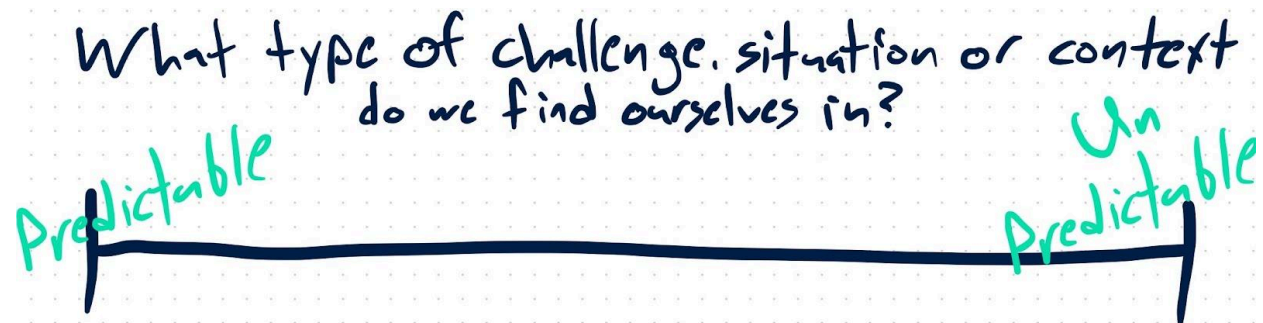
As of Dec 2023 there are 9566 members of the “General” channel in the Slack community.

## Adjacent Communities



## BRAIN DUMPS AND PREVIOUS INCREMENTS AND ITERATIONS

Process Mindfulness is not a meditation but an impractical framework that will encourage you to waste some time thinking and communicating, figuring out how you want to get something done, instead of actually going to get something done. Curious though isn't it? That sometimes you can just shoot from the hip and go get shit done, and yet others you need to stop, think and sometimes you know, make a god-damned plan. How do you know when you need to do one or the other?



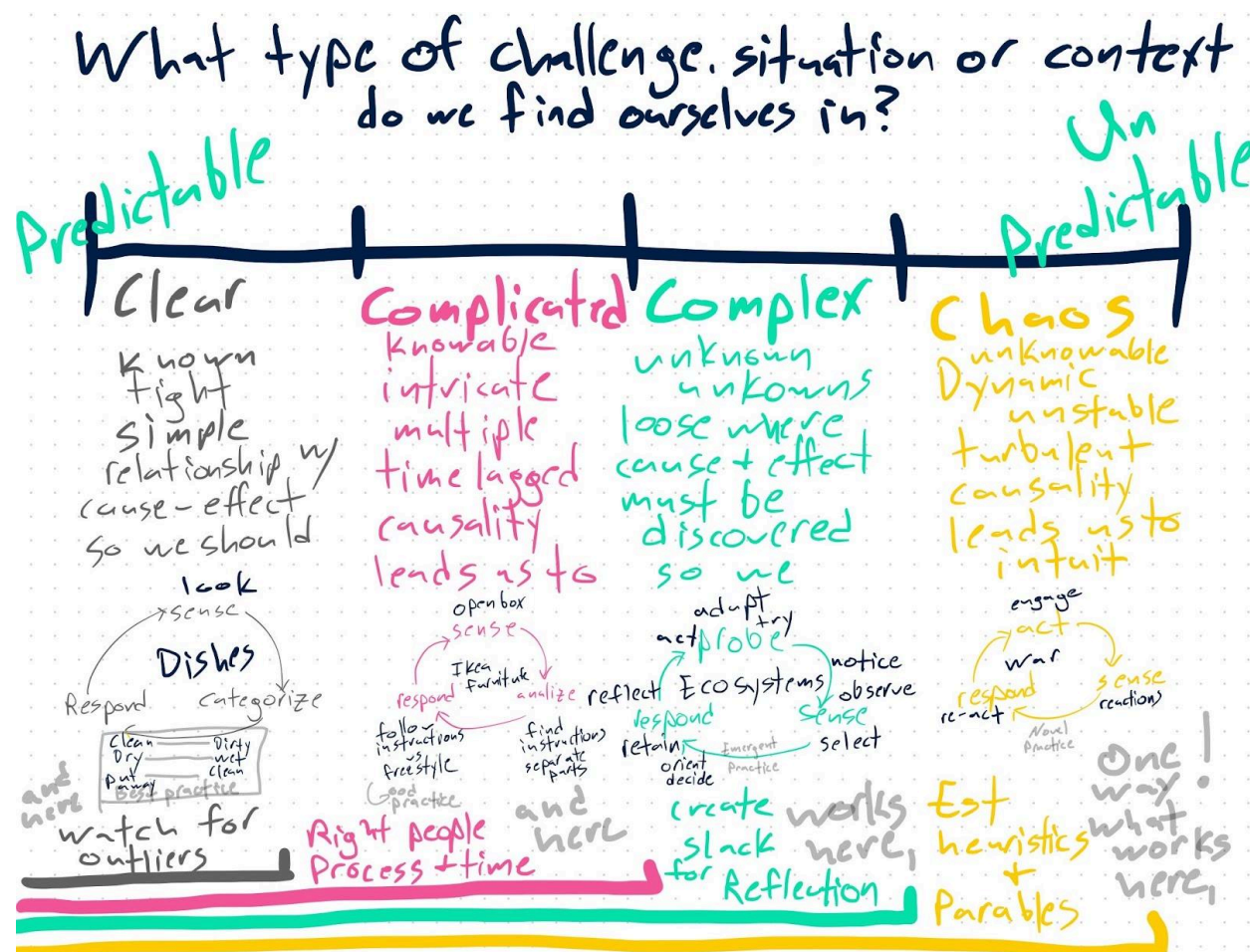
I'd encourage you to Think Slow for just one minute. Considering your situation, question or challenge where are you on a spectrum with "predictable" on the left extreme and "unpredictable" on the right. If you're with anyone, find a partner and discuss where each of you believe you are in just one minute per person. If you're with a larger group of people, join with another pair. Paraphrase your partner to the new pair, invite them to do the same and see if you can synthesize your perspectives as one answer in just 4 minutes. If you're with more people, go around to each set of four and collect their answers in a minute or less. If you're all over the place, consider playing that game again. But if you're more or less tightly clustered, divide your spectrum into 4 segments. The one on the farthest left is Clear, prolly fine to just get shit done. The next one is Complicated, lots of pieces moving around, I mean if you nerds all locked right into this answer and know how the things fit together, get after it! If not however I'd do whatever your version of Googling shit is because expertise and analysis is advisable here. Take note that

if you fuck up and jump to getting things done(GTD) without the requisite expertise here, you'll kick yourself to the far right bucket called Chaos. Chaos being chaos, the relationships between cause and effect are changing all the time. Ironically in this context the DOing mode is your godsend. With all this flux in play, it doesn't make any sense trying to go all smarty pants and figure things out, just keep moving, capture the high ground and stay in radio contact. The last ¼ is... Complex. Complex... lots of unknown unknowns at play, you'll need to uncover things as you go. Probe, Sense and Respond is your search algorithm. Take your time and create some slack to look back and reflect after your last test. Now there's a lot of nifty insights in this simplified variation of the Agreement Certainty Matrix, but that will do to make this point: It depends.

Okay yeah except for Chaos mode, chaos mode always works, but it will sometimes waste a bunch of energy and yeah, drag things into chaos, which sometimes sucks, because sometimes you just want to chill right?

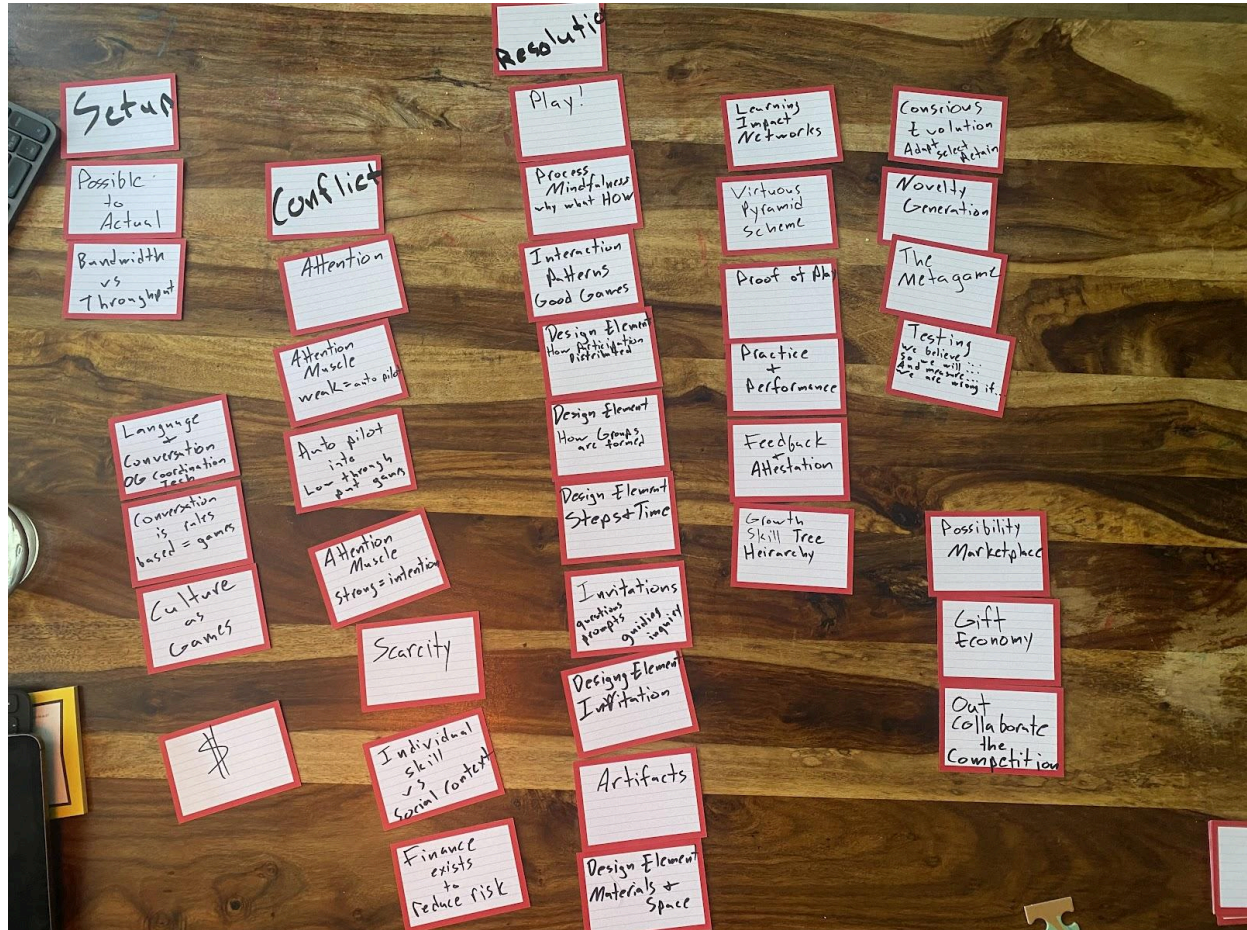
But yeah, it depends on the context, as to what is the correct course of action. Pay attention, take notes and ask around, somebody or perhaps the sum total of some-bodies will have the insight of whether you can stick with action mode or if thinking about HOW to think about things and get things done is good use of time.

This is Process Mindfulness.





# Table of contents



## Act 1 Setup



## Setup

Possible  
to  
Actual

What does  
the moment  
need (group)  
now?

Imaginariness

## Conflict

Downward  
Spiral:  
Risk what  
could be

Narrow's  
possibility

Erosion  
=  
bad narrowing

Avoid bad  
=  
good narrowing

## Resolution

Upward  
Spiral  
what could be

Possibilities  
that  
create  
more  
possibilities

opens  
windows  
of possible  
offer/invite

Shadow  
=  
scope creep

Shadow =  
hunger for  
more

## Possible to actual

Oh my god I want this to be so good SOOOOOOOOOO BAD. And it's not going to be good, not this time at least. It is going to start a hot steaming pile of garbage that hopefully conveys a glimmer of something interesting.

What is it this moment(group) needs now?

It's a big fucking question right? Which moment? That one? Or this one? Or the capital M moment of our times?

Whichever temporal scale makes sense to you prefer, the question behind that question is one of imagination to move what is possible to what is actual.

Sensemaking (is a big can of worms to open things up but maybe that bit about the Agreement certainty matrix make sense here), as defined by Granddaddy Dave Snowden, is about making sense of the world *so that we can act in it*.

## Imaginaries

We can all imagine an endless sea of possibilities. Call them dreams, prayers or wishes if you wish, but one thing becomes quickly obvious, these opportunities of latent in the imagination are abundant, perhaps even endless. Indeed economics 101 tells us that human wants are limitless but the supply of resources is finite, and offers itself as the solution to navigate that differential. They were on to something in when they tried to get the most actual out of the possible but they missed something essential about a quality of possibilities. Missing this distinction yet maximizing the actualisation of all possibilities leads us to believe selling sugar is just as good as selling a book.

## Downward Spiral

Some actualities create a type of order, that could be considered very efficient, optimized for just one task. Take a drainage ditch or the gutter system in a city for example. "Get the water out of here" is the function that it has been optimized for, so the water is relocated as fast as possible. I sea dike is another example of this aesthetic at work in a different way upon the same medium of water. "Keep that water out of here" and voila we get two very efficient systems that do what we intend, but nearly nothing more.

## Narrows Possibility/Avoiding bad=good

If you think about the perspective of the water, there is less choice available, less possibility of what it might be up to and where it might go. Our intentions are accomplished, our wishes

satisfied, but as opportunities as a result. Dry ground where we want it, mudslides prevented, floods avoided is better than fine and good, on paper it's amazing. Especially in the category of intervening, decreasing the probability of unwanted catastrophe this seems like the best thing since sliced bread. So how could this possibility possibly be wrong?

### How possibilities relate

This has to do with how no possibility exists free from other possibilities. How the outflow of one actuality becomes the starting point for another possibility. This relationality means that we have to consider a larger context of intended and unintended consequences. Two things are salient here

1. There are no externalities. What is external for you may be unavoidable for me. At its most extreme we get unmitigated disasters and genuine tragedies. Expanding the awareness of care/concern to others is how we escape the classic "prisoner's dilemma"
2. Feedback loops.

Alright so that water it flows down hill. When it flows fast it has a consequence that it picks up particles and cuts deeper channels in the dirt. These deeper channels concentrate and accelerate the flow of water which cuts deeper channels and run this pattern for a length of time and we have ourselves a proper ravine.

### Erosion of good possibilities

So what? Let's go back to there are no externalities. The consequences of the possibilities we have made actual, have consequences that become deterministic/unavoidable for those who come after us. At this micro scale of water on a hillside this steeper ravine gives seeds a more challenging surface to fall upon, the water running off of the hillside also dries out the soil, starving what seeds can fall of an essential resource. Less plant material means when rain does fall it's earth gets picked up easily causing further erosion. We're in a positive feedback loop, where we get more of what we put in, but for a negative outcome/consequence. Erosion and desertification in one place, Climate change as the sum total of those places spreads across the earth.

To oversimplify, some possibilities don't give you as many possibilities as they cost to realize, oh but some do. Some give you more than they cost.

### Upward spiral of what could be

Lets work backwards from where we left off rather than restart again. Imagine we can slow the flow of the water off of the hillside by digging many water harvesting retention ponds. Not only might we prevent that erosion from steepening the hillside, but the water gets absorbed by the soil, charging the groundwater and making essential ingredients for plant photosynthesis available higher up on the landscape. That extra plant material not only prevents erosion once

more but the leaves, branches and dead plant material that gets dropped on the landscape absorbs more water and creates healthier soil as well. This in turn increases the varieties of plants that might thrive on this hillside. Blah blah blah springs, blah blah blah food blah blah blah civilization.

I learned of this quote from Karen Jansen from Paul Krafel: "You can count the seeds in an apple, but you can't count the apples in a seed. When you teach, you never know how many lives you will influence...you are teaching for eternity". This statement points at these different classes of possibilities.

### Invitations

The point of this book is to invite you into a particular possibility creating possibility that I call process mindfulness. Think of it as a game where the point is to both open up windows of possibility rich possibilities, then step into and steward them into becoming actual. It's foundation is to become fluent in recognizing, responding to and actualizing possibilities as a way to create greater possibilities.

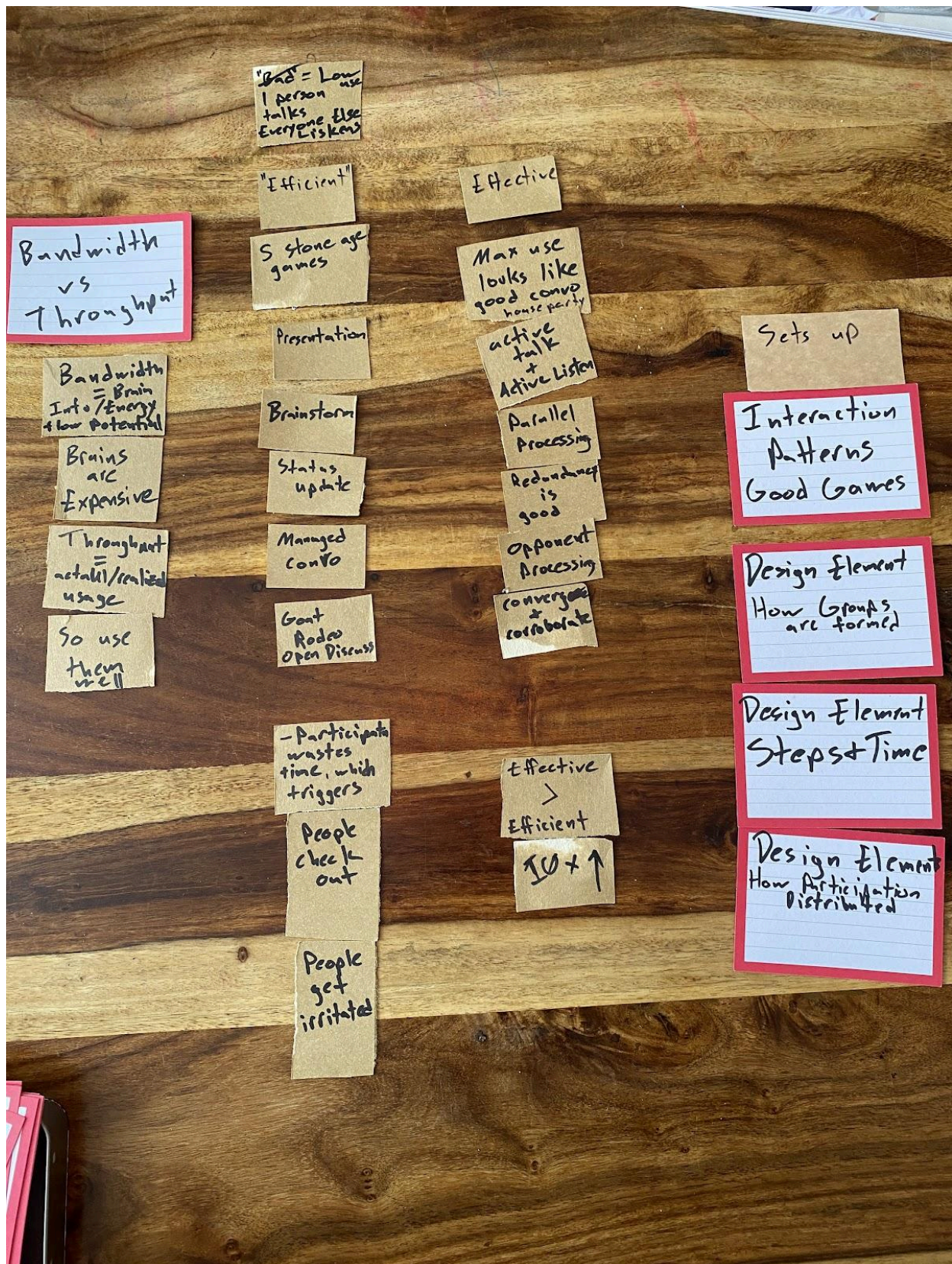
### Shadows

Now keep in mind that we are talking about an infinite expansion that could become just a bunch of dudes in an infinitely meta circle jerk. So it is extraordinarily important that the actualization happens. In addition this could become another game of economic folly where we just play for a different class of growth. The actualization must be in service of life.

missing: slowing flow looks like many paths vs one monopath



## Bandwidth vs Throughput



## Bandwidth= Brain info/energy flow potential

So bandwidth is a particular type of potential, in this instance for flow. It's a broad technical term but I'm going to use it to talk about max potential to be used of human time attention information energy processing.

## Brains are expensive

Human time attention information energy has enormous creative potential but requires a lot of invested energy as well. At the micro/individual scale a brain accounts for something like 2% of body mass but uses almost 20% of calories. This is a huge evolutionary choice that must carry big upside to justify. That's on the day to day, but think about how it takes 25 years for a brain to "fully develop." That's bananas. We're reproductively ready at 15ish but brains don't mature until a decade after that. This all on its own is fascinating but I'm past the point. Booting up brains is crazy expensive.

At the macro organizational scale as well, labor is one of a primary business costs of most any company. Despite that Labor and entrepreneurship show up twice in the factors of production (land labor capital and entrepreneurship).

## Throughput is actual/realized of potential

In relation to the bandwidth, or total potential, there is an actual usage of that we refer to as throughput. The concept here is percentage of total. When we gather together or pool human time attention information energy, how much of that potential are we actually using.

## So use them well

So it rains/accumulates at the rate people/brains gathered together for a duration of time equals our bandwidth or total potential of human time attention information energy processing pool. When you think about the calories and years sunk in rearing and payroll costs and global integrated supply chains to support all of the above the sunk cost of time together is mind boggling. Now compare that bandwidth as potential with the throughput of actual utilization and its enough to make you cry. The literal opportunity costs that we just go flushing down the toilet every day would make our ancestors furious.

And that consideration is before any evaluation about the worthiness of what we're there paying attention to, the downward vs upward spirals. We're just talking about what fraction of the possibility we're burning the entire planet to create are we actually using?

This I'm going to refer to as "the throughput problem" going forward

Now just to be clear I'm talking about real time, synchronous communication. I'm going to polarize everyone and say I believe that this is the attention that matters most to me. There's lots to be said about async, but I haven't given near as much a thought about it. The argument I'm building is about brains and the people they're in, when they are gathered together at the same time.



## Lowest throughput = 1 person talks everyone listens

When we think about this throughput problem it comes from one primary input that has a few different flavors: one person talks, everyone else listens.

I'm sure why this happens is interesting, but I don't really care enough to dig into it. I speculate that this is a hominid thing, having something to do with prestige hierarchies. I bet there is a relationship to our individual limitations in language processing and the way that we don't multi-thread communication. You can either talk, or you can listen, but not both at the same time. You can only consciously process one source of communication at a time as well, so for the sake of keeping everyone on the same page, let's just listen to whoever is talking at any given moment.

This is kind of a weird thing that we do when we gather together, that while it seems pretty normal is actually hard to accomplish. It requires judges to have that wooden gavel thing, raised podiums, architecture like cathedrals or amphitheaters to create passive amplification, electronic amplification with microphones, speakers, screens, lights and production to pull off. Not to mention someone to capture everyone's attention at once and then to keep and maintain it.

This is going to seem contra to my main point but fuck it. Think about all of the time that people spend together in one time and place, at the train station, in the park, on the bus, in the cafe, at the grocery store, even at work, how often are we all paying attention to one person talking?

Hardly ever and yet there is a sort of set of games we play that are hyper insidious where we all share attention as one person talks and everyone else listens, leading to the most tragic throughput imaginable.

## 5 stone age tools

There are 5 Stone Age tools for communication and 5 of them fit the pattern of 1 Talks/Everyone Listens. We call them Stone Age tools with a wink and a nudge, but there is a kernel of truth there. We have likely been using these tools since the Stone Age. They are so deeply ingrained that they are somehow omnipresent. Unless you make some conscious effort and exercise an intention, some Process Mindfulness, you'll default into 1 of them with near absolute certainty.

While I hate them with a passion, let me qualify that for all things there is a season. At times these structures are appropriate, however this an exception, not the omnipresent rule.

presentation

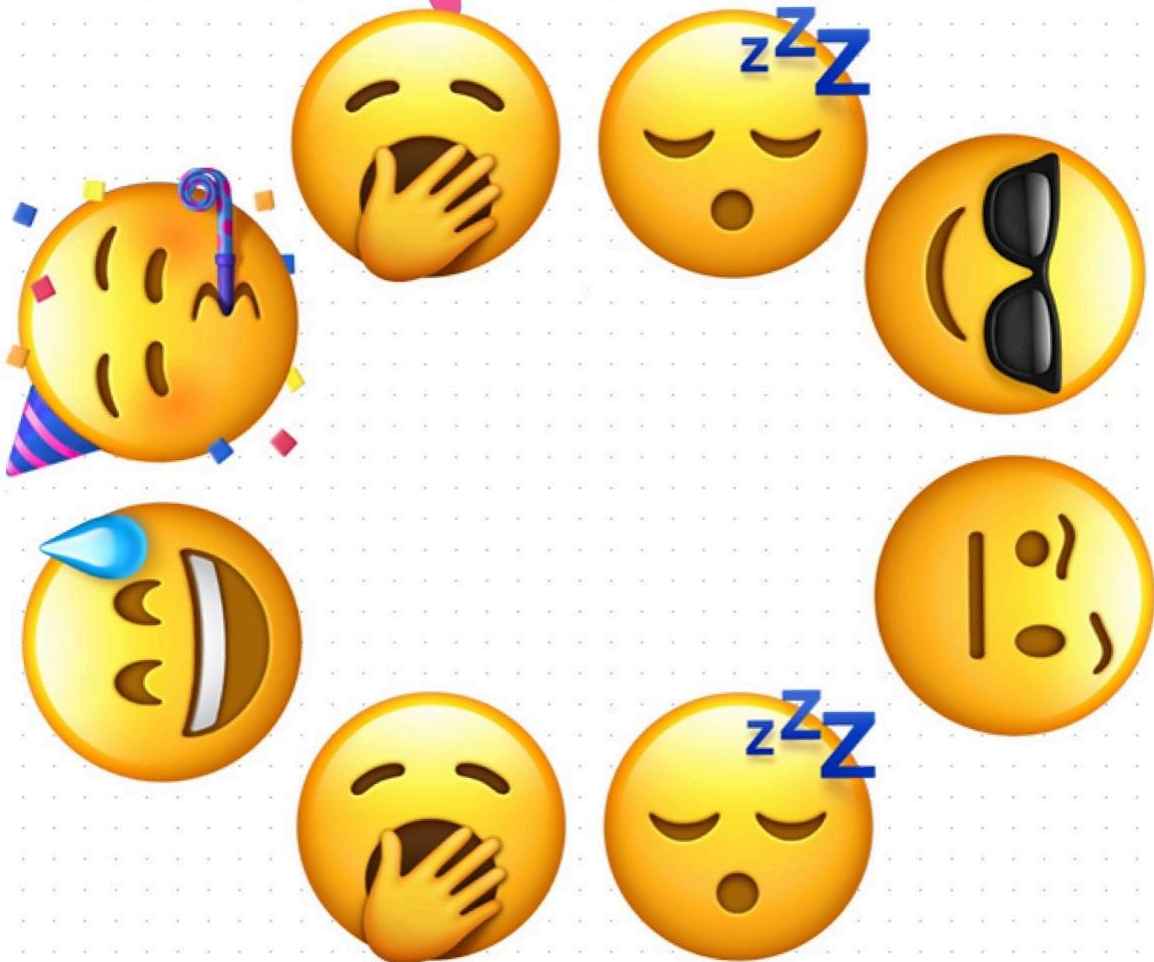
# Presentation



The principal villain of this story is presentation. Stand there on the podium with your fucking slides, and bore 50-80% of every fucking one to death. There's an old saying in sale and public speaking 20% will buy everytime 20% will never, that leaves 60% in the middle which is up to you. Unless you're a pro, stand-up, theater, storyteller, professor or preacher, that has the opportunity to get to 10,000 hours, then you're not getting over half of the group. Most humans are being carried by the goodwill of that 20% of fans, pleasers and nerds.

status update

Status  
update

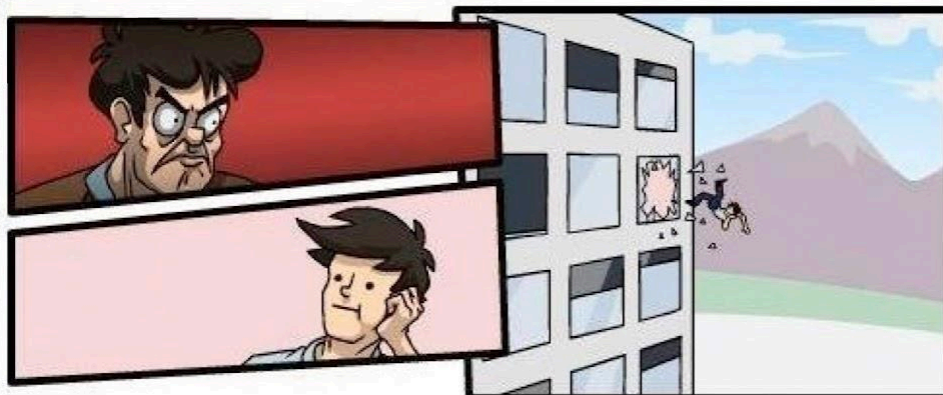




Like a micro presentation, where everyone takes a turn boring one another with information that is 20%- 30% relevant. That minority then engages in conversation about some detail that is almost certainly irrelevant for everyone else. Often there is one authority figure who finds the information of all parties relevant, so in many ways this structure is a sort of theater for their behalf

managed conversation

# Managed Discussion



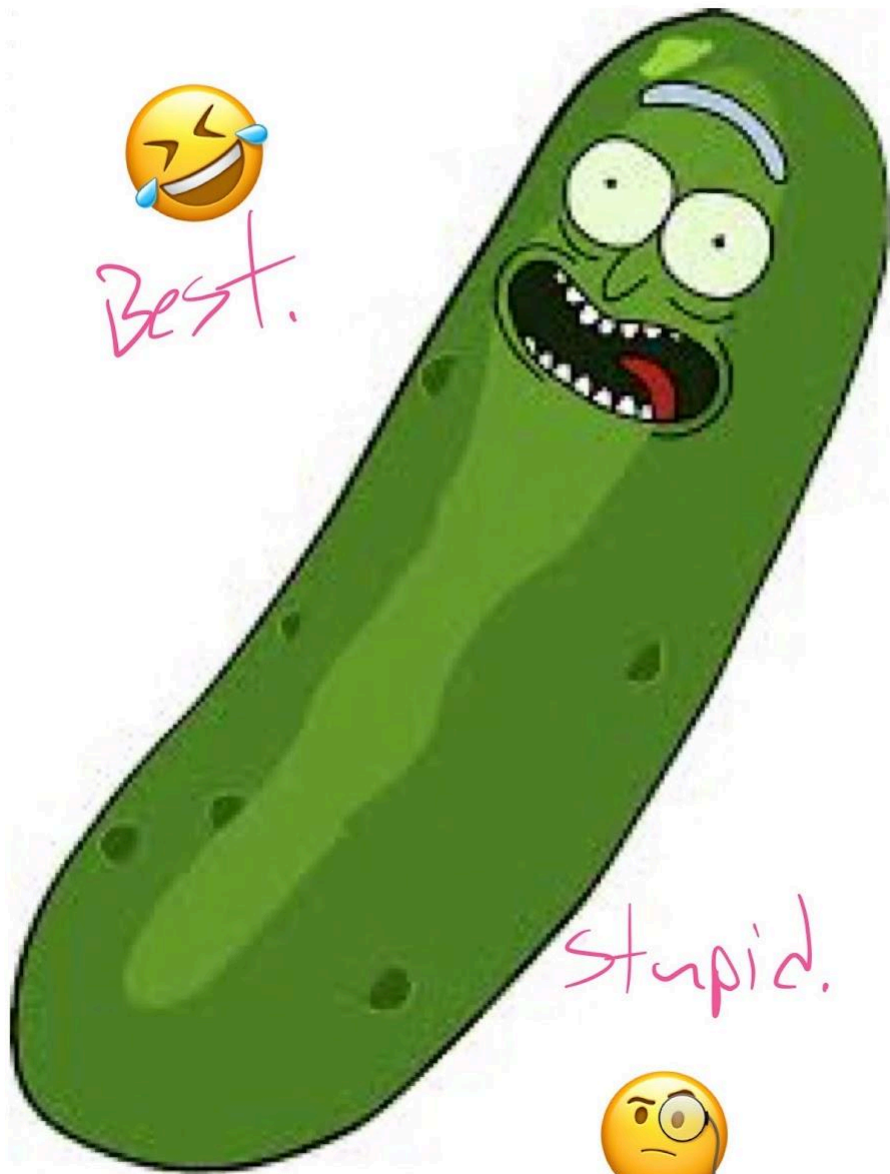
In the best of times this looks like a highly organized sometimes bureaucratic yet explicit process that at least is led by someone. Redeemed by the responsibility that someone takes. However in the vast majority of the times this is the worst of the worst. Where positional authority is wielded, creating toxic environments where fear is the norm and politics are played with the table stakes of survival. The blueprint is that someone owns the middle of the conversation, managing the flow of who speaks and everyone listens to. Here we get a glimmer of hope as the responsibility and skill can play a transformative role.

brainstorm

# Brainstorm



Best.



Stupid.



Throwing spaghetti against the wall in the hopes they some shall stick is a fine way to use novelty to address complexity. However, without any objective measures of success, we end up arguing about what sticks to where.

Given this dynamic at play, there are many times that the novelty never arrives. People are sensitive creatures to the reaction of the group and the perceived social risk involved with offering information is too great. Often though the sensitivity that many have to how their information might be received, takes up too much cognitive space and those with many ideas can find themselves stuck



goat rodeo/decoherence

Free  
At  
All



[The tyranny of structurelessness](#) is real. When we make a choice to make no choice about how to have a conversation we give space for rhetoric, debate, dominance and prestige to play. This is fine for hyper extroverted opinionistas with who want to win the conversation war at any costs. For the quieter voices who have information that may be easier to ignore and dismiss than address, this format poses a serious problem. Those with power, influence and will reign supreme. Diversity, equity and inclusion can perhaps get a 1-1 meeting after the meeting, but more often they will get most air time around the water cooler. In safer, less formal settings. See SAVI?



# SAVI® Grid

System for Analyzing Verbal Interaction

CLASSIC

| PERSON                              |                                                                                                                                                       | TOPIC                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                     | Personal                                                             | Factual                                               | Orienting        |
| <div>Red</div> <div>AVOIDANCE</div> | <b>1 FIGHTING</b><br>Attack/Blame<br>Righteous Question<br>Sarcasm<br>Self Attack/Defend<br>Complaint                                                 | <b>2 OBSCURING</b><br>Mind-Reading<br>Negative or Positive Prediction<br>Gossip<br>Joking Around<br>Thinking Out Loud<br>Social Ritual | <b>3 COMPETING</b><br>Yes-But<br>Discount<br>Leading Question<br>Oughtitude<br>Interrupt            |
|                                     | <b>4 INDIVIDUALIZING</b><br>Personal Information Current<br>Personal Information Past<br>Personal Opinion/Explanation<br>Personal Question            | <b>5 FINDING FACTS</b><br>Facts & Figures<br>General Information<br>Narrow Question<br>Broad Question                                  | <b>6 INFLUENCING</b><br>Opinion<br>Proposal<br>Command<br>Social Reinforcement                      |
|                                     | <b>7 RESONATING</b><br>Inner Feeling<br>Feeling Question<br>Answer Feeling Question<br>Mirror Inner Experience<br>Affectionate Joke<br>Self Assertion | <b>8 RESPONDING</b><br>Answer Question<br>Clarify Own Answer<br>Paraphrase<br>Summarize<br>Corrective Feedback                         | <b>9 INTEGRATING</b><br>Agreement<br>Positives<br>Build on Other's Ideas or Experience<br>Work Joke |

Silence, Laughter, Noise

Developed by Yvonne Agazarian and Anita Simon.

Note: The SAVI® Grid is intended to be used in conjunction with SAVI® training.

Taken out of context, the content of the Grid may be ambiguous, confusing or misleading.

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“Efficiency” (sucks) and gets sideloaded, silencing, domination (get mine)

What I'm about to describe can apply to any group discussion but is most common to the goat rodeo/free for all, so let's pull the thread. There are always as many perspectives as there are people, and if you stop to notice any amount of time, there are in fact many many times more than there are people. In a single threaded conversation where one person talks and everyone else listens, there is a battle for which perspective gets the time attention information energy resources of the entire group. Not only is this a cesspool for social dynamics, but it is also the least coherent on the content. Almost never does any perspective get explored in any meaningful depth. Instead we play tug-of-war for what is relevant and we mix completely different classes of information together.

See the ladder of Inference

## Ladder of Inference



Developed by Keith McCandless & Henri Lipmanowicz. Based on work by Chris Argyris.

A coherent thread of conversation would collect data, explore inference/meaning/significance and propose action in that order. In the tug of war for relevance however, I see that different people are all over the ladder at once. Most people skip directly to action, then someone questions the conclusion the plan was based on, suggesting another action instead. At some point data finally gets brought in, but is politically inconvenient and gets sidelined.

Single threaded conversation, feels very efficient because everyone gets to hear what is said, but it introduces scarcity in participation of who can speak. I argue that this scarcity is the apple Eve bit from the tree of knowledge, that gets them cast out of heaven and leads to the invention of economics, and the industrial/Taylorism obsession with efficiency. I mean there is just a whole raft of problems that flow downhill from the Throughput Challenge. Take the choice to restrict participation. It seems logical enough, since it takes so damned long to get anywhere with other people we exclude them and use hierarchy, representative democracy and centralization to do so.

Participation wastes a lot of brain info/energy time which triggers retaliatory impulse

When the throughput challenge is present, a lot of time attention information processing energy is wasted. Nature abhors waste so much she never does it. When our individual energy is wasted it is only natural that there should be a reaction to it, inspired by some form of retaliatory impulse. Thy amygdala hijack of the neocortex and the classic fight, flight, freeze or fawn is out there. But let's simplify how we learn to manage our retaliatory energy.

People get irritated

The blueprint is simple, there is some energy/sensation or discomfort present which takes over the person. Anger, frustration and irritation trigger an active position of +/- "fuck that" is the result. I'm of the opinion that conflict is a part of life, so better deal with it, but this is a challenge that often reduces the ability of many people to participate. The mind worm/ontology of "get mine" takes over and prosociality goes out the window. As we simplify the world into us/them

People check out

Another way is the passive route, in response to that same energy/sensation or discomfort some choose to avoid it. Some 20% check out all the time, some 30% check out most of the time and another 30% check out some of the time. It's really easy to hide in the crowd when throughput is poor. Because of the sunk cost of embodied cognition the waste of this phenomena is tragic, even more so due to its ubiquity.

Effective

I didn't ground efficient well enough but lets say that it is in there with the upward downward spiral stuff. Efficacy is much more ecological/natural than efficiency. Efficiency strips away all redundancy, waste and unnecessary effort. But this misses a hugely important point about how disgustingly difficult this is. It also creates fragility and ironically creates waste as externalized byproducts. Even if the waste isn't in the circle of care of your outcome, it still continues to exist. Again financial cost is bad accounting.

Effectivity on the other hand makes possible the magical statement of "that or something better." An efficient setup will never yield a bumper crop, but an effective setup might. I don't want to shit on minimism, because it matters as well but I do want to emphasize value creation.

This all feels a little tangential from our current line of inquiry around wisdom flow or shared time attention information energy processing.

Max throughput looks like a pub/houseparty (participation)

Active Talking and Active Listening

Parallel processing

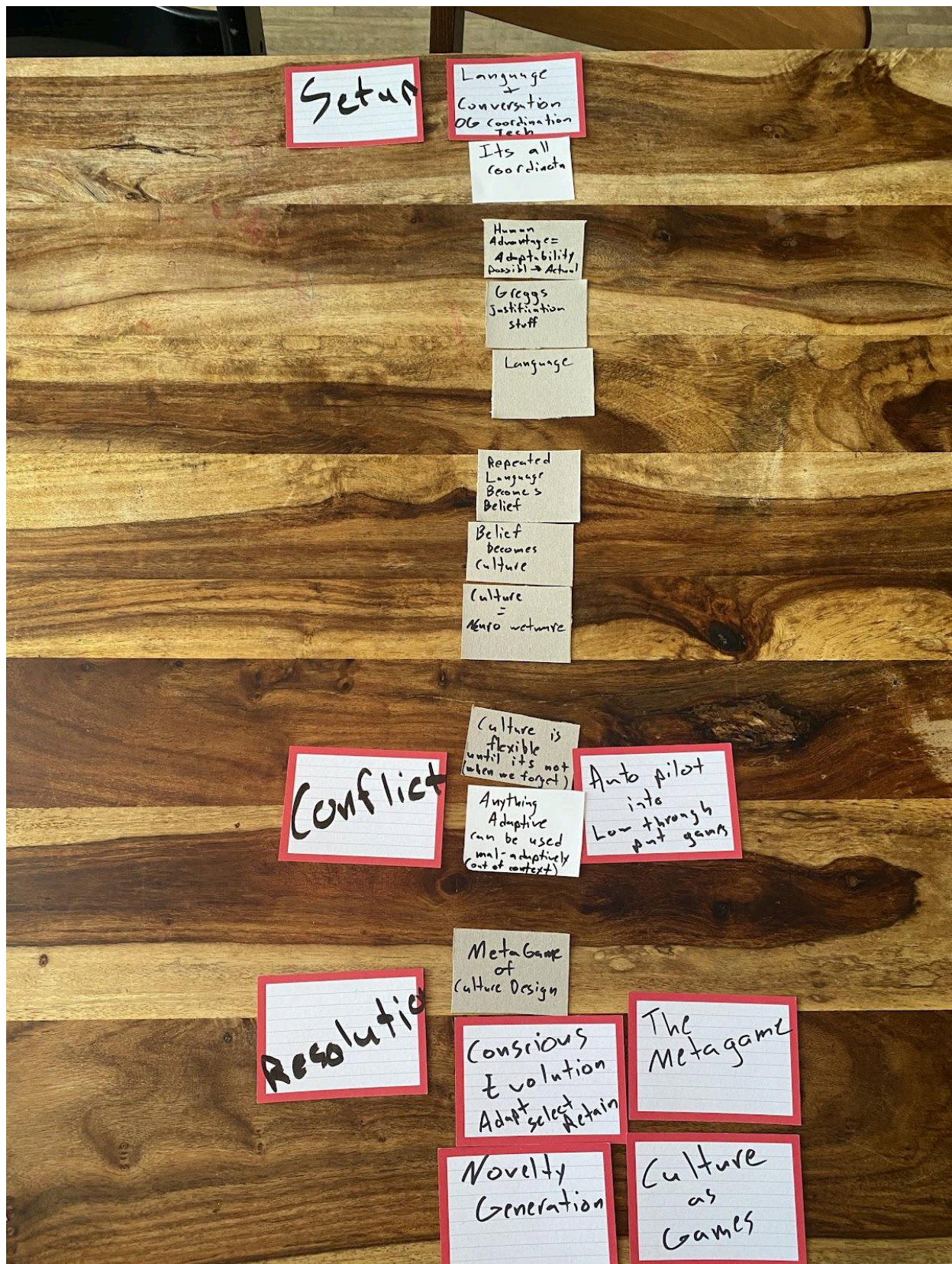


Redundancy good

Converge, corroborate and cross pollinate

Effective is 10x > Efficient (enable participation is the possibility worth actualizing)

## Language and Conversation OG coordination tech









Setup

\$

What

Yes  
store of  
value  
unit of  
Account  
Means of  
exchange

Why?

Possible  
to  
Actual

How

Simple Rules  
become  
Complex Adaptive  
System

Dist  
Coordination

No central  
authority  
Plan

Everyone  
@ edges  
making choices

Diversity  
of  
outcomes  
(timing)

G G

Conflict

OP  
Coordination  
Game/Tool

Scarcity

there is  
only as  
much as  
we create

too much?  
inflation

too little?  
deflation

Resolution

The  
Metagame

Goldilocks  
?

\$  $\neq$   
Possibility

Finance  
exists  
to  
Reduce risk

Risk is  
Real

Possibility  
that  
Possible does  
not become actual

Loss of  
Committed  
Time  
Energy  
Resource

Finance  
game

Hedging

Insurance

Optionality

Borrowing

Debt =  
Need more  
\$ later

Growing Pie  
of Possible  
is good

See

Growth  
obligation

Bailouts  
Bad

Privatize  
gains  
Socialize loss

Central  
Authority  
Plan

Synchronize  
Risk







There are three flavors of LS,

- 1 decentralize the conversation to include and unleash everyone
- 2 guide the conversation to engage in seriously-playful curiosity
- 3 create artifacts to practice self-discovery within a group

- 1 decentralize the conversation to include and unleash everyone

Why it matters: Critical Uncertainties



In the scientific pursuit there is a saying, that if you grant me one miracle then I can explain the whole of the universe. The above preamble is our foundational assumption, that we are living in the era of the complex. I know that setting is important, but I'm bored with the conversation of existential risk. Call it what you want to, I'm partial to the Everything Crisis. I'm not the person to help you cross that bridge. I'm much more the welcoming committee for those who are ready to roll up your sleeves once they have burnt the bridge down.

This is not to say I disrespect the legacy of my ancestors. It is to say that I believe the last few hundred/thousand years of human history have led us way off the path. And maybe I am suffering from some form of Make America Great Again, but I'm fully committed to team SolarPunk0

I don't want to get into





Okay so this doc is half of a Venn Diagram. In this half I'm introducing web3 Natives to Liberating Structures(LS) and this particular project to set up an LS DAO and Commons. The other half is a DOC you can find [here](#), which is about introducing LS practitioners to web3 and this project.

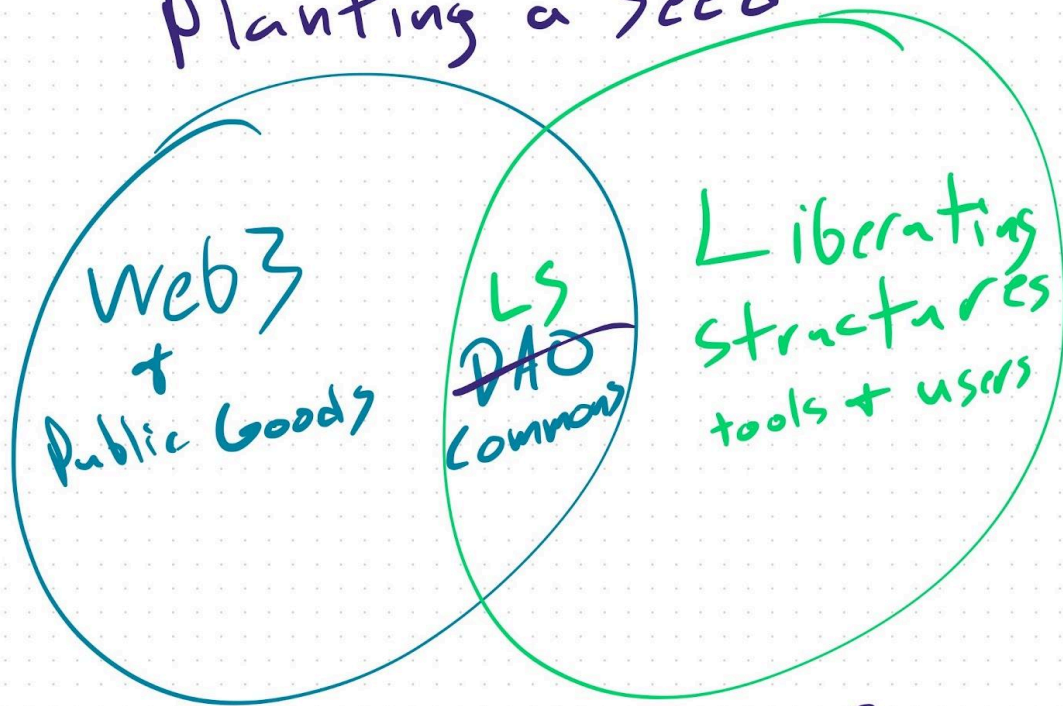
Both of these things are hard, but if you can help me bridge these communities then we can all see the awesome stuff their collaboration makes possible. Like

- Win: DAOs more capable of facing off with Moloch with LS
- Win: LS Community are pioneering facilitators, that can help directly or help DAOs learn, which could offer an economic engine to spark the LS community
- Win: The world is better and more beautiful when more people learn to ditch their Stone Age meeting tools and practice LS  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1803qDtPLXYIr9E5i4EIE55TpRLfrQImv/view?usp=drivesdk> This is a great read, 100x as clean as this doc
- Win: LS are tools that regenerate the human spirit
- Win: web3 can get diversity/representation because LS the members of the LS community come in all shapes, colors, sizes, gender identities, sexual orientations, belief systems and whatnot
- Win: LS Users can get staked in the rising tide of web3
- Win: LS are tools for shared thinking that become a way of being and moving through the world. They can be a powerful vehicle for the Cultural Enlightenment 2.0 project needed to address the Meta Crisis. Come for the better outcomes get an upgrade in your entire epistemic operating system for free
- Win: LS community can be the tip of the spear to onboard adjacent facilitation and coaching communities into web3 increasing further the tooling and skills available
- Win: My old friends meet my new friends and have opportunities to build a incredibly bright future together that we can all enjoy

Planting a Seed event link:

<https://qiqochat.com/e/ZorUTMqONuvhqRTrURMAFjvEN>

# Planting a Seed



March 20, 2022

So what are LS?

They are tools for Shared Thinking. 33 tools to be exact, which are all social technologies for communication, coordination and collaboration. They are literally human communication algorithms. They have a bunch of awesome properties that become possible when you use them. We call these the principles, which you can think of as “Why” you would want to use LS and they are:

| <b>Principle</b><br>When LS are part of everyday interactions, it is possible to: | <b>Must Do's</b><br>Often valued and espoused but not often practiced. LS make it possible to START or AMPLIFY these practices.                                                                                                      | <b>Must NOT Do's</b><br>Often unnoticed, or "autopilot" behaviors. LS make it possible to STOP or REDUCE these practices.                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1. Include and Unleash Everyone</b>                                            | Invite everyone touched by a challenge to share possible solutions or invent new approaches together. Actively reach across levels, beyond the usual suspects.                                                                       | Appoint a few to design an "elegant solution" and then tell all others to implement it after the fact. Confront resistance with hours of PPT presentations. Force buy-in. Separate deciders from doers.                  |
| <b>2. Practice Deep Respect for People and Local Solutions</b>                    | Engage people <i>doing the work</i> and familiar with the local context. Trust and unleash their collective expertise and inventiveness to solve complex challenges. Let go of the compulsion to control.                            | Import <i>best practices</i> , drive <i>buy-in</i> , or assume people need more training. Favor experts and computer systems over local people and know-how.                                                             |
| <b>3. Build Trust As You Go</b>                                                   | Cultivate a trusting group climate where speaking the truth is valued and shared ownership is the goal. Sift ideas and make decisions using input from everyone. Practice "nothing about me without me." Be a leader and a follower. | Over-help or over-control the work of others. Praise and pretend to follow the ideas of colleagues. Indirectly, respond to ideas from others with cynicism, ridicule, criticism, or punishment.                          |
| <b>4. Learn by Failing Forward</b>                                                | Debrief every step. Make it safe to speak up. Discover positive variation. Include and unleash clients as you innovate. Take small risks quickly, reducing time between iterations.                                                  | Focus on doing and deciding. Avoid difficult conversations and gloss over failures. Punish risk-takers when unknowable surprises pop up.                                                                                 |
| <b>5. Practice Self-Discovery Within A Group</b>                                  | Engage groups to the maximum degree in discovering solutions on their own. Increase diversity to spur creativity, broaden potential solutions and enrich peer-to-peer learning. Encourage experiments on multiple tracks.            | Impose solutions from the top. Let experts "educate" and tell people what to do. Assume that people resist change no matter what. Substitute laminated signs for conversation. Exclude frontline people from innovating. |

|                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6. Amplify Freedom AND Responsibility               | Specify minimum constraints and let go of over-control. Use the power of invitation. Privilege fast experiments over playing it safe. Track progress rigorously and feedback results to all. Invite the front line to create local performance metrics. Celebrate mistakes as sources of progress. | Unleash people without structure such as a clear purpose or minimum specifications. Let rules and procedures stifle initiative. Ignore the value of people understanding how their work affects one another. Keep frontline staff in the dark about group performance data. |
| 7. Emphasize Possibilities: Believe Before You See  | Expose what is working well. Focus on what can be accomplished now with the imagination and materials at hand. Take the next steps that lead to the edge of creativity and renewal.                                                                                                                | Focus on what's wrong. Wait for all the barriers to come down or ideal conditions to emerge. Work on changing <i>the whole system</i> all at once.                                                                                                                          |
| 8. Invite Creative Destruction To Enable Innovation | Convene conversations about what is keeping people from working on the essence of their work. Remove the barriers even when it feels like heresy. Make it easy for people to deal with their fears.                                                                                                | Avoid or delay stopping the behaviors, practices and policies that are revealed as barriers. Assume obstacles don't matter or can't be removed.                                                                                                                             |
| 9. Engage in Seriously-Playful Curiosity            | Stir things up — with levity, paradoxical questions, and improv — to spark a deep exploration of current practices and latent innovations. Make working together both demanding and inviting.                                                                                                      | Keep it simple by deciding in advance what the solutions should be. Control all conversations. Ask only closed yes or no questions. Make working together feel like drudgery.                                                                                               |
| 10. Never Start Without Clear Purpose(s)            | Dig deep for what is important and meaningful to you and to others. Use <i>9 Whys</i> routinely. Take time to include everyone in crafting an unambiguous statement of the deepest need for your work.                                                                                             | Maintain ambiguity by using jargon. Substitute a safe short-term goal or means-to-an-end for a bold reason to exist or a deep need. Impose your vision of the future on others.                                                                                             |

Pretty freaking cool right?

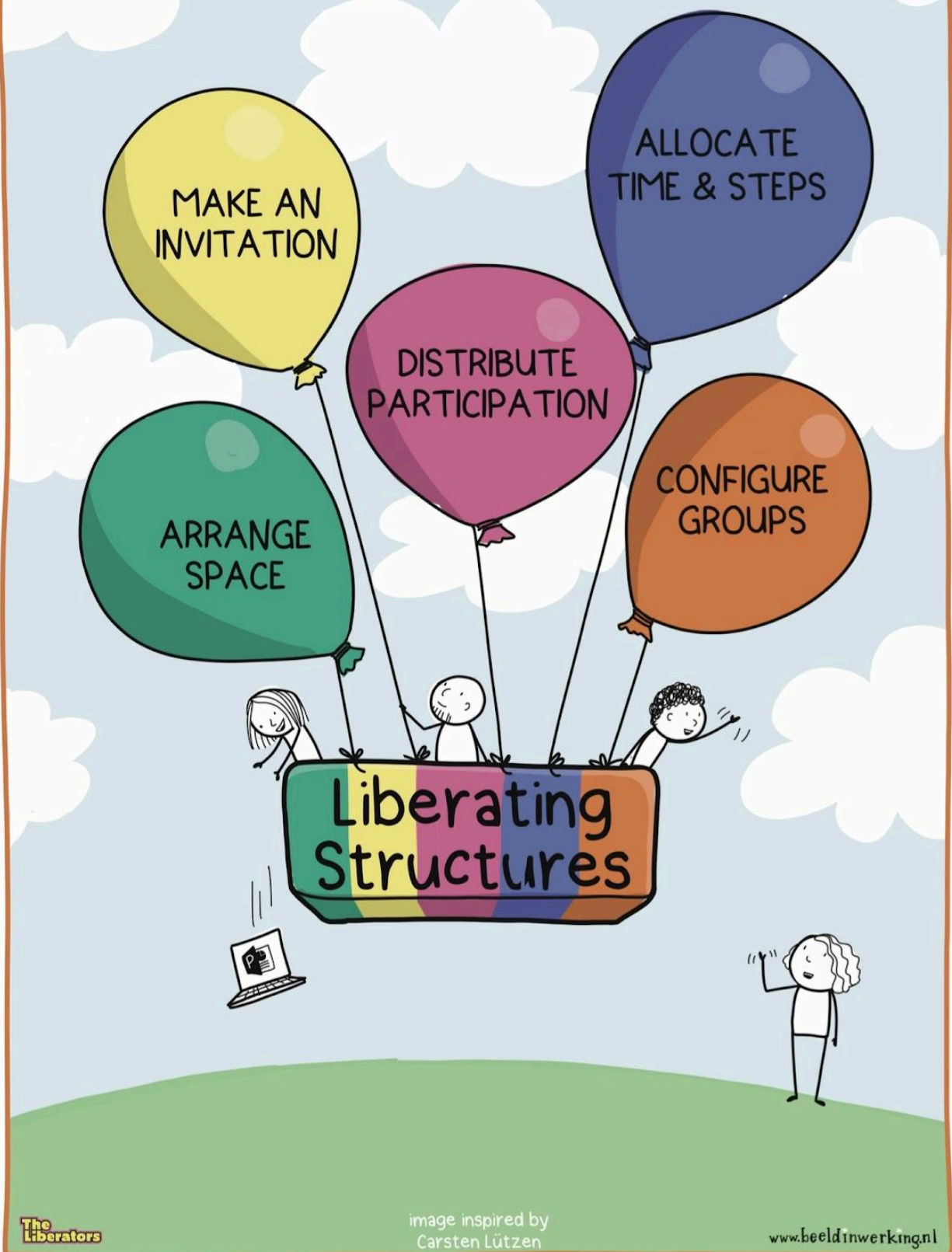
Okay so comms algo's this is how they work

Each structure consists of and instructions to:

1. Make an **invitation**: What prompt or question sparks interactions?
2. Configure groups: How many people should be talking together in order to maximize participation?
3. Distribute participation: in what ways/roles should people in those sub-groups interact?
4. Arrange space: standing, sitting, tables, post it's markers, visuals, what type of supportive infra stuff do you need?
5. Allocate time and steps: How long should those interactions be? Then what happens next and how long should that last? And then? And then? Etc



## THE 5 ATTRIBUTES OF LIBERATING STRUCTURES



You may get the sense that these are like facilitation techniques, and they are. But with a special twist: they are crazy simple. Like my-5-year-old-son-can-use-them simple. Like it-is-possible-for-any-person-in-any-meeting-to-suggest-a-structure-for-everyone-in-the-meeting-to-use, then participate-in-the-conversation simple. Not needing an outside-of-the-conversation facilitator enables us to decentralize facilitative leadership, the type of influence that helps guide the conversation, to potentially everyone in the conversation. We call this **Process Mindfulness**. Basically super awesome good things happen when people are thinking about HOW they want to have a conversation about stuff.

There are Liberating Structures for most everything that a group of people could need and want to talk about together.

There are LS to

**Share** or spread ideas, know-how, experiences, challenges, etc

**Reveal**, discover, generate, develop or improve opportunities, obstacles solutions and ideas

**Analyze**, diagnose, clarify or debrief

**Help** or get help or cooperate

**Strategize**

**Plan**

## **LS Selection Matchmaker: What Serves Your Purpose?**

*~ Use with the LS Design Cards or the LS Menu on the next page ~*

|                                                                                   |                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Rapidly share challenges and expectations while building new connections       | 12. Specify only the absolute "Must do's" & "Must not do's" for achieving a purpose                      | 23. Discover, spark and unleash local solutions to chronic problems                                             |
| 2. Make the purpose of your work together clear                                   | 13. Tap the wisdom of the whole group in rapid cycles                                                    | 24. Move from either-or to robust both-and solutions                                                            |
| 3. Together, look back on progress to-date and decide what adjustments are needed | 14. Articulate the paradoxical challenges that a group must confront to succeed                          | 25. Reveal and understand relationship patterns that create value or dysfunctions                               |
| 4. Stop counterproductive activities & behaviors to make space for innovation     | 15. Reveal insights and paths forward through non-verbal expression                                      | 26. Develop strategies for successfully operating in a range of plausible yet unpredictable futures             |
| 5. Discover & build on the root causes of success                                 | 16. Develop effective solutions to chronic challenges while having serious fun                           | 27. Define the 5 elements that are essential for a resilient & enduring initiative                              |
| 6. Engage everyone simultaneously in generating questions/ideas/suggestions       | 17. Sort challenges into simple, complicated and complex categories                                      | 28. Analyze the full portfolio of activities & relationships to identify obstacles & opportunities for progress |
| 7. Share know-how gained from experience with a larger community                  | 18. Spread good ideas and make informal connections with innovators                                      | 29. Understand how embedded systems interact, evolve, influence the spread of innovation, and transform         |
| 8. Discover & focus on what each person has the freedom and resources to do now   | 19. Practice deeper listening and empathy with colleagues                                                | 30. Surface most essential needs across functions and accept or reject requests for support                     |
| 9. Rapidly generate & sift a group's most powerful actionable ideas               | 20. Map informal connections and decide how to strengthen the network to achieve a purpose               | 31. Reconnect the experience of leaders and experts with the people closest to the challenge at hand            |
| 10. Get practical and imaginative help from colleagues immediately                | 21. Define the step-by-step design elements for bringing initiatives or meetings to productive endpoints | 32. Practice progressive methods for helping others, receiving help and asking for help                         |
| 11. Engage everyone in making sense of profound challenges                        | 22. Liberate inherent action and leadership in large groups                                              | 33. Observe and record actual behaviors of users in the field                                                   |

Write two or three sentences about the challenge you have in mind. Then, ...

1. Put a checkmark next to each objective you wish to achieve. [✓]
2. Group objectives in a logical sequence of beginning, middle and end.
3. Trim your list by taking out the less critical objectives; save those for later.
4. If you are down to between 3 and 7 objectives you have your first string. [Voila!](#)
5. Develop one or two alternative strings, shorter, longer or different.
6. Share with others, compare, modify and choose one that makes good sense.
7. Match your string of objectives with its string of LS and check timing.
8. Save alternative objectives for improvising as needed during implementation.



## Liberating Structures Menu

~ Use when LS Design Cards are not available ~

Each LS in this table is designed to achieve the objective with the same number.

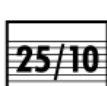
Cut along the table lines to make separate cards easy to manipulate and string together.

|                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.<br><b>Impromptu Networking</b><br>5-20 min.         | 12.<br><b>Min Specs</b><br>20-50 min.                       | 23.<br><b>Discovery &amp; Action Dialogue</b><br>25-70 min.  |
| 2.<br><b>9 Whys</b><br>5-20 min.                       | 13.<br><b>Wise Crowds</b><br>10-60 min. per person          | 24.<br><b>Integrated~Autonomy</b><br>60-80 min.              |
| 3.<br><b>What, So What, Now What</b><br>15-45 min.     | 14.<br><b>Wicked Questions</b><br>20 min.                    | 25.<br><b>Generative Relationships</b><br>25 min.            |
| 4.<br><b>TRIZ</b><br>30-45 min.                        | 15.<br><b>Drawing Together</b><br>30-40 min.                | 26.<br><b>Critical Uncertainties</b><br>60-100 min.          |
| 5.<br><b>Appreciative Interviews</b><br>30-60 min.   | 16.<br><b>Improv Prototyping</b><br>15-20 min. per round  | 27.<br><b>Purpose-to-Practice</b><br>25-120 min.           |
| 6.<br><b>1-2-4-All</b><br>10-12 min.                 | 17.<br><b>Agreement-Certainty Matrix</b><br>30-45 min.     | 28.<br><b>Ecocycle Planning</b><br>60-95 min.              |
| 7.<br><b>User Experience Fishbowl</b><br>25-70 min.  | 18.<br><b>Shift &amp; Share</b><br>35-90 min.             | 29.<br><b>Panarchy</b><br>1-2 hr.                          |
| 8.<br><b>15% Solutions</b><br>15-20 min.             | 19.<br><b>Heard, Seen, Respected</b><br>25 min.           | 30.<br><b>What I Need From You</b><br>45-70 min.           |
| 9.<br><b>25-to-10 Crowd Sourcing</b><br>20-30 min.   | 20.<br><b>Social Network Webbing</b><br>45-60 min.        | 31.<br><b>Celebrity Interview</b><br>25-60 min.            |
| 10.<br><b>Troika Consulting</b><br>15-30 min.        | 21.<br><b>Design Storyboards</b><br>25-70 min.            | 32.<br><b>Helping Heuristics</b><br>15 min.                |
| 11.<br><b>Conversation Café</b><br>35-60 min.        | 22.<br><b>Open Space</b><br>90 min. to 3 days             | 33.<br><b>Simple Ethnography</b><br>1-6 hr.                |

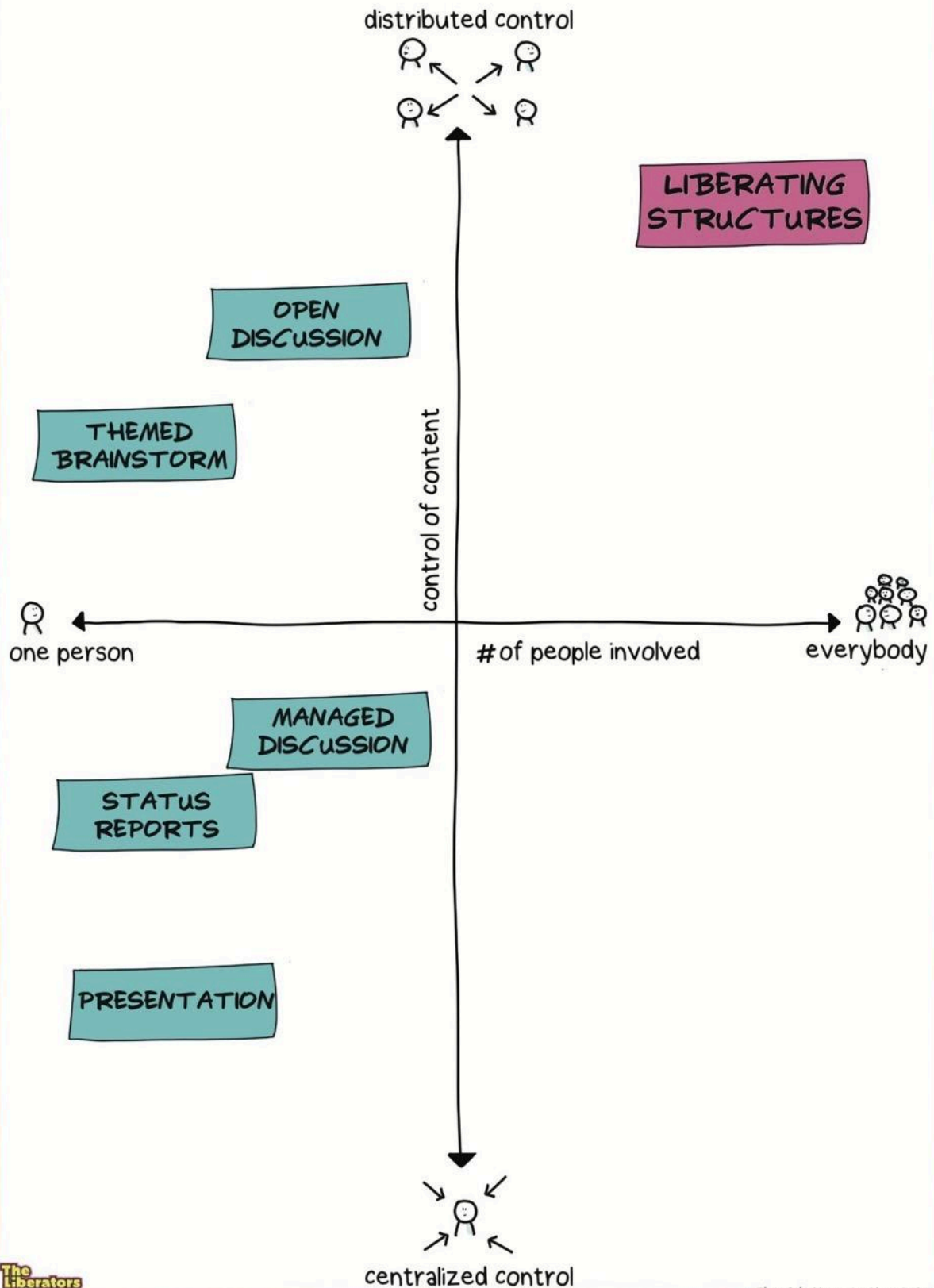




Individually these structures are super handy forms that any person can use to organize thinking and conversations about anything you can imagine wanting to talk about. As communication algorithms you can string them together as the output of one conversation becomes the input of the next, ad infinitum. We call this planning of sequences “designing strings.” The above Selection Matchmaker is a tool to help beginners jump right into this design process. Once any person has learned 15+ “letters of the LS alphabet” they are a pretty decent conversation guide/facilitative leader, and can start to do this more or less out of their head. At the point where you are familiar with how to use all 33, you are like Neo for meetings. You’ll be able to avoid so many problems that probably irritate or bore you to death while helping make everyone’s time more productive. At the point that you have actually hosted other people to use all 33, you’ve got all the experience you need to call yourself and start to deliver work as a pro facilitator should you want to.

|                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| LS Menu<br>                | Wicked questions<br>          | What <sup>3</sup> debrief<br>     | Min specs<br>                  | Heard, seen respected<br>    | What I need from you<br>       | Integrated autonomy<br>      |
| Design elements<br>      | Appreciative interviews<br> | Discovery and action dialog<br> | Improv prototyping<br>       | Drawing together<br>       | Open space<br>               | Critical uncertainties<br> |
| 1-2-4-All<br>            | TRIZ<br>                    | Shift & share<br>               | Helping heuristics<br>       | Design storyboards<br>     | Generative relationships<br> | Ecocycle<br>               |
| Impromptu networking<br> | 15% solutions<br>           | 25 : 10 crowdsourcing<br>       | Conversation café<br>        | Celebrity interview<br>    | Agree/certainty matrix<br>   | Panarchy<br>               |
| 9-whys<br>               | Troika consulting<br>       | Wise crowds<br>                 | User experience fishbowl<br> | Social network webbing<br> | Simple ethnography<br>       | Purpose to practice<br>    |

# LIBERATING STRUCTURES



## The Network Effect

Starting meetings with 5 minutes of process mindfulness, deciding which LS you should use for the meeting, will help you get twice as much done in half of the time. Not only is it strictly productive, this sense of self authorship and agency feel great and the net result of progress is... enlivening.

This habit will help ensure that you avoid the 5 stone age tools that make up 85% of meetings, presentations, status reports, managed discussions, brainstorm and open discussions. In contrast these involve few people at any given time while also either giving few control of the meeting or under-controlling enabling little agency. It's important to recognize that defaulting into one of these 5 is simply an unconscious choice to make use of ancient tooling. Like heirarchy/centralization, these tools are easy to choose but come with drawbacks that make them ill suited to deal with today's challenges.

### Embellishment:

Process Mindfulness is a form of collective third-person meta-cognition. We are thinking about how to think, together. This meta-cognitive stance shows up time and again as a trademark of adult development, maturity and wisdom broadly.

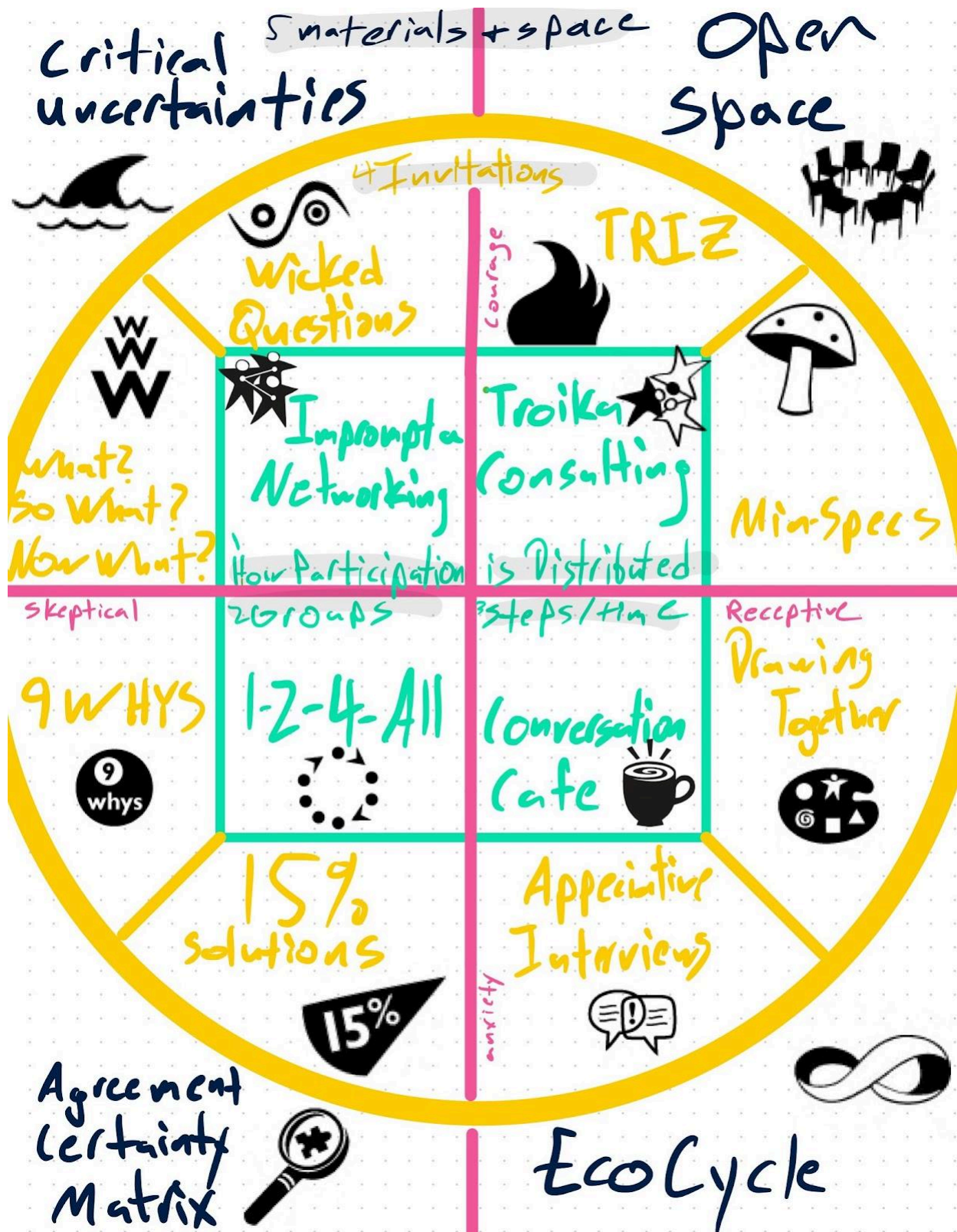
There are many such models, tools or patterns that help organize and cohere group thinking as another facet of doing. Design thinking, Scrum, sociocratic circle method. Individually these are structures, simple processes and patterns that are more or less prescriptive and algorithmic. All of these thinking tools are useful and LS play well with them. Once you go down the process-mindfulness rabbit hole you discover that it is an infinite path.

The reason I start and stay on message about LS is because they are a non-prescriptive starting point that offers enough options to do damned near everything, yet not so much that your brain instantly over-heats in combinatorial explosion. It takes some time and effort to learn them but the payoff of process mindfulness is extraordinary:

The optionality to pick the appropriate tool for the job of the conversation increases our probability of a job well done.

Throughput and an order of operations to upgrade it:

Bandwidth in meetings is fixed, the brains that are there are what you've got. The throughput of information across the network of brains is a function of their interaction. Presentation sends some amount of information from one node/participant to all of the available nodes/participants, in terms of insight potential, some exists but the flow of energy/information across the network is pretty low. Now we could add more people to the meeting and the throughput of information would scale linearly. What happens to throughput when you use a Liberating Structure, participation is distributed to everyone? Up, up and away, where each dialog has the opportunity to recombine information in unexpected ways we now have a network of thinking that may be capable of swelling to complexity equal to the task at hand.



Each LS consists of 5 design elements, instructions on how to:

1. Distribute Participation: with the assumption that everyone should be participating



2. For groups: with the assumption that smaller groups are better for communication
3. Follow the steps in time: with the assumption that the interaction is algorithmic

Now the first four LS that any person should learn are

- 1-2-4-All
- Impromptu Networking
- Troika Consulting
- Conversation Cafe

These four act as the most basic building blocks of organizing interactions and are infinitely adaptable. With just these the flow of information within any group can improve to such an extent that you'll be in the better than most(+50th percentile). They ground these 3 Design Elements in embodied experience and provide a container within which the next sequence of structures can be explored and through them the next design element.

4. Invitation: with the assumption that there is some question or prompt that people will discuss.

Invitation is the most crucial element of LS is as it sparks off the participation, in whatever group size regardless of the steps they intend to take.

- 9WHYS
- TRIZ
- What? So What? Now What?
- 15% Solutions
- Min-specs
- Appreciative Interviews
- Wicked Questions
- Drawing Together

Together these 8 offer a robust set of options of what to put inside the previous 4. Pick a first 4 structures and offer one of the second 8 invitations into it, easy.

5. How materials and space is organized: with the assumption that you may need some stuff to enable your thinking
- Ecocycle
  - Open Space
  - Agreement Certainty Matrix
  - Critical Uncertainties

These final 4 offer patterns around which the attention of multiple groups over multiple sessions can cohere.

Make use of these to establish a sense of shared context map of reality to explore with across groups and/or over the course of time.

Mega voltron bonus:

Armed with these 16 a person has many options to make use of the 17th structure and make magic happen:

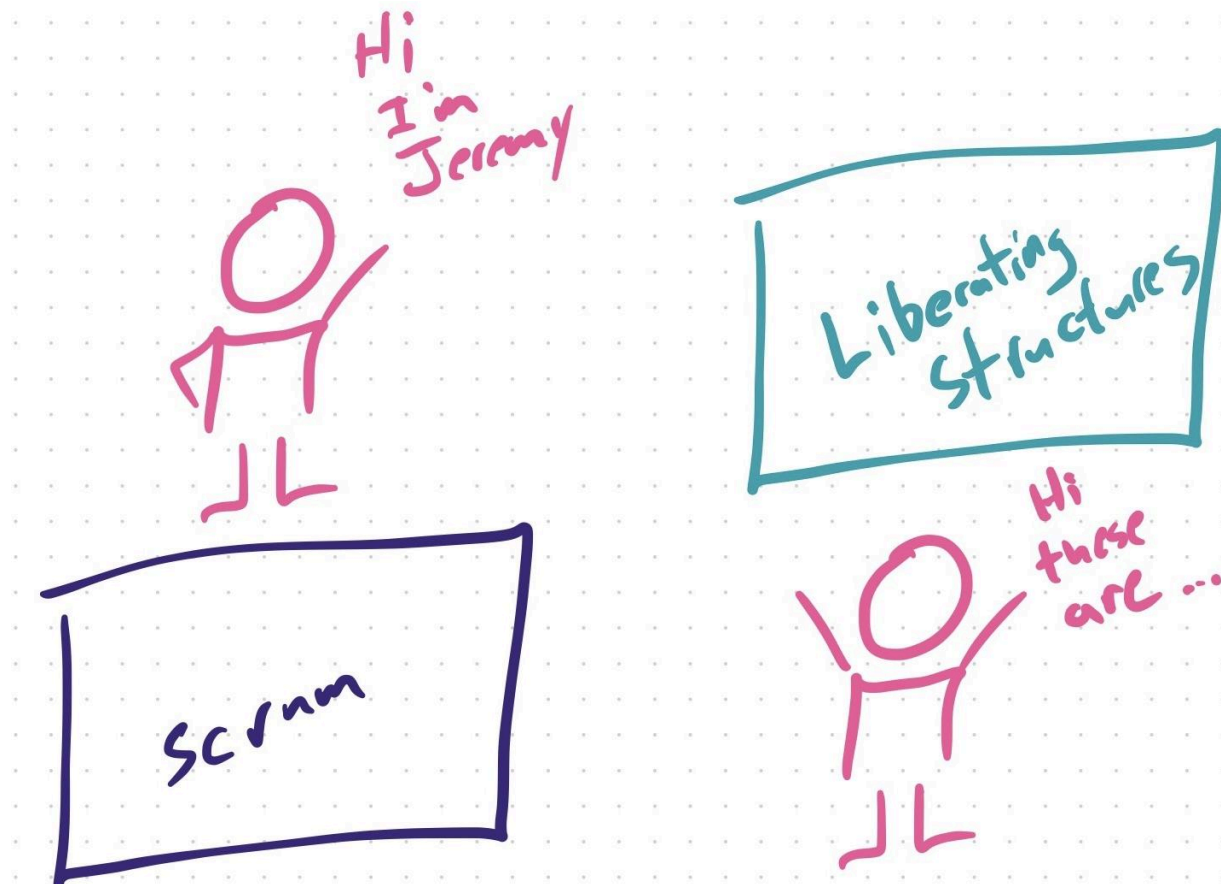
- Design Storyboards

Enabling Process Mindfulness by offering insight into the option space of meeting design.

This is a good point to introduce what I believe is the first use case for web3 in the LS community. Those who don't know fuck all about web3, believe that everything is a scam and have judgements about the environmental impact, will need a super practical offering, that they can actually use from day 1.

Documenting the LS Learning Journey and establishing street cred could do that. Reputation has vaulted to buzzword status for good reason, and it should be pretty easy with NFTs, POAPs or attestations.

So before I get into the nuts and bolts of how, let's start with why? The Liberating Structures scene is radically decentralized and user generated. There is not an LS Organization, no company, no non-profit, nothing. These things are Creative Commons Copyright, free and accessible to all. So there is also no form of certification, encouraging anyone to pick these things up and go run with them. This is a feature that enabled me to jump in, learn and contribute.



It is also a bug however. Let's contrast to illustrate why. Take Scrum.org, as the stewards of Scrum they offer a certification that legitimizes anyone with it. This acts as a platform for me to stand on, raising my salience to the marketplace. My adherence and acceptance by that standard helps me to land jobs and earn a living. For sure that certification is not enough by itself but it is a step that, especially early on, helps me to be taken more seriously than I would otherwise be. Some people are emboldened by this type of approval and take courage from

knowing that they are prepared in this established way, or path. For others it is the recognition by their employer, acting as a sorting filter on the options, that enables this path of certification to become part of their learning and development plan. This is just reality for them: if its not on the list I can't spend my budget on it.

Now back to LS. I as an individual practitioner am more legible to the marketplace than the toolkit that I use every single day. I am the column upon which the platform LS teeters. I must use my credibility and capital to vouch for them, thus making them salient. Its back-asswards and certainly not alone

The net effect is that LS are only legible to those that already believe in and recognize them as valuable. While at face value that may seem similar to web3, the difference is that LS are extraordinarily mature. Their user interface is fucking easy and they work, every time. They are a product that is ready to blow but because they are only visible to innovators and pioneers most people have never heard of them.

So how do we do both? Legitimize and continue to be radically open source and accessible?

Create an on-chain record of the learning journey where attestations of participation in learning opportunities accrue. Just make explicit what is currently implicit. It doesn't have to cost anyone any money, but they do need a wallet to keep their journal.

Nuts and bolts

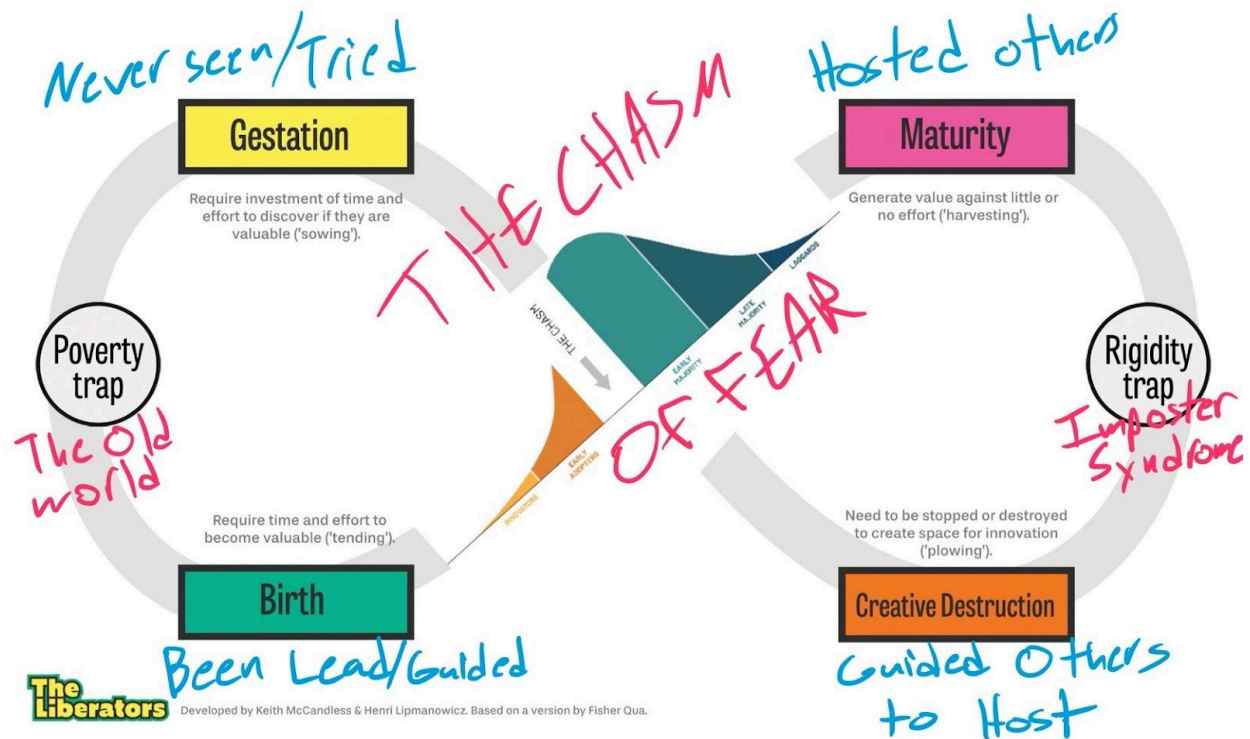
The LS Learning Journey itself has two components, knowledge of the individual LS tools, and how that familiarity accumulates to an overall growth phase.

For each individual LS we can knowledge as follows

0. Gestation: Never seen/tried or heard of this structure
1. Birth: been lead through or guided in its use by someone else (I showed you the way)
2. Maturity: you've used it with others and hosted them in the use the structure
3. Creative Destruction: you've guided another person to be able to host and use that structure with yet others (skipping step 1 and going straight to step 2)

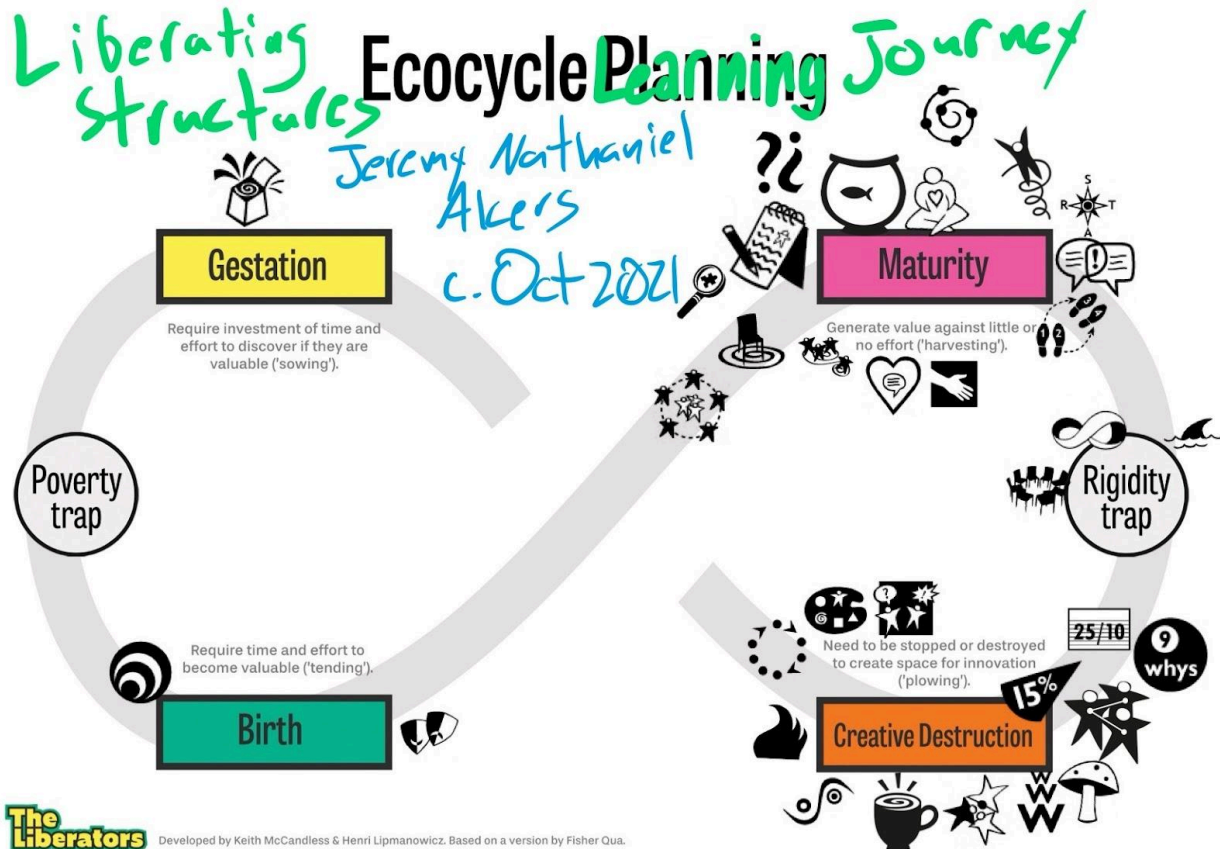
We can plot that onto one of the Liberating Structures called Ecocycle Planning:

# Ecocycle Planning



Jump over the chasm, and you're good enough

Each LS has an icon so plotting them in this visual looks like this:



Now for the way these individual learning arcs accumulate into overall growth phases looks this, where “# of LS in use” on the left, corresponds with The maturity phase of the individual structure.

## LS Development Phases |... ||... |||... ||||

| # LS in use | USER                                                | MAESTRO                    | GROWTH FOCUS                                                                                                                                                                          | TIPS & FEARS                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 0           | Despairing Cynic<br><i>Unconscious Incompetence</i> | Authority, Expert          | Guide exploration & self-discovery toward practical results. <i>LS as tools that play well with other change efforts.</i>                                                             | Focus on noticing what how structure liberates & confident first steps. <b>Fear:</b> will I look foolish or unprepared?                                     |
| 5           | Cautious Optimist<br><i>Conscious Novice</i>        | Facilitator, Teacher       | Focus on clarifying purpose, including unusual suspects, and design skills (stringing & inviting). <i>LS as inclusive &amp; engaging alternatives to conventional methods in use.</i> | Design effective meetings + find LS co-leaders. <b>Fear:</b> can we generate better-than-expected results w/o pre-cooked goals/agendas/visions?             |
| 15+         | Rapturous Super-User<br><i>Conscious Competence</i> | Coach, Co-Designer         | Focus on expanding your repertoire & use in diverse settings + messy challenges. <i>LS as generating innovative results while shifting relational patterns &amp; habits.</i>          | Focus on spreading LS & 5 micro-design elements. Expand to action research & strategy. <b>Fear:</b> is it possible to prevent snapback to old habits?       |
| 33...       | Maestro Minimalist<br><i>Unconscious Competence</i> | Self-Authoring Participant | Transfer design expertise to the group. Enter new domains & reach across multiple scales. <i>LS as pattern for simultaneously &amp; mutually shaping next steps and the future.</i>   | Connect users & challenges across domains. Invent new LS. <b>Fear:</b> as LS becomes the routine way we work together, have I designed my own obsolescence? |



So yeah basic gamification, a trusted seed, DOA or multi-sig verification wallet could mint an NFT and send it to the wallet of a user to attest to their credibility. Or you could go maximum agent centricity and any person attests to another.

Once you Level Up into the next Development Phase at 5, 15 or 33 LS, you get a different NFT and an air drop of “LS” tokens so you can participate in Governance, tip other users, stake, sell, provide liquidity, hodl, whatever.

This enables us to create an on chain record of not knowledge but learning. Plus making explicit what there is to still be learned, helps keep it in focus. Gotta catch ‘em all right?

POAPs could also play a role for the many LS User Group events. Community driven and user generated, these practice sessions are happening all the time and could also play a role in documenting participation in the community. For example I’m a Maestro and 1000 wallets are holding POAPs I minted from events I hosted = I’m super fucking legit and motherfuckers know me. Again we’re making what is currently implicit, explicit. Could be as easy as yet another attestation pointing back at me.

This enables us to establish credibility, without going to the dark side of certification, enabling the community to stay open and inclusive at the same time. Credibility matters to users, emboldening them with confidence and giving them achievements to celebrate. John and Jane Q Everyone, can now get approval from their employer Behemoth Megacorp for LS to be in their learning plan, because they get a digital participation trophy.

The marketplace loves reputation, having it could enable LS to go from a cottage industry of individuals to 2 Legit 2 Quit at enterprise scale.

This on chain credibility also enables an on chain Social Network Web(which is itself another LS) of Relationships and learning lineage. Think automated who’s-who in the LS User directory because the implicit is explicit. This also enables the community as a whole to be engaged or hired at scale.

And most importantly this could onboard 1000’s of facilitators and coaches onto web3. Which could make it much easier for them to work with and for other DAOs as teachers of LS, facilitators and contributors. Not only can they help solve the coordination challenges felt across the space, but they can also add a massive amount of diversity to the scene. LS Users come in all colors, shapes, sizes, geographies and cognitive types. Their presence can literally make safe spaces for others to join as well.



Enterprise



LS DAC

Now let me address the shadow you're likely seeing. Credibility, isn't that just another form of exclusion? Doesn't that put a moat around LS? Hiring the community, couldn't that mean it becomes captured and co-opted by our corporate overlords? What if Shell wants to use LS to destroy the planet? What if JP Morgan uses them to exploit and extract? What about the way money has this history of paving paradise and putting up parking lots?

Oh ye of little faith. The magician/trickster delights in dancing with such dark energy! I'm glad to take all of those risks for all of the following reasons:

*Credibility, isn't that just another form of exclusion? Doesn't that put a moat around LS?* Yes it is and that is a good thing. I want to be able to check that those who portray themselves as the scene are really in the scene. Liberating Structures, the practices may be a Public good, but the addressable market of learners is a Common Good. If we don't find a way to govern that commons then it is just a matter of time before some fucking asshole comes and captures it. We need a way to identify those who try and beat the shit out of them. And no it's fucking not exclusion. We're talking about keeping a journal of learning progress. Everyone starts where they are and makes progress in their own time. Someone will always have started earlier, and time does not monopolize insight. C

Reputation and credibility that is both explicit and Non-Deterministic is as let's us have our cake and eat it too.

*Wait won't documenting the learning journey make it easier for psychopaths to extract and game?* If someone wants to challenge my speed run, more power to them. If someone wants to become the person who has learnt the most knock yourself out. If you want to have taught the most people, good for you. And yes it might. That's a good bridge into...

*Hiring the community, couldn't that mean it becomes captured and co-opted by our corporate overlords?* Yes it does! Wouldn't that be great?! Imagine if Accenture decided they wanted to whale up the LS space and profit from pimping it out, then at least more people would be introduced to LS. To be fair nothing except that Creative Commons text being printed on the book prevents them from doing so now. The only difference is if we were federated into a singular body they would have to engage all of us as a collective or at least a meaningful sub group. This would be an upgrade to the way I am marginalized as a practitioner and pimped out currently.

*What if Shell wants to use LS to destroy the planet? What if JP Morgan uses them to exploit and extract? What about the way money has this history of paving paradise and putting up parking lots?* Well yes there is that. What if I told you that the way to win the war for the future was to beat them at their own game? The blueprint is transcend and include after all. What if I told you that I believe we can win and that I'm willing to bet the house on it?

Some of you are going to find what I write next very distasteful. Some of you will feel quite strongly that it is morally corrupt. You may just think that I am foolish. It may seem downright evil. Let me first tell you, that you might be right.

Liberating Structures are tools for Shared Thinking. Nancy, a pillar in our community, once described them as tools for thinking that become a way of being and moving through the world. Like any tool, the brain integrates its model of that tool into the model of the self. Ding the butcher wielded his knife as an extension of himself, using the part with no edge to get between the part with no space, to cut effortlessly. Darth Vader, Vladimir Putin, Adolf Hitler, I would trust them all with Liberating Structures. Because at some point the boundary between the tool and individual disappears.

LS are tools which are native to complexity. This is why they work everywhere. Keith, Henri or Fisher are going to have to tell you the story but the way I understand it, they were born out of Complexity Science when the shit was brand new and just popping off at the Santé Fe Instituut. My point is that we stand on the shoulders of giants, on the bleeding edge of the alternative of Cartesian reductionism that gets us closer to rediscovering indigenous knowledge

One of many sources for LS:

<https://www.taosinstitute.net/about-us/theoretical-background>

They are the perfect tools for the Cultural Enlightenment 2.0 because they embed the Propositional knowledge of theory into Procedural knowledge, inviting Perspectival exchange in a Participatory experience. If you allow yourself to get carried away, it can feel sacred.

Now these tools work to deliver extraordinary outcomes, which is the only thing the current system gives a fuck about. While their busy trying to satisfy their hunger for more. They don't realize that their way of thinking and being is being infected by a virtuous virus. Memetic desire can be a powerful tool for good

So fuck yeah I want to them to pay me to fundamentally change their way way of thinking. And if you don't have the stomach to engage with some of the business that might want to engage with a coordinated us, then don't. I will. Because those hell holes are the exact places that need them most.

Worst case scenario the include and unleash everyone to destroy the planet faster. Plausibly worst case they reject them as too different, conflicting with their values. Best case scenario the combined insight causes them to abandon, turn around and transform.

My fantasy would be to create a bounty for Donald Trump to learn and use Liberating Structures. Could you imagine him leading an entire stadium of MAGA's through an ecocycle?

I reserve the right to be overly optimistic, naïve and wrong. With luck I'll learn as I go.

How is it that we integrate wisdom with power?

## LS (Hatch) DAO to LS Commons

So starting small and selfish and expanding to how I want to go about it and the world of externalities I hope to afford.

I want to quit my day job and hang out with more people in the generative creativity of LS, more of the time.

To do that I want to increase the global user base of LS practitioner to 10billion, and increase the LS fluency of everyone to boss level

1. Spark an economy in the LS commons that enables folks to quit their day jobs and focus on stewarding the LS community
2. Build a bridge between LS and web3 in order to offer LS to DAOs
3. And connect other value aligned facilitation and coaching communities to the ecosystem of DAOs
4. In order to help ad the skills of trust building and coordination to DAOs through both teaching and hosting
5. By doing so stake these communities on the rising tide of web3
6. And inject their extraordinary diversity to the web3 scene

The next right thing or step along that path that makes the most sense to me is to use web3 tooling to build reputation in the LS community. This is pretty straight forward considering there are shittons of user generated events already happening that we basically “just” need to document (adoption is another thing but I believe the utility of street cred is a good start since it is missing/implicit in LS). And there is already an established Learning Journey LS that again we “just” need to engineer some form of attestation engine to document on chain. Holochain can work, NFT's and POAPs, some form of Polkadot parachain think could work, I'm certain there's no less than infinite ways to make this first step possible. Talking about which and governing will enable us to build the web3 bridge and get us traveling towards an LS DAO which then helps us hatch a commons

Speaking of which I could really use some help from web3 natives interested in public goods and commoning to participate in a conversation I'm hosting on March 20th plant this seed in the LS community Event link

<https://qiqochat.com/e/ZorUTMqONuvhqRTrURMAFjvEN>

Here's some onboarding docs

web3 meet LS

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/12piML3DM6vKN\\_AeHPbLGIVuNBN60UGxa3x3Oi9UIEI/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/12piML3DM6vKN_AeHPbLGIVuNBN60UGxa3x3Oi9UIEI/edit)

LS meet web3



<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1YoxsMvRQ7znuSzN0ad5J09RDrqsEak8boPZMHTSyC7U/edit>

Liberating Structures are a collection of tools for Shared Thinking. One way we think of them is micro structures that operates at human/human interaction scale according to certain principles

@StefanMorales introduced me to the idea of looking for macro structures, that operate with similar principles and properties but at organizational/civilizational scale

Reading Green Pilled, it's clear Kevin Owocki is claiming that the regen view is using web3 itself as such a macro structure. I look at the map of impact DAOs as an index of different attempts to harness web3 as a Liberating Macro-structure.

I suppose this is what attracts me to this space.

I see that some tools follow the principles of LS better than others. One of the standouts so far is Coordinape. It distributes participation and creates an artifact that can be used today continue the conversation and learn as time goes by. Good to note that it's use is not a panacea! Making the implicit explicit will at times feel horrible, like a meaningful regression and cause a yearning for the good old days when mama and papa took care of everything. This is what learning sometimes feels like, hang in there.

Soft DAOs

<https://hackmd.io/Xf9LhBnyQ9Ga0RGLUrxslQ?view>

How to learn:

TLDR: try them, you might like it

LS are a form of embodied/enacted knowledge. John Vervaeke describes 4 different ways/types of knowing:

- ☐ Propositional
- ☐ Participatory
- ☐ Perspectival
- ☐ Procedural

LS skip the propositional and offer a procedure that activates a participatory perspectival exchange. Super technical way of saying that you don't need to **understand** all this theory I'm pumping your brain with to **use** them. By following the procedure, you can catch the vibe and then you *know*. We help people learn by experiencing how the structures work and feel.

Since the way to learn is by trying them, here are three different broad strokes

- Content: use them to address some form of sticky widget or hard problem that you need to address in your context. This is a highly non-theoretical exercise. You'll likely need at least one very skilled person on your Design team to develop the program, but the **content** here takes priority. What you'll likely learn is "damn these things work" or "ooh this is not as simple as it seems" I'd encourage you to pick the biggest hairiest challenge you're faced with.
- Process: this is by far and away the most common way of learning. We create a context away from real life in order to practice the Structures. It's kind of like Disneyland for learning, looks like an adventure but it's super safe. Here the stakes are super low and we generally take our time to debrief each thing we do as the **process** takes the center stage.
- Voltron: take both of the above and smash them together in a beautiful combo of lion robot goodness to form the galaxy's mightiest defender. Take the challenging content and as you work through it, debrief all the structures you use to address it. This takes longer than just focusing on the content and is often more emotionally charged than just being about the process, in exchange for that extra degree of difficulty is that the learning becomes very **real**. This will be a story that you and those around you will continue to tell for years after.

What I Need From You:

Learn and use Liberating Structures

The bridge is being built by and of the people here

<https://t.me/+p8BbSLbY2pU1ZmY6>

Ad your attention and voice here



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