

Case Clinic: A Theory U Tool for Transformative Innovative Solutions

Introduction

Throughout the semester, we have been grappling with the question of how the Theory U framework and tools can facilitate transformation processes that address the root causes of today's environmental challenges. To consider this question, we first needed to learn about Theory U and through doing so, experience our own transformations. Then, we needed to discover how to radiate those learnings out in ways that could continue to be transformational. We (Alejandra Ramos and Emily Miner) decided we wanted to send out ripples by facilitating a Case Clinic workshop. The following document contains all the materials we developed for the workshop, photos from the session, and our reflections about how this experience related to the guiding question of the project and the intended learning outcomes.

Case Clinic Materials



**STUCK
WITH YOUR
THESIS
TOPIC?**



**CASE
CLINIC**

A Theory U Tool for
Transformative
Innovative Solutions

**02.12.2022
CAMPUS KALK
14:00 -16:30
ROOM K202**

Join us!

Register for free:
<https://ugoitt.com/registration/>
<https://ugoitt.com>

Join us for a peer coaching process to identify innovative next steps for whatever pressing challenge you are facing.

Experience a Case Clinic, in which a case giver presents a case, and peers act as coaches based on Theory U principles such as deep listening.

Case Clinic: A Theory U Tool for Transformative Innovative Solutions

Agenda

02.12.2022

Facilitators

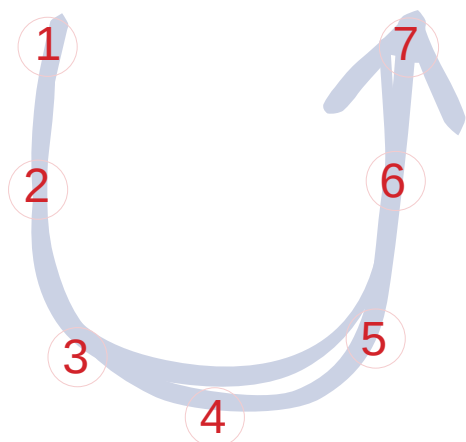
Alejandra Ramos, Emily Miner

Intention

Participants distinguish the levels listening and become aware of themselves as listeners. Through a Case Clinic, participants experience the value of deep listening in teams for discovering transformative mindsets and innovative solutions.

Tool

Case Clinic is a peer coaching process designed to identify innovative solutions and next steps for addressing a pressing and immediate leadership challenge. In a Case Clinic, a case giver presents a case, and peers or team members act as coaches, based on the principles of the U-process and process consultation.



	Time	Topic	Activities
	14:00	Introductions	Facilitators and participants introduce themselves
	14:10	Sensing	Guided meditation activity
	14:20	Overview of Case Clinic Tool	The U Process How a Case Clinic differs from typical problem-solving Steps of a Case Clinic
	14:25	Listening	The 4 Levels of listening
	14:35	Partner Dialogue	Sharing and listening to a pressing challenge with a partner
	14:45	Select case(s)	Share challenges with whole group Agree on who will be the case giver(s) for the case clinic(s)
	10 mins	Break	
1	15:05 5 mins	Case clinic (70 mins)	Clarify roles - Case giver, Coaches
2	15 mins	Intention statement by case giver	a. Current situation: What are the key challenges or questions? b. Stakeholders: How might others view this situation? c. Intention: What future are you trying to create? d. Learning threshold: What do you need to let go of, and what do you need to learn? e. Help: Where do you need input or help?
3	2 mins	Stillness	Coaches and case giver reflect
4	10 mins	Mirroring	Coaches share reflections and case giver responds
5	20 mins	Generative dialogue	Generative dialogue between coaches and case giver on new perspectives on the challenge
6	13 mins	Closing remarks	Coaches: final reflection. Case giver: How do I now see my situation and way forward?
7	5 mins	Individual journaling	Guided journaling to capture what was learned
	16:15	Closing reflections	Written and spoken reflections about listening process, case clinic tool, and workshop.
	16:30	End	

References

<https://www.u-school.org/case-clinic>

<https://www.u-school.org/listening-assessment>

Case Clinic:

A Theory U Tool for

Transformative Innovative Solutions

Alejandra Ramos

Emily Miner



Agenda

- Introductions
- Sensing – guided meditation
- Case Clinic Overview
- Levels of Listening
- Partner Dialogue
- Case Selection

Break

- **Case Clinic**
- Closing Reflections



Peaceful Place



Peaceful Place

Find a comfortable position, and if you feel comfortable, please close your eyes.

Begin to calm your mind by focusing on your breathing. Allow your breathing to center and relax you. Breathe in.... and out.

In..... out.....

In.... Out.....

Continue to breathe slowly and peacefully as you allow the tension to start to leave your body. Feel your muscles relax and become more comfortable with each breath.

Now we will take some time to imagine our own peaceful, safe place. This place will be an imaginary area where you can relax your mind and leave any unwelcome stressful thoughts behind.

Begin to create a picture in your mind of a place where you can completely relax. Imagine what this place needs to be like for you to feel calm.

Start with the physical layout of the place you are imagining..... where is this peaceful place? You might envision somewhere outdoors.... or indoors..... it may be a small place or large one..... create an image of this place.

(pause)

Focus now on the sights of your place - colors, shapes.... objects.... plants.... water..... all of the beautiful things that make your place enjoyable.

Imagine more detail about your surroundings. What can you hear? Listen to the relaxing sounds around you in your peaceful place.

Now notice any smells or tastes your place has to offer.

Pay attention to the sensations of touch... including the temperature, any breeze that may be present, the texture of the surface you are on....

Picture yourself there. What are you doing in this calming place? Perhaps you are just sitting, enjoying, relaxing. Maybe you are walking around.... or doing any other variety of activities.

Enjoy the feeling of calm..... of peace..... this place where you have no worries, cares, or concerns.... a place where you can simply relax, and enjoy just being.

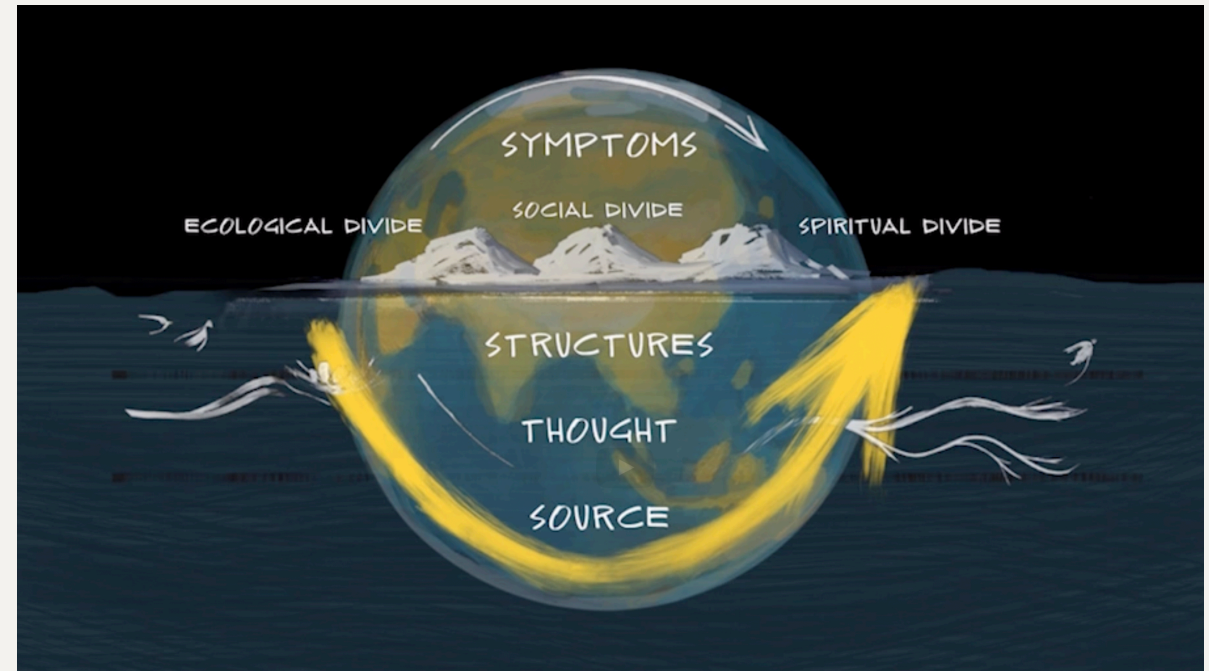
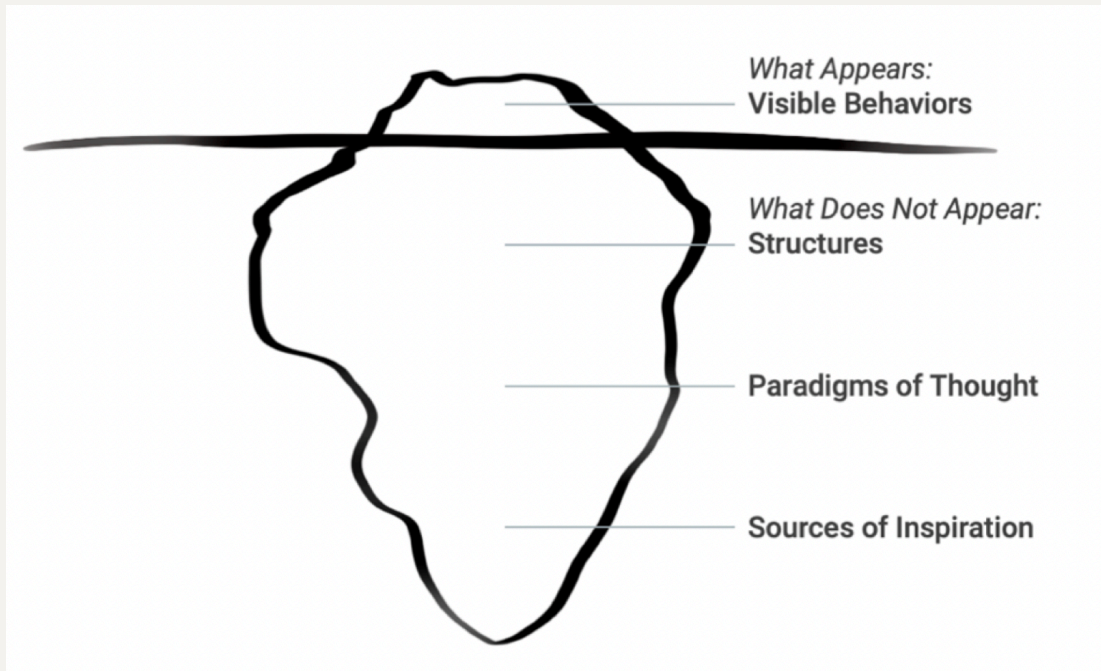
(pause)

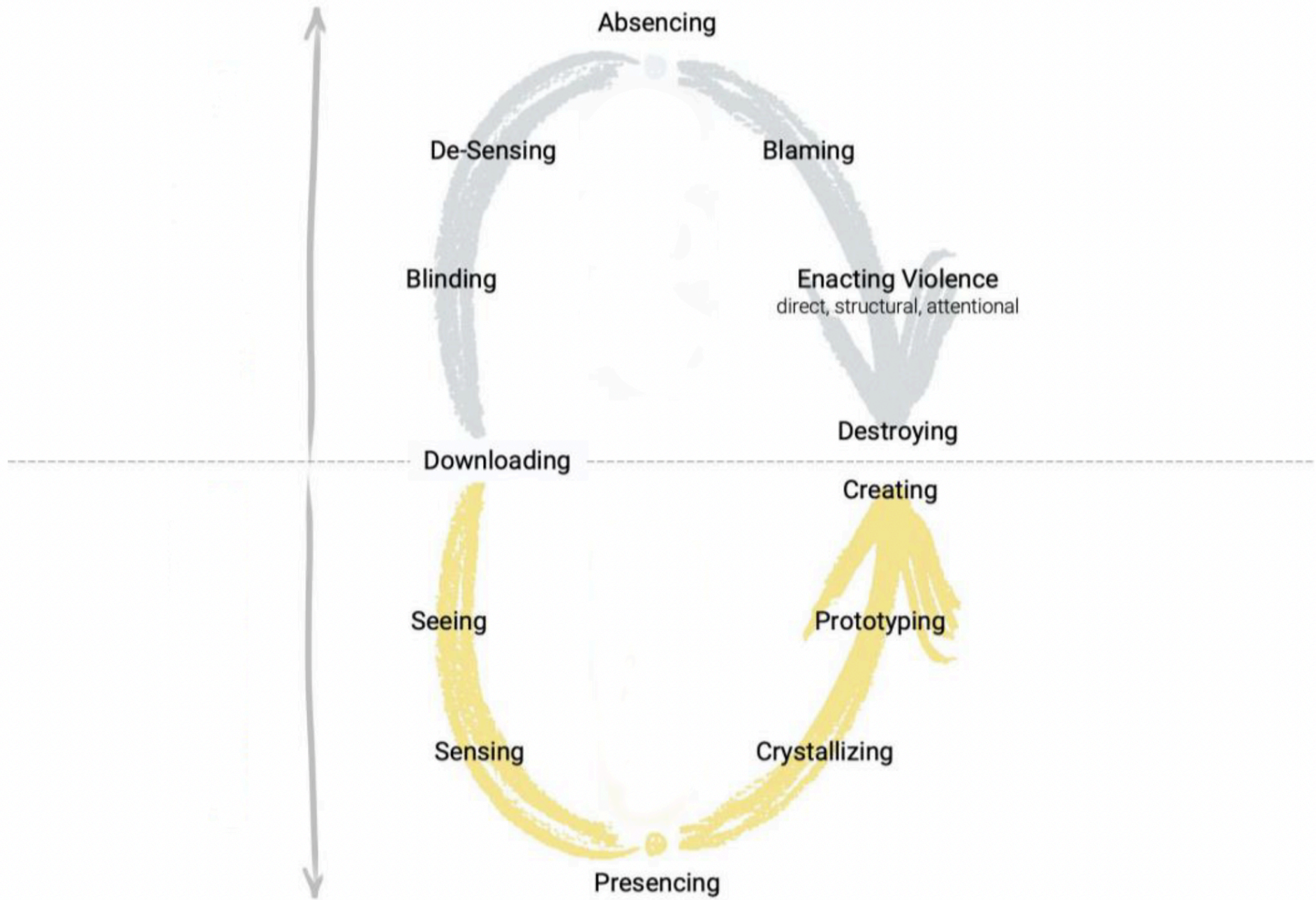
Enjoy your peaceful place for a few moments more. Memorize the sights, sounds, and sensations around you. Create a picture in your mind of yourself in your peaceful place. Breathe.

(pause)

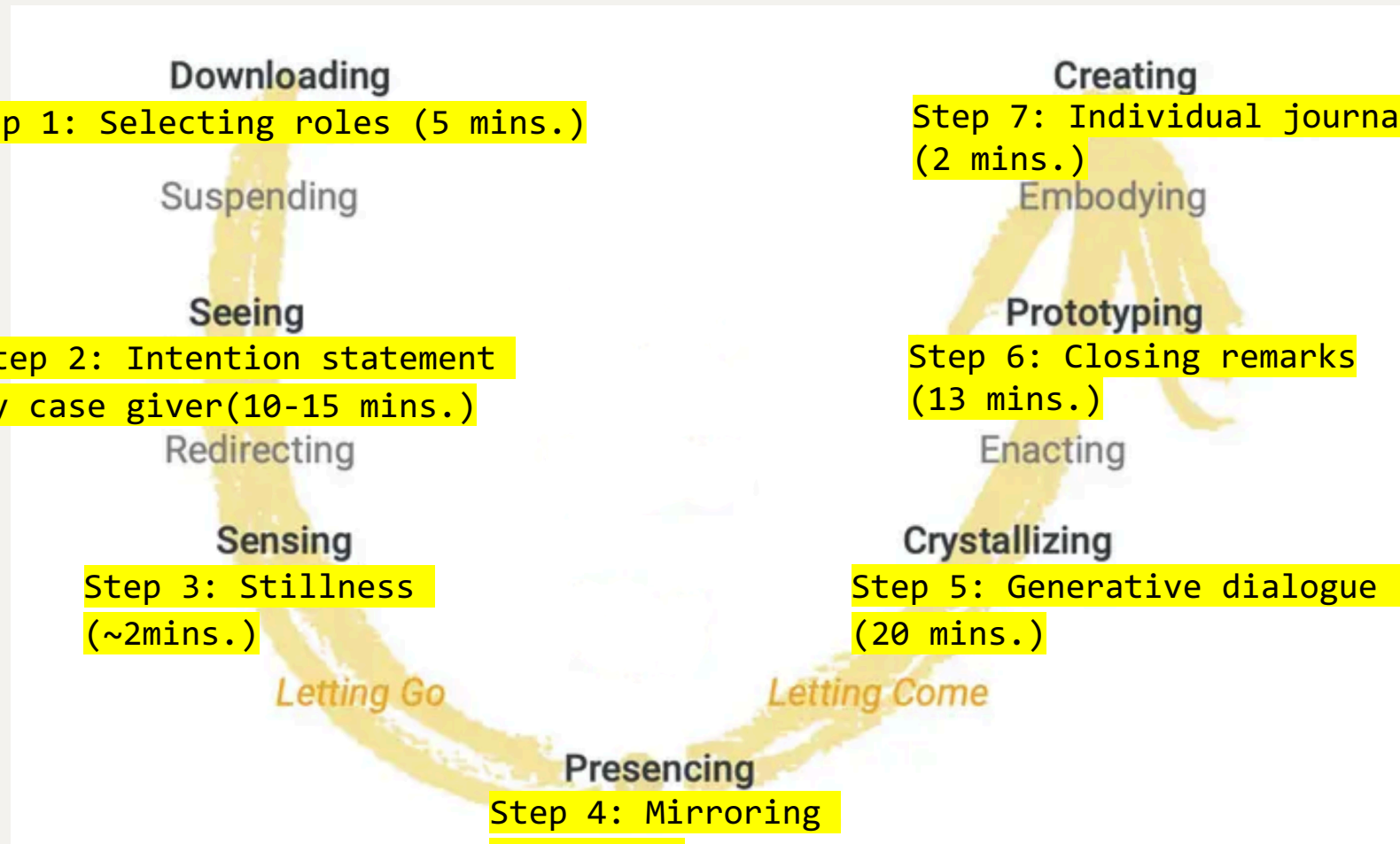
When you are ready, save this place in your mind and begin to bring your awareness back your breathing, the position and feeling of your body, and finally back to your surroundings as you slowly open your eyes.

U Process

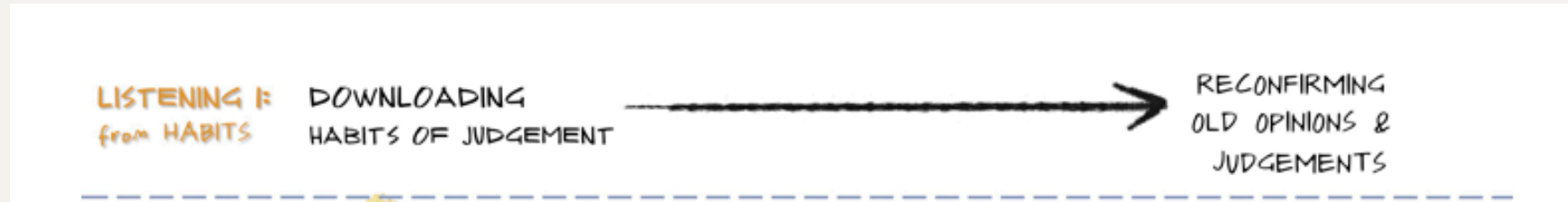




Case clinic overview



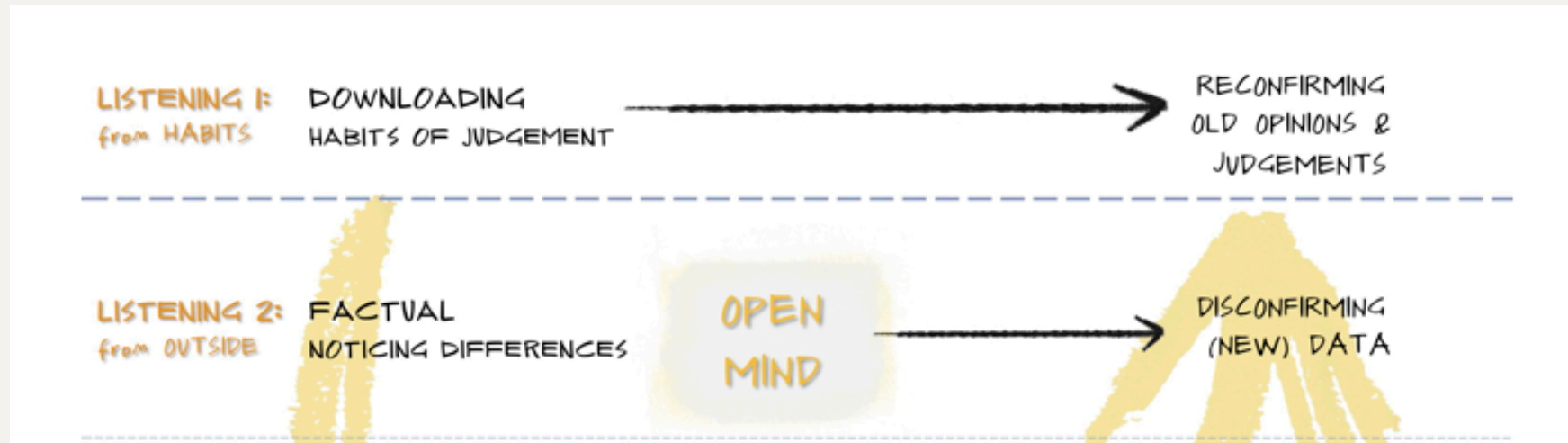
4 Levels of Listening



Hearing only what we expect to hear.
Confirming what we already know.



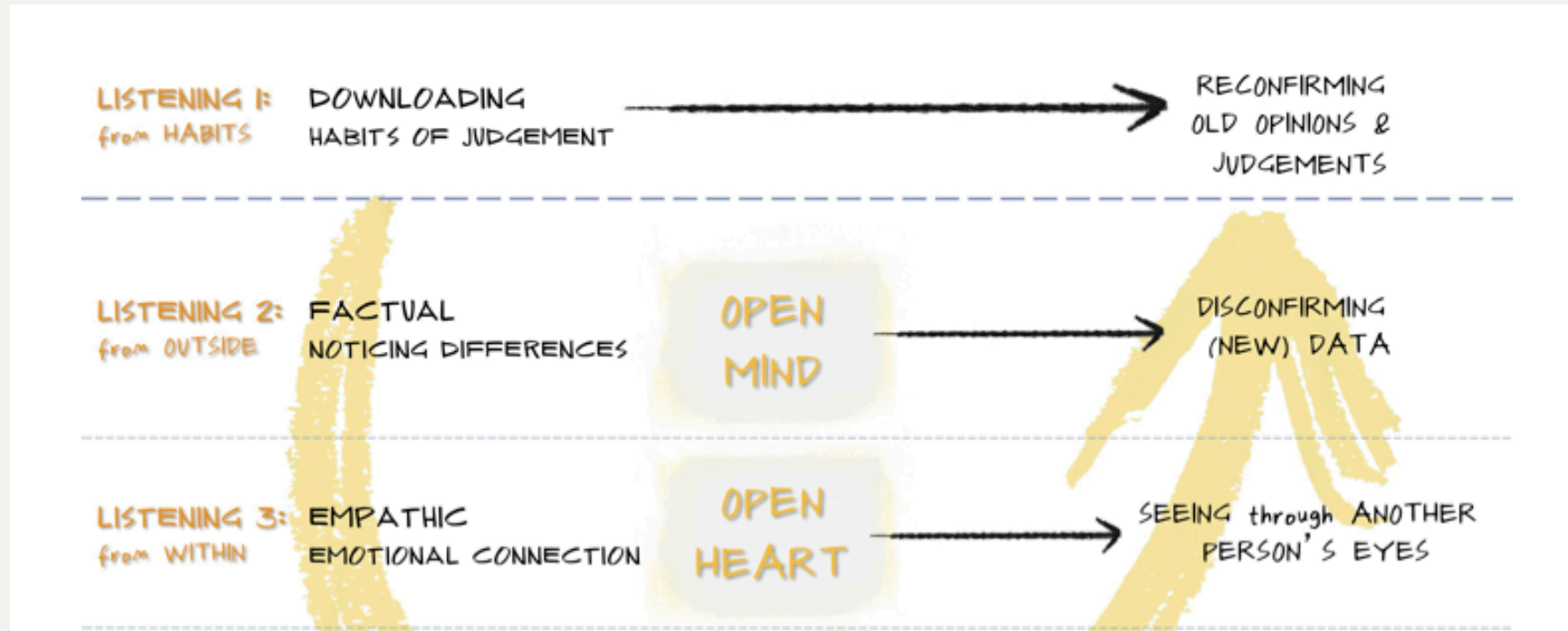
4 Levels of Listening



Hearing what we did not expect to hear.
Obtaining new knowledge.



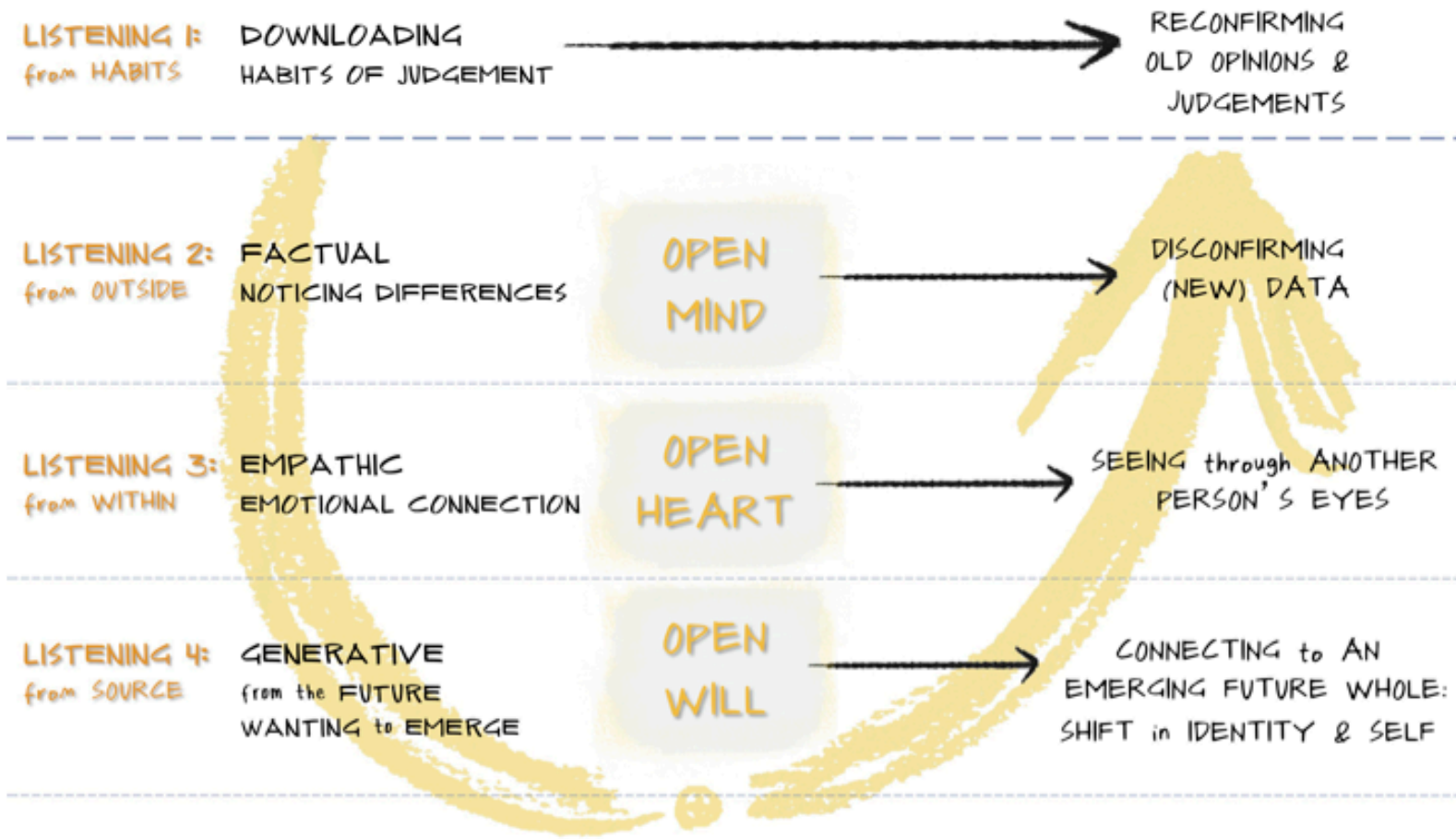
4 Levels of Listening



Hearing from the perspective of the other person.
Creating an emotional connection.



4 Levels of Listening

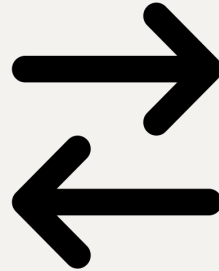


Hearing what is wanting to be said.
Connecting to highest future possibility.



Partner Dialogue

- Partner 1
- + 3 mins:
- + Describe a challenge you are facing that you might want to share in the case clinic
- + 2 mins:
- + Listen deeply



- Partner 2
- + 3 mins:
- + Listen deeply
- + 2 mins:
- + Share 3 images, feelings, or body positions that came up for you while listening.





Select case

(~2 mins.)

Case giver: Share a challenge that is current, concrete, and important, and in which you are a key player/decision maker.

Include your personal learning threshold (what you need to let go of and learn).

You should be able to present the case in 15 minutes.



Break

(10 mins)



Step 1:
Clarify
roles



1. Clarify roles

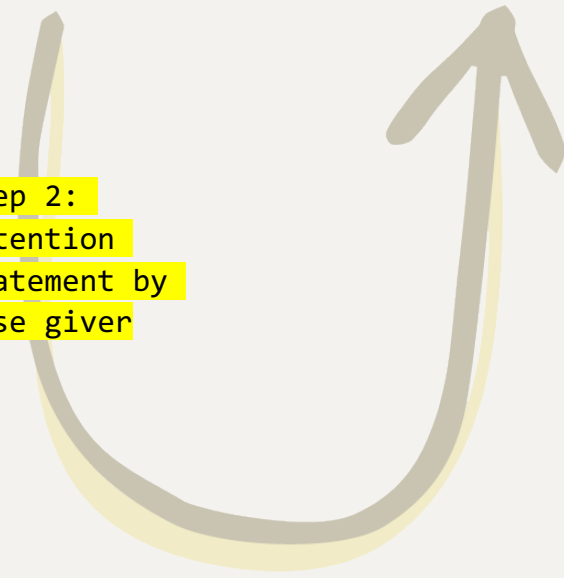
(~2 mins.)

Case giver: Share a challenge that is current, concrete, and important, and in which you are a key player/decision maker. Include your personal learning threshold (what you need to let go of and learn). You should be able to present the case in 15 minutes.

Coaches: Do not try to “fix” the problem by offering advice; instead, listen deeply. Attend to the images, feelings, and gestures that the story evokes in you.

Timekeeper: One of the coaches also manages the time.





Step 2:
Intention
statement by
case giver

2. *Intention*

(10-15 mins.)

- Take a moment to reflect on your sense of calling. Then describe your case using the following questions as a guide:
 1. Current situation: What are the key challenges or questions?
 2. Stakeholders: How might others view this situation?
 3. Intention: What future are you trying to create?
 4. Learning threshold: What do you need to let go of, and what do you need to learn?
 5. Help: Where do you need input or help?
- Coaches may ask clarifying questions if needed.





Step 3: Stillness

3. Stillness

(~2 mins.)

- Listen to your Open Mind: What images/metaphors arose?
- Listen to your Open Heart: What emotions do you sense, and where are they in your body?
- Listen to your Open Will: What gestures might represent the essence of what you are hearing?





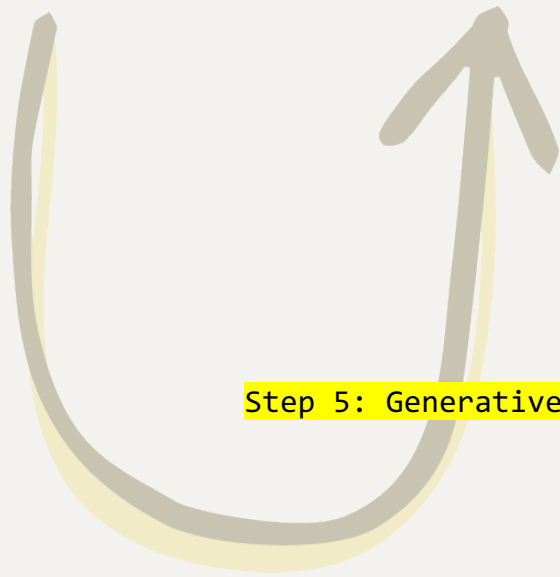
Step 4: Mirroring

4. Mirroring

(10 mins.)

- Each coach shares what came up during the silence or while listening to the case.
 - + What images/metaphors arose?
 - + What emotions do you sense, and where are they in your body?
 - + What gestures might represent the essence of what you are hearing?
- After listening to all the coaches, the case giver responds to what they said.





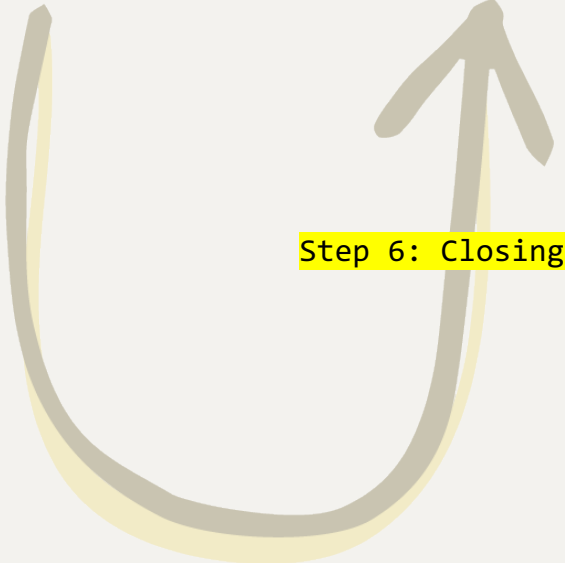
Step 5: Generative dialogue

5. Generative dialogue

(20 mins.)

- Reflect together on the remarks of the case giver and move into a generative dialogue on how these observations can offer new perspectives on the case giver's situation and journey.
- Go with the flow of the dialogue. Build on each other's ideas. Stay in service of the case giver without pressure to fix or resolve their challenge.





Step 6: Closing remarks

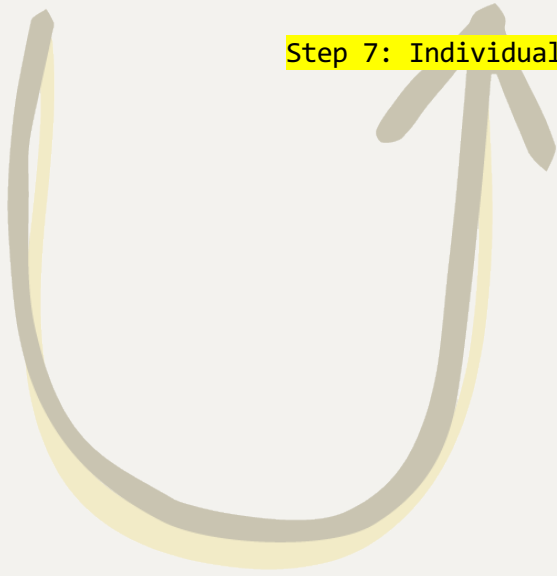
6. Closing remarks

(13 mins.)

- By coaches: Shared final reflection.
- By case giver: How do I now see my situation and way forward?
- Acknowledgment: Share an expression of genuine appreciation to each other.



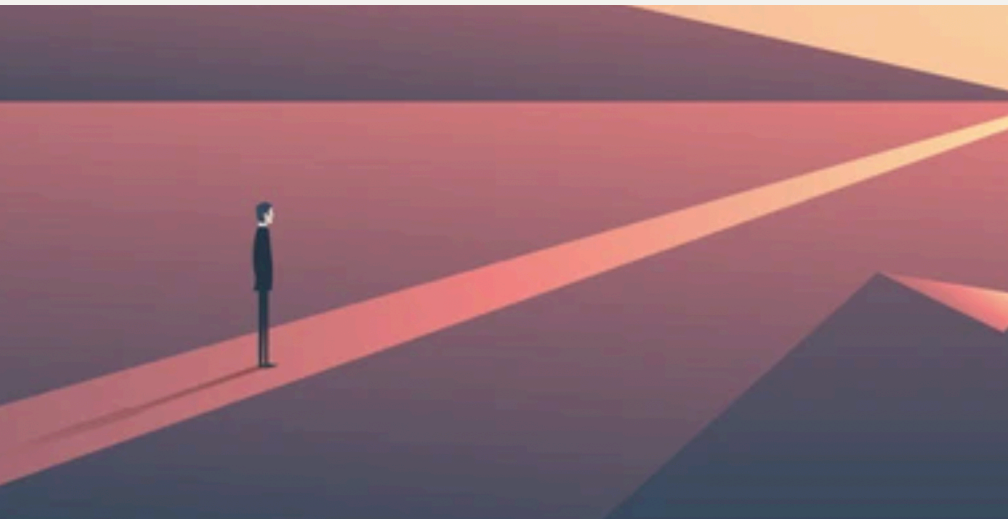
Step 7: Individual journaling



7. Individual journaling

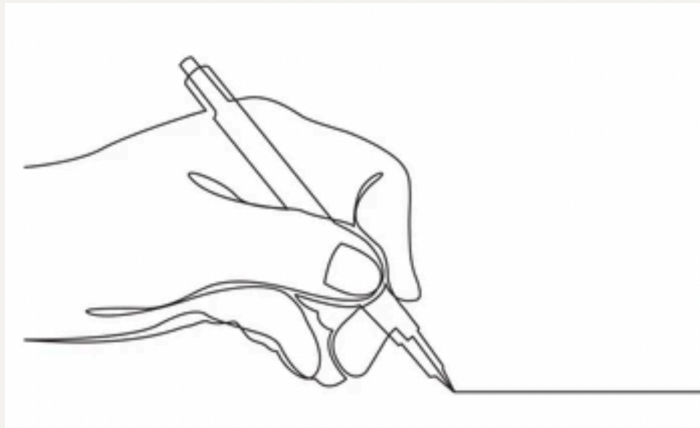
(5 mins.)

- Write down what you learned
- Describe what you noticed about your case clinic journey, paying particular attention to your mental state, emotions that were present, any sense felt in your body, and shifts in your perception.



Closing Reflections

- In which level of listening are you most of the time? Were you aware of this?
- Have you experienced a shift from one level of listening to another?
- Could you draw or map your journey through the case clinic?



References

- <https://www.u-school.org>
- <https://www.u-school.org/case-clinic>



Thank U!



Presencing Institute – Otto Scharmer – www.presencing.org/permissions



Photo album







Reflection

How did facilitating the Case Clinic workshop relate to the learning outcomes for the project 3 course?

Outcome 1: Apply tools from Theory U

Facilitating the workshop was a very concrete opportunity to apply the Theory U tool of the Case Clinic. We were able to participate in case clinics ourselves several times throughout the semester, reflect on those experiences, and then plan our workshop with adjustments we felt would make the tool more applicable to the audience of the ITT community.

Outcome 2: Judge the applicability of the Theory U framework and its methods as an implementation strategy to facilitate transformation processes to achieve SDGs

One adjustment we made in preparation for our workshop was that we prompted participants to come to the workshop with a challenge in mind. We suggested their thesis topics as possible challenges, but we left the prompt open to other pressing challenges too. In the workshop, participants shared their challenges with each other and then with the group, and we collectively selected the challenge for the case clinic. All the challenges would have been good candidates for a case clinic, but the one we ultimately selected was one we absolutely did not expect. Even though it was a challenge we never could have anticipated, the tool worked beautifully, which affirmed the idea that Theory U tools are very broadly applicable.

The challenge selected was not directly related to the SDGs, but it was very relevant to several of the IDGs (Inner Development Goals), which are arguably at the root of achieving the SDGs. Theory U is about going deeper to address the underlying sources of problems, and the case clinic workshop was a very clear example of how a Theory U tool could facilitate transformation at that deeper level.

Outcome 3: Describe the connection of basic concepts around systems theory and transformation and the Theory U framework

This outcome was certainly achieved throughout the course of the semester, but it was not a central topic of the workshop we facilitated. We did give an overview of Theory U and explained the fundamental concept of acknowledging complexity and using Theory U strategies to change the approach to listening and to solving problems. Implicit in that explanation is that simple linear approaches to problem solving only work on simple linear problems, and most, if not all, sustainability challenges we face today are not at all simple. Without spending too much workshop time trying to put it into words, we hoped to allow participants to experience the benefits of leaning into subtlety, ambiguity, complexity, and empathy, in other words, of stepping out of a linear mindset and into a complex systems mindset.

Outcome 4: Recognize, practice, and reflect on transformative competencies of change agents

According to Otto Scharmer, the most important transformative competency for change makers is deep listening. We made this a central objective of our workshop because we really wanted the participants to become aware of and to practice moving between the different levels of listening. Unexpectedly, the case clinic challenge that was selected involved the case giver feeling exhausted from doing too much deep listening with friends and family. This presented a very interesting opportunity for all of us to practice deep

listening *about deep listening* and for the case giver to be on the receiving side of that listening for a change. One of the reflections at the end of the workshop was that knowing how and when to use transformative competencies such as deep listening is important. One must have the ability to listen deeply when warranted by the situation, but also the ability to turn one's energy inward at times to avoid exhaustion and be able to continue moving forward. Selectively implementing these transformative competencies is both a form of caring for others and a form of self-care.

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Project III
Embodied System Understanding for Holistic Action-oriented Sustainability
Transformations
Supervision: Vetter, Brandes & Hamhaber
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