

written by: the Living Wholeness Institute

My heart is moved by all I cannot save: so much has been destroyed

I have to cast my lot with those who age after age, perversely,

with no extraordinary power, reconstitute the world.

~adrienne rich





INTRODUCTION: CONTEXT

What does it mean to truly transform our systems-ourselves included-so that they are deeply sustainable, at all levels?

Our damage to the planet and to our humanity has led to unprecedented depletion of both our biosphere and ethnosphere. Yet, as we witness many of our human systems and institutions topple under revolution or struggle to stay relevant, we also see an explosion of innovation in sciences, technologies, social entrepreneurship and the emergence of new organizing patterns. People and communities are becoming conscious of the need for systemic change-not tinkering part of the system but transforming whole. We are realizing that we have to regain the responsibility for many aspects of our lives which we have outsourced to "experts." So we are marshalling resources and are innovating to create new realities that are based on new forms of leadership and power sourced from within ourselves.

And amidst all this activity, we sit on a massive grief that has yet to be expressed for our role in the degradation of the planet, its resources and life forms.

Nobody knows what our new systems will look like because we are currently in a world in transition. There is not the one solution, but a multiplicity. It is time to trust ourselves to let something new emerge by journeying into unchartered territory. Ecosystems and human systems will have to evolve quickly together and adapt. Implicit in this is a dis-orientation and a need to re-pattern and re-orient ourselves and make new meaning together. In fact, we are re-patterning our whole way of living as we learn our way towards 'a new normal.'

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This is the long-term work of systemic transformation: the evolution of a new culture-or new cultures-whose values, beliefs, behaviours, assumptions and meaning-making are aligned with life-cultures which function as living systems.





FRAMING LIVING WHOLENESS

The Living Wholeness Institute (LWI) is the home of practice leaders and action researchers who work across these three levels:

Micro

we offer process architecture for systemic transformation initiatives where a learning ecology for a collaborative community of practice can work to systemically transform the specific topic or area of inquiry.

MACRO

we connect these different systemic transformation initiatives to each other and to our network, so that trans-local learning can be amplified and accelerated.

Мета

we research the learnings from this family of systemic transformation initiatives in order to make visible how systemic transformation takes place across the world.

As such, the LWI is working with different initiatives that each holds a transformative vision and practice. These range from a collaborative practice of place-making in Israel, rethinking the finance and food systems in UK, young leaders and leadership in Egypt, social revolution in Greece. Each one is a system in itself, but by connecting them, the LWI is cultivating a network that is creating transformative change across different parts of the world.

LEARNING ECOLOGIES

A learning ecology is a specific kind of collective practice ground which is designed not so much to create the new systems, but to create the conditions for the new systems to emerge.

Underneath this is the core belief that in order to transform our systems, we need to engage in systemic learning. This means widening the scope of what we mean by systemic and framing our work not as fixing systems external to us, but finding new alignment with our inner and outer worlds - not so much 'unfreezing' a problem but aligning and re-balancing our own inner fragmentation in service to a greater whole. In other words, seeking wholeness.

Learning ecologies cultivate the conditions for the kind of learning, experimenting, innovating and relationships that can sustain the tension of working with the many unknowns inherent in transitioning from what we know now, to what we do not yet know - i.e. the new systems. The nature of this work is to create containers for the deep knowing that every human being holds to meet that which we are seeking to know, and to work with what emerges.

They are not discrete, one-off, time bound interventions for change with a set number and type of participants. They are organic, evolving, self-organising movements with people starting at different phases of readiness all the time.





We work with those who are willing to ask audacious questions, take risks and enter unknown territory. We partner as co-learners with those whose questions are not only about "the world out there" but within their lives, their closest family systems, and how to live life. They are calling new initiatives and ways of working from the "edge", either because their vision for change is disruptive to the dominant systems (in society, in their work cultures) or because they live in places where the systems are at the edge of collapse. This edge is where innovation happens. We look at innovation as a life practice, and as innovating our lives in order to serve a larger purpose.

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The learning ecology, then, is the space in which we enact the values we wish to activate more widely by cultivating practices that help us learn and grow together through actually being in profound relationship with each other and with the earth. The Living Wholeness Institute's Learning Ecologies are the grounds for these new cultures to be initiated, practiced and scaled out.

A LIVING WHOLENESS DNA

A Living Wholeness practice works towards balance and alignment, by working within these three perspectives (i) Visible and invisible, (ii) Individual and collective, (iii) Depth and **breadth**. These three perspectives are complementary and are interconnected - one is not able to exist without the other for systemic change to occur. Together, they illuminate the wholeness from which a new system can arise.







THE VISIBLE INVISIBLE

When we refer to "systemic", we look at the palette of interconnected relationships that make up any given context. Held in this palette are both the visible elements e.g. different people who have a stake in the system, their structures, knowledge, processes of interaction as well as the more intangible or invisible aspects which include the underpinning value sets, thought forms, perspectives and what Jung refers to as the personal and collective unconscious.

ii. THE INDIVIDUAL COLLECTIVE
This axis brings attention to creating wholeness within ourselves and with others by gathering around purposes that align who we are, what we do and how we do it. This allows us to simultaneously heal fragmentation within ourselves and create new collective intelligences and capacities to traverse the unchartered territory. This creates new knowledge which can be translated into new artifacts i.e. products, services, structures as well as values, behaviours and relationships.

iii. BREADTH DEPTH
We work with intentionally inviting a breadth of knowledge, intelligence, participation and diversity into the system, Key to this is self-selection and resonance - a readiness to engage and be a learner. The learner(s) travel from breadth to depth by unlearning, accessing courage to take risk and working generatively with the unknown, shifting our own internal system which includes discovering and accepting new values, and being in conscious relationship with a wider system. There is a direct relationship between the capacity for depth and the capacity to hold or work with increasing complexity.

APPROACH AND ARCHITECTURE TO SYSTEMIC TRANSFORMATION INTRODUCING THE LINEAGE OF THE 4-ROOMS

The inspiration for the 4-Rooms is the journey from seeker to master in the Sufi tradition. Rumi writes that there are three levels of spiritual engagement with life. The first level is based on exchange (Maslahat), a trade. One meditates to have some peace, one prays to have prosperity. The second level is the level of knower (Ma'arefat). One engages more fully with life to access a deeper level of knowing. It is beyond exchange; one doesn't provide in order to get something back, but rather because it is time and it is your job. The third level (Tajrobat) is based on oneness. He describes it as going beyond hearing, seeing and tasting it. You become it.

As in the Sufi tradition, in the Living Wholeness practice, one re-engages as a master with the wider system to host others through the rooms. The Learning Ecologies have 4 rooms, with room 2 and 3 being equivalent to the level of the knower/practitioner in the Sufi tradition.



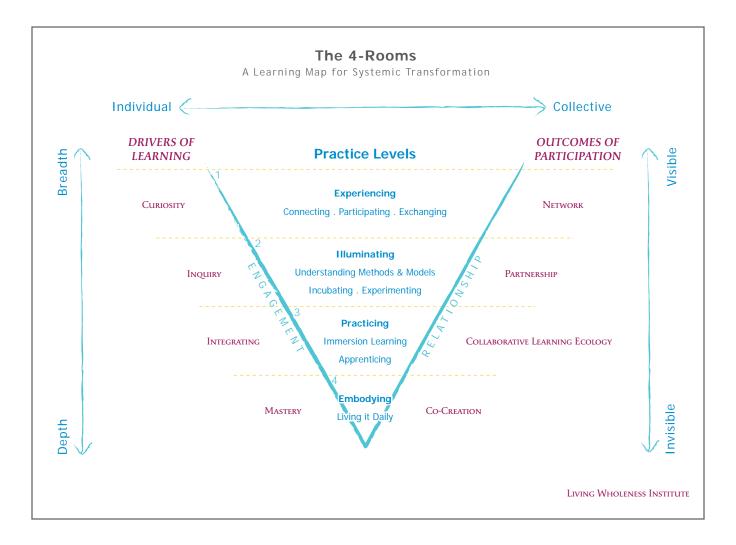


EMBARKING

To embark on a learning journey-personal and collective-in the context of a Learning Ecology is to travel the 4 Rooms of which there are four levels of practice.

To prepare, the callers experience the basics to the 4-Rooms approach in order to invite others to join in. Together, we illuminate the intentions, motivations, economy, and the basic internal resources and capacities of the callers, the emerging "core team" and the system they wish to influence. They learn to host the whole, create emergent strategy, and increase their capacity to work with complexity. The core team is the first innovation prototype that will be scaled out as they host others into the learning ecology.

We then co-create the learning ecology together (the diagram below).







Yoom one:

Experiencing the Practice

Driver: Curiosity.

What do I care enough about to act on? Who else cares about this? How can people help me? What is going on? Where can my ideas fit in?

Purpose: To connect the diversity of the system around a resonant question. Begin to translate individual interests into a collective field.

Forms: Systemic level projects. Partnership with other organizations.

PARTICIPANTS: People and organizations who are asking questions about how to create new forms (of living, working, organizing). They are curious about deeper meaning, connecting with others and making something new happen. It is an open call, people self-select to join.

PROCESS AND PRACTICE: Large-scale Assemblies. Participatory social technologies that inspire conversations that matter and create collective meaning (e.g. Open Space Technology, appreciative inquiry, bricolage, World Cafe, pro-action cafe, scenario planning, mind mapping etc).

DESCRIPTION: The work happens where people are. This can include people/organizations calling systemic projects (Finance Innovation Lab) or situations (Greece) where large-scale change is being sought. The leaders are seeking clearer understanding of how to bring about the change but do not have the vocabulary or portfolio of practices that can support them to do this. At this level, teaching of the practice is implicit.

Outcomes: A network of relationships. Touch many people and seed many conversations. Create the conditions for more leaders i.e. those who care and want to do something about it - to step forward. People begin to discover their place in a greater whole. Offer inspiration and cultivate courage to continue journeying.





Yoom two:

Illuminating the Practice

Driver: Inquiry.

What do I need to learn to gain a deeper understanding of how to lead what I care about? How does this work? What is new and different? What else don't I know? Who else can I learn with?

Purpose: To establish safe environments where people can learn more about the underpinning world views, models, methodologies of the systemic approach so they can begin practicing it and inviting others to join them.

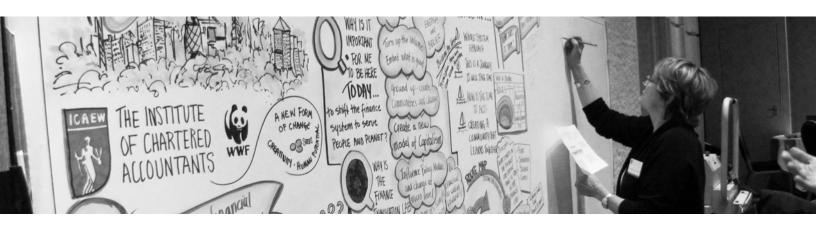
Forms: Retreats. Trainings. Workshops. Incubation spaces. Teaching and talks. Short immersions. Explicit discussion of the practice. Coaching and mentoring.

PARTICIPANTS: People who step forward to host innovation and have an explicit interest in acquiring skills of convening others, to experiment and incubate. Self-selection and by invitation.

PROCESS AND PRACTICE: The Art of Hosting meaningful conversations (the process architecture of how different methodologies are used). The Art of Systemic Transformation (models and skills for hosting large-scale systemic projects). Underpinning theory e.g complexity, living systems, developmental evaluation etc. Awareness of inner motivations and calling.

DESCRIPTION: At this level, exploration is less about project impact, but more about acquiring the personal/collective skills, self-awareness, capacity of a person and/or team to develop a greater sense of the deeper source and potential of their work.

Outcomes: Partnership. Cultivate literacy about theory and methodologies. Skill of inquiry has been developed, and in particular inquiring collectively.







Yoom three:

Integrating the Practice

Driver: Integrating.

How do I align my/our consciousness and skills with the work that needs to be done? What are my limiting beliefs? How do I need to practice differently? What is it I don't know? What do I need to open up to or let go of?

Purpose: Deepening of the practice – Personal depth and collective learning. Apprenticing to embodying the practice of living wholeness. Commitment to life-long learning.

Forms: Immersion learning retreats. Apprenticing with those who are masters. Hosting practice grounds, with support/presence of masters.

PARTICIPANTS: Practitioners. People who are interested in deepening their projects, their lives and themselves. Recognized and invited by hosts/core team because they have shown interest, resonance, learning.

PROCESS AND **PRACTICE:** Working with the frame of individual-collective, depth-breadth, invisible and visible. At this stage, individuals are working explicitly with their inner worlds and understanding more clearly limiting beliefs and deeper motivations - this is accelerated by being in a collective learning ecology. Learning to access a wider scope of intelligences intuition, the collective unconscious, synchronicity, presencing, body wisdom, earth practices, arts and storytelling. Protection practices (working with vulnerability and disturbance generatively).

DESCRIPTION: At this stage, the core team and other practitioners are apprenticing into the practices that will help them embody the culture they wish to see in the world, and the culture that they are inviting others into through their systemic projects. They are learning this from the Living Wholeness Institute who are mentors, masters and they learn this collectively through the Immersion learning experiences.

Outcomes: Collaborative learning ecology. Develop deep and complex relationships between the learners and masters.





Yoom four:

Being the Practice

Driver: Mastery.

Am I willing to commit to living this practice daily? How does the practice express itself in every action and moment? How do I offer this to others?

Purpose: To embody the practice. Who one is, what one does and how one does it is aligned and balanced. Discernment of when misalignment occurs so that it can be re-established.

Forms: A Core Team. Living daily life by seeking balance. Hosting others into their callings.

PARTICIPANTS: Practitioners who are committed to living a life of the practice and who are willing to be in the world, i.e. Room 1, to share practice with others.

Process and Practice: Chop wood carry water. Mindful living.

DESCRIPTION: At this stage, a master is someone who works with complexity by moving between depth and breadth, the invisible and visible, and the individual and collective. Continual exploration. Bringing mastery practice into the wider field.

Outcomes: Co-creation is with others who are practicing their mastery. Mentoring.







Fit for a Planet

Who makes the Blue Prints for the new World Who are The Draftsmen? The Architects? The Artists? The Visionaries?

Look! There they are!! Stooped over the Drawing Board Slide rule and pencil in hand

Tricky Business making Blue Prints... Needed in Scale and Stature The size of a Planet

Still – someone's got to do it Got to start Drawing the base-lines – scoping possibility

Otherwise, we stay with the same Model The same Ground Plan The same Design

But the Design is Shifting To house the Newness calling To be lived and Loved into Being

> So the Draftsmen, the Architects and the Others Stoop studiously late into the night Crafting the Ground Plan

> > Fit for a Planet

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