

Principles Circumscribing the Field of Collective Intelligence and Spiritual Wisdom

PRACTICES FOR PREPARING AN OPENING:

The ways in which people prepare for and conduct themselves as they participate in this phenomenon; **HOW** they form and hold the intent for healing and wholeness in service of the collective.

Listening Deeply
Clearing
Holding the Space
Trusting Intuition
Non-attachment
Not Knowing
Non-judgment
Art, Music, Sound and Movement
Whole-Body Sensing
Symbolism and Metaphor
Discernment

LISTENING DEEPLY

People listen to each other in a deeper way—they lean forward and listen into each other. They are willing and able to put aside differences and evaluations, and relax into listening for the meaning being conveyed behind the words, and for its significance in the life of the speaker. They stay with the speaker for as long as it takes, trusting that all that is being said is needed for the group as a whole, even when they disagree, or don't yet understand its implications.

"It's a way of holding and being willing to be there in paradox with others with whom you don't necessarily agree. There's a willingness to be quiet, a willingness to disagree and not let that bother you, a willingness to hear; a kind of willingness to be empathetic. Not listening for the words per se, but listening for the sort of humanity that drives them, the fears and desires and loves and needs that drive them. There's a willingness to go to a place of openness with each other." Bob Forman

"You have to sacrifice your attention to your own well-being and what you consider to be your own agenda or 'your own identity reputation or whatever it is. And you have to give your attention freely, totally as much as possible, to the other person. What really helps is the quality of attention that has been exchanged. My attention has been given to you and yours has been given to me. And when that happens, another life has appeared. Another quality of human attention has appeared that is more balanced, higher, more full than my individual one." Jacob Needleman

"When you listen at that level, then you can hear not only the people; if you really pay attention, you can hear what the universe is saying." Paula Underwood

"Let's what happens when you listen to people as if what they're saying is a window into the whole rather than only an expression of a part." Adam Kahane

CLEARING

People recognize the importance of inner preparedness. They speak of various forms of personal practice—meditations, quiet, walking, and music—to get as clear as possible within themselves in preparation for a meeting. They are keenly aware that the clarity of interaction in any group endeavor, and the richness of the outcome, is very much dependent upon the clarity of each participating mind, and that a special responsibility for this is borne by the conveners or facilitators.

“Attention to inner work, to one’s own inner state in any kind of group, is profoundly important. That’s been overlooked in many kinds of groups.”

Penny Williamson

“It makes an enormous difference to spend time prior to the engagement, remembering—to sense into, to feel into the intention for the engagement, and to the best of my ability, to try to tune my instrument for the nature of the music that we’re going to engage in together.”

Mitch Saunders

“You concentrate on the group as a whole, tuning into the highest possibility that is emerging, you make yourself an instrument for this emerging whole.” Otto Scharmer

HOLDING THE SPACE

People speak of many different forms and purposes for gathering—teachers concerned for the quality of schools, world leaders addressing a territorial conflict, conservationists addressing the preservation of rainforests, a family meeting to resolve issues. A common underlying factor in all these meetings where collective holistic functioning is experienced is a deliberate and consistent holding of a fundamental intention for unity. “Holding of the space” is offered sometimes by a facilitator, and sometimes by participants; sometimes explicitly assigned and sometimes invisible to the group. In whatever form, there is a kind of spacious inclusiveness, which results from the work of holding the space or the intention for unity regardless of the specific content or purpose of the meeting.

“The café host offers an impulse of consciousness that is taken up by the field of consciousness in the group, and then it (collective intelligence) manifests. I think of it as a knowing that is taken up from the presence of the host.” Finn Voldtofte

“We really maintain relationships strongly all the time and we believe that we have generated a field into which we bring people. This is a critical piece, which contributes to the depth of the experience that people have. We establish relationships as strongly as we possibly can. We speak about all the people in the group in the invisible territory before the event.” Jennifer Gillespie

TRUSTING INTUITION

People make a choice to live the group experience through the instrument of their personality or “self,” while drawing on the more expansive perspective of the inner “Self.” They trust their intuition and rely on their natural ability to be channels for divine guidance or a voice of wisdom for the group.

“It’s knowing the pattern of patterns and knowing one is just a part of that pattern. It’s dwelling in the intuitive. It’s sensing the energetics of the whole. It’s tracking and moving on intuition. Not always listening to your rational mind.” Anne Doshier

“I have a deep trust in my own intuition. I can turn to my own source of guidance in any moment and immediately know what I’m being asked to do, so that’s always present and I use that.” Tom Hurley

NON-ATTACHMENT

Gatherings almost always begin with clear hopes, goals, or some form of result in mind. Paradoxically, however, a consistent theme is that the facilitators at least, and sometimes the participants, practice as best they can a non-attachment to specific outcomes; a kind of balanced detachment with commitment; a relaxing and a surrendering to a higher wisdom, while still holding a clear intention for the desired results.

"It was important that we got there, but we weren't trying to get somewhere, which was also one of the important pieces." Beth Landernoa

"It's a trust. It's a trust in the synchronicity. It's a trust in the spontaneity. It's a trust that this particular organic organization will be able to surface and resolve the things that matter to them."
Leilani Henry

NOT KNOWING

People describe a stance of not knowing; of surrender to the larger collective wisdom and to the flow of divine intelligence in the moment. They undertake a certain and necessary amount of research, planning and organization in preparation for a gathering, and create a certain amount of structure to enable a free flow of collective wisdom, rather than to contain it, or to control what happens.

"I always know what the purpose is, I don't know what it's going to look like. It's that staying crisp to the purpose and the letting go of what it's going to look like that allows me to be present in the moment of what's happening in order to make use of it in that moment in time." Ann Hoewing

"The sense of not knowing what's around the corner and being willing to be with that and actually be energized by that, is essential; especially when we're talking about exploring, opening ourselves into learning something that we don't know. It's like the next step in our evolution." Glenna Gerard

"To be without preconceived notions. To be without answers. To be open to possibilities. To be willing to discover in relation to one another. Those are higher ways of being." Diana Whitney

NON-JUDGMENT

People describe how they work to hold themselves centered in a neutral or impartial place of non-judgment. This is a constant practice as it is all too easy to find agreement or disagreement, irritation, impatience, and any number of other judgmental reactions arising during a group gathering. People speak of noticing these personal feelings and judgments arising, looking at them clearly, discerning if a response is needed for the larger whole, and otherwise consciously discarding them-choosing instead to return to their center, to their openness, and to their stance of non-judgment in service of the group.

"There's a kind of settling amongst the people in the group so that the listening and the talking is coming from a deeper place, where people are able to relax and suspend judgment and be curious and open, and a meaning emerges from the group that's greater than any individual would have made." Penny Williamson

"I allow myself to feel the sting of the indictment, and I let it wash right over me, or through me. I try not to get attached to it. So there's a little moment of internal clearing to let go of what I had been fixed on, in order to taste, to feel, and maybe even to smell what might be behind the indictment." Mitch Saunders

ART, MUSIC, SOUND AND MOVEMENT

Art, music, sound and movement enable access to insight and offer means of expressing the forms it takes. People describe how they prepare for and enter group experiences with a certain fearlessness and light-heartedness. There is a sense of humility in their stories, and a joyful gratitude that they are privileged to be doing this work. They don't take themselves too seriously, for with all the preparation in the world, they know that the only way is to place their trust in the group and in ever-present divine consciousness. Art, music, movement, and other forms of physical sensory activities are often used as enablers of lightness and play, through which the whole person, individually and collectively, may be fully engaged.

„Art is a vital form of communication. It is spiritual. It is political. It is fundamentally the way in which human beings communicate their deepest essence. Now, can you understand the power of [art] to change the world in an intentional way, to bring us together in an intentional way, or to raise issues in an intentional way? Then I think we will have crossed a major kind of threshold.” Ysaye Barnwell

Each of us would bring our creative expression into the group and share it collectively. That was a very powerful experience, which allowed the tacit knowing in the group to surface.” Marilyn Velcro

„A particular kind of intelligence got shut off when the singing was shut off. If you look far enough back in the history of most people, part of how we were together and worked together and celebrated together and mourned together was through song... To bring this forward again opens up the possibility it primes the pump for certain other kinds of creativity to come in.” Rachel Bagby

”There’ s some way that participating in all of the other [creative, playful] activities actually expands the field of view of whatever the question or task’ is.” Glenna Gerard

WHOLE BODY SENSING

There seems to be an emerging new understanding of the role of the human body in learning and transformation, both for the individual and in gatherings. People speak of how the western culture we live in usually places too strong an emphasis on logical, orderly, cognitive processes—verbal and written—for learning and communicating. This has left us somehow disembodied—the brain with little awareness or connection to the cellular intelligence that permeates the body; the senses with little ability to pick up on the finer signals coming through to us from the body as conduit for our collective intelligence and spiritual wisdom. Movement of the body is not only about relaxation and releasing of tension. It is utilized as a serious discipline for the integration of the human system—mind, emotions, and body; for right and left brain integration and essentially for the integration and completion of collective learning, in a way that engages all the senses in the richness and fullness of whole-body functioning. It is the fully aligned and integrated human system—individually, collectively, and as a species— which will best serve as a clear channel for the manifestation of divine wisdom for healing and evolution on the planet.

„Anything that brings people together where their bodies, their minds and their imaginations are engaged simultaneously has the potential to go deeper.” Peter Hawes

„The body doesn’t lie. There is wisdom that’s locked into the body ... So we're not using words, we’re using movement and sound ... There’s a rhythm, there’s a coherence in the body if you let the body move.” Leilani Henry

”When we are sitting in those circles together and calling forward for more wisdom to do something else as a species, to be another way to live more restoratively; then when I hear or see some kind of opening, a kind of shining—it’s almost like a portal— then I will sound until I feel like a tuning fork— opening, amplifying, deepening the tender new insight that is ready to be born.” Rachel Bagby

SYMBOLISM AND METAPHOR

Many people speak of using objects, symbols, and metaphors, as powerful avenues for creating shared meaning within a group. The introduction of a physical object, or use of metaphoric language seems often able to facilitate a dramatic shift in the collective consciousness of a group enabling ideas to coalesce and the group to come together with a sense of movement, direction and/or resolution. Many people speak of a pioneering spirit they feel, as if charting new territory in an emerging field of group practice. The natural language often used when people speak about these experiences—try to describe the indescribable—is often metaphoric and rich with symbols, images, icons and turns of phrase.

"One of the people who had died in the conflict was a relative of his, and he starts crying; and he's holding the stone ... it's like he'd forgotten to pass it on ... So after a couple of minutes, the stone moved on and we continued the session, and each one of them in this four-hour session indicated that this was a life-changing experience They took the stone and they built this Plexiglas case for it; and so there's this shrine... for those who had done that level of sharing. They knew what the stone meant, and didn't need any words for it. Sharif Abdullah

"We use the labyrinth as a spiritual tool, as a huge metaphor for the spiritual journey ... Labyrinth walking is archetypal. The return home, the hero's journey or more of the feminine sense of you go out into the world, you don't necessarily slay dragons, but you awaken, you open, you receive, you allow, you expand. And then, you take the return back to the real world." Lauren Artress

DISCERNMENT

Inner preparation before a gathering allows people to more easily discern when action is needed, and when stillness and listening are needed. And so they tend not to engage in overly busy preparatory activities that are based on past learning and experience. People describe the awareness they have of being in a relationship with everyone and everything that is going on in the group. All external happenings carry messages, clues, directions as to the learning that is unfolding inside for the self as well as for the group. It is in the inter-play in the spaces in between the self, the other, and the group as a whole, that the richness of collective wisdom reveals itself. And so the actions that people take come from a deeply trusting place of being with whatever is happening in the moment.

"It's a knowing-the recognition that the decision point will happen, and you need to recognize it in that moment. It's kind of like it's own hypertension, to recognize when that moment is that's best suited, and when the shift needs to happen." Ann Hoewing

"One of the learnings is to continue sharpening one's ability for distinguishing between what is picked up from being here that is about the process field, and what is not about the process field, but is about myself." Finn Voldtofte

„If I'm not clear on what to do, or people are seemingly in conflict; I just pray that the highest good would be revealed, and try to get my ego out of the way by doing that. So, this prayer will be going on inside of me at the same time someone else in the room is talking, or maybe even while I am talking." Diana Whitney