Cultivating personal leadership capacities to facilitate collaboration in Strategic Sustainable Development

Towards an authentic approach to facilitation

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Abstract:
The complex, multi-faceted sustainability challenge that society faces calls for a strategic approach to sustainable development. Strategic planning processes towards sustainability in organisations and communities are oftentimes led by a facilitator or facilitative leader. We argue that planning processes of complex and transformational change call for collaboration among stakeholders and for highly skilled facilitative leaders who are committed to the development of self, others and society. This thesis explores the ‘interior state’ of facilitative leaders as a high leverage point in moving society towards sustainability. We identify nine personal capacities that enable leaders to facilitate collaboration in Strategic Sustainable Development: (1) Being Present, (2) Whole Self-Awareness, (3) Suspension & Letting Go, (4) Compassion, (5) Intention Aligned with Higher Purpose, (6) Whole System Awareness, (7) Personal Power, (8) Sense of Humour, and (9) Holding Dualities and Paradoxes. We identify a range of personal and collective practices that help develop these personal capacities. We propose these capacities are the foundation for a more holistic and authentic facilitation approach applied to strategic sustainable development.

Keywords: facilitation, collaboration, personal capacities, personal development, leadership development, personal mastery, practices, Strategic Sustainable Development, authentic leadership
Statement of Collaboration

Our thesis was a collaborative process based upon each of our personal interest in developing ourselves both personally and professionally. We spent many hours in dialogue scoping our subject matter and taking a journey together that inspired each of us.

We were all intrigued during a webinar by Otto Scharmer, his book Theory U, and the quote by Bill O’Brien stating, “the quality of an intervention is dependent upon the interior state of the intervener” (Scharmer 2007a, 7). We wanted to explore how to personally master our own interior dimensions, as well as informing other interested parties about leveraging ourselves to effectively engage others in complex, transformational change towards sustainability.

Phil’s background in management consultancy and organisational change management gave him a deep appreciation of the limitations of top-down change initiatives in organisations. Since working in sustainability change, the need for new ways of engaging people in facilitated processes which harnesses collective intelligence became a passion, and he began a journey of embodying this through experiential learning in eco-literacy, deep ecology and relational practice.

Christopher’s interdisciplinary background encompassing development studies, global climate governance, communication, and sociology, helped in structuring big picture questions, and brought a strong analytical component to the table. His strong personal interest in the U-process and the interior dimensions of leadership provided a powerful motivation to dive deeper into the topic of authentic leadership.

Dana’s background, with a master’s degree in clinical psychology, gave her insight into the lifelong journey of self-discovery, group dynamics and the shadow work behind personal growth. Her knowledge about energy work through Reiki, flower essences, animal behaviour practice and facilitated group work gave her the ability to understand the less cognitively articulated connections in the research area.
The literature review was completed efficiently by all of us. We divided up readings alphabetically and then we all read the most important documents discovered.

Each person in the thesis team contributed to selecting research participants and each of us conducted the interviews. We all wrote the content of the thesis and each member edited the entire document. A dialogue ensued for each important element in the thesis to collaborate ideas through a co-learning and co-creative process to reach conclusions. All of us participated in two Art of Hosting trainings and attended the ALIA Europe 2011 training and retreat in the Netherlands, which brought us in touch with a rich group of experienced leaders and practitioners.

The thesis process was challenging and highly rewarding. It helped us accomplish our goals of personal and professional development. We truly feel honoured to have worked on this topic together and grow ourselves, in our relationships and in our ability to leverage the most important tool in our work: our selves. Working with the topic of personal capacities and practices enormously helped develop our own self-awareness around developing the personal capacities needed in order to do the work we want to do in this world.

Karlskrona, June 2011,

Christopher Baan

Phil Long

Dana Pearlman
Executive Summary

Introduction
Today, human society is facing a systemic and complex sustainability challenge, manifested in many interdependent crises, including biodiversity loss, climate change, top soil erosion, deforestation and desertification, rising food prices, and resource scarcity (Meadows et al., 1992; Steffen et al. 2004), socio-economic imbalances (Jackson 2009), enormous public health challenges, conflict, decreasing social trust and social capital (Putnam 1995) and institutional failure (Scharmer 2007a).

Strategic Sustainable Development (SSD) provides a solid and functional definition of sustainability based on scientific consensus (Ny et al. 2006). This definition enables organisations and communities to operationalise sustainability in their own context. SSD provides a number of core concepts that clearly articulate the challenges we are facing as society and how to strategically move toward sustainability. This process oftentimes calls for facilitators that can engage groups in a collaborative manner.

We argue that application of an SSD approach calls for both:

1. Group engagement processes based on dialogue that engage multiple perspectives from stakeholders and collaboratively builds group intention and cohesion towards a shared vision of success (Senge 1990; Hassan 2006; Scharmer 2007a; Carstedt 2010; Cuginotti 2010; Robèrt et al. 2010).

2. Highly skilled and experienced facilitators or leaders who are committed to the development of self (personal mastery), others and that of society; and who are able to guide groups through a collaborative process (Dunphy et al 2003; Jenkins et al 2006; Scharmer 2007a) that engages with a group’s ‘collective intelligence’ (Pór 1995; Frieze et al. 2010; Woolf et al. 2010) and create lasting results that have ownership among relevant stakeholders.

We contend the continuous mastery of personal capacities is a foundational component to facilitators who effectively and holistically lead change towards sustainability.
Guided by Bill O’Brien’s argument that “the quality of an intervention is dependent on the interior state of the intervener” (Scharmer 2007a, 7), the assumption behind our research is that a facilitator’s ‘personal capacities’ are as important as the process and content (e.g. guiding the group with clear methods and processes). We also argue that personal capacities of facilitative leaders can be developed through personal practice, exercise and experience (Cabeza-Eriksson et al. 2008; Woolf et al. 2010; Szpakowski 2010). They are not learnt directly in the way process or action-oriented skills may be; rather, they are attained through repetition and intention. The simplest definition of ‘practice’ is “to do (something) repeatedly to acquire or polish a skill” (Szpakowski 2010). This leads to our research questions:

**Research Question 1**: What personal capacities enable leaders to facilitate co-learning and co-creation in Strategic Sustainable Development?

**Research Question 2**: What personal and collective practices do facilitators do to develop their personal capacities?

**Methods**

In order to triangulate the research findings, we used a variety of methods (survey, interviews, literature review, and personal experience and deduction) to seek evidence from multiple individuals (33 facilitative leaders working with complex, transformational change). Specifically, we felt a review of fields including authentic leadership, organisational development and personal leadership development would contribute to an understanding of facilitative leaders’ personal capacities working within the field of SSD. The literature review and reflecting on our own personal experiences resulted in a first conceptual model listing seven personal capacities.

We interviewed an expert panel of eight facilitative leaders to assess if the capacities in the conceptual model were useful in their work, how they would describe the capacity, how they develop the capacity, and if there were any capacities missing from the conceptual model that were essential to their work. We then used surveys and interviews with another 25 facilitative leaders in the field to determine what personal and collective practices they engage in to develop their personal leadership capacities.
Conceptual model
Seven personal capacities were identified in our literature review as being important to facilitate group collaboration processes, listed in Table I.1

Results
The personal capacities were considered essential to the work in 55 out of 56 responses. While the nuances and personal descriptions of the capacities varied from person to person, there were many practices that repeatedly came up as essential and correlated with specific practices. Common practice areas included various types of meditation, working with peers and mentors for feedback and in dialogue, and movement practices. The personal capacities were refined in their description (see Table I.1).

Table I.1: Personal capacities of facilitators employing group collaboration in Strategic Sustainable Development.

<table>
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<th>Personal capacities</th>
<th>Brief description</th>
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<td><strong>Being Present</strong></td>
<td>Being fully aware and awake in the present moment – physically, mentally, and spiritually. This includes connecting oneself to others, the environment and circumstances.</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Whole Self-Awareness</strong></td>
<td>The continual lifelong process of paying attention to knowing oneself; it involves consciously and intentionally observing various dimensions of the self (including the body, mind, senses, emotional and spiritual realms). It is the capacity to observe how one is thinking, relating, feeling, sensing and judging. Self-Awareness includes perceptions beyond cognition, such as intuition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suspension &amp; Letting Go</strong></td>
<td>The ability to actively experience and observe a thought, assumption, judgment, habitual pattern, emotion or sensation like fear, confusion and conflict and then refraining from immediately reacting or responding to the situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Compassion</strong></td>
<td>The continual act of having unconditional acceptance and kindness toward all the dimensions of oneself and others, regardless of circumstance. Compassion involves the ability to reflect upon oneself and others without judgment, but with recognition and trust that others are doing the best that they can in any given situation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Intention Aligned with Higher Purpose** | Aligning one's authentic nature with the natural order in the world. This alignment trickles down to all facets of life including our personal, professional and spiritual dimensions. “Where your deepest personal passion and the world’s greatest needs
align, there is opportunity” (Senge 2011b). Embodying this capacity helps one embrace the unknown with profound trust.

| **Whole System Awareness** | The capacity to quickly switch between different perspectives, scales and worldviews to see the big picture, interconnections within the system, and being able to scale down to small details. Whole System Awareness is not just perceiving the system cognitively, but sensing it. It is also understanding everything is interconnected within a system. |
| **Personal Power** | The ability to use one’s energy and drive to manifest wise actions in the world for the greater good, while being aware of one’s influences on a situation. It includes the ability to face one’s fears with courage and to persevere during difficulty. |

**Discussion**

Descriptions and nuances of the personal capacities are provided, as well as an elaboration on their relevance in SSD facilitation. Two personal capacities that were considered essential among a majority of expert panel members, were added to the conceptual model: (1) a Sense of Humour, and (2) Dealing with Dualities and Paradoxes.

Furthermore, the research revealed that when people engage in practice it is not so much what one does, but how one does it; it’s the quality of consciousness and intention that one brings to the practice that determines the outcome and development of the personal capacities.

**Conclusion**

Through personal development, SSD facilitative leaders are more able to utilise hindsight, hold multiple worldviews, and sit with current reality while simultaneously aiming toward a desired future. The adaptability achieved by facilitators honing these capacities, we argue, lends itself to enhancing SSD collaborative group processes and outcomes.

The personal capacities identified in this thesis by their very nature cannot be learnt only on a cognitive level; they must be embodied. Our research has shown that one path to the embodiment of these capacities is through personal and collective practice. The implication of this is clear: as one respondent put it, “no real transformation can take place without personal and collective practice” (Møller 2011). In addition to the personal
capacities identified in this research we found conditions for success for developing personal capacities through practice:

- A combination of personal and collective practice is a one pathway to the development of personal capacities;
- A combination of contemplative, physical and spiritual practices helps people align body, mind and spirit, in order to maximise personal development; and
- Integration of practices in one’s personal and professional life helps one take the learning from the practice back into the facilitation process.

And three conditions of success for practices:

- The practice must have a mirroring quality, to help the participants observe themselves;
- The practice has to provide ‘a container you can’t manipulate’ with structures that are adhered to;
- The quality of one’s personal attention in the practice is more important than the type of practice performed; and
- The practice must be something one is willing to do repetitively.

Facilitative leaders bringing their authentic selves into the SSD engagement process, we argue, would benefit engagement outcomes. However, it is not enough in order to successfully address the sustainability challenge. One must have the ability to plan in a strategic manner that is in within the confines of the Earth’s carrying capacity. The sustainability principles introduced in the main paper define such boundary conditions. Combining an authentic and holistic approach along with an SSD structure, we contend, will benefit collaborative engagement processes and outcomes that help move society toward sustainability.

Key research outcomes are summarised in a Practice Guide for Authentic Leadership for SSD that includes reflective questions, principles, and practices to develop one’s personal leadership capacities, including references to further reading and practice.
Acknowledgements

We have learned a great deal about group dynamics, one another and ourselves through our collaboratively conspired thesis. We are forever grateful to the many people that supported our research, our personal development including our familial support that was extended to us that ultimately helped us complete our Masters’ degrees.

First, we want to thank BTH staff, including our advisors Andre Benaim, Brendan Moore for their guidance and constructive criticism along the way. Their input on our thesis was invaluable and helped us frame our research in a succinct manner. Also thank you Tamara Connell for your support and insights.

We also want to give gratitude to our precious classmates and colleagues of MSLS. They have provided us with the essence of community, by being supportive, brilliant and loving. Thank you from the depths of our hearts.

The participants in our research gave us inspiration and the deeper understanding of self-development and personal practices we set out to discover. They include the expert panel and the facilitative leaders that graciously gave us their time and presence wholeheartedly. Although many respondents remained anonymous, the expert panel includes:

Martin Kalungu-Banda, Co-Faculty at the University of Cambridge Programme for Sustainability Leadership and Organisation and Leadership Development Consultant for the Presencing Institute; former Special Advisor to President of Zambia.

Ágota Ruzsa, Chair at Society of Organisational Learning in Hungary. She is a Bohmian Dialogue and Systems Constellations Practitioner. Ágota facilitates groups with systems thinking and mindful presence to raise consciousness among participants.

Tim Merry, Co-founder of the Shire and founded the non-profit organisation Split Rock Learning Centre for youth. Tim engages in participatory processes with Art of Hosting community and the Berkana Institute.
Toke Paludan Møller, Co-Founder of InterChange in Denmark, Art of Hosting Community of Practice. In Toke’s own words, “I choose consciously to co-create, co-learn and co-operate with bold people, leaders, companies and organisations that want to explore and take responsibility for the needs and possibilities at this time both in global and local contexts.”

Monica Nissén, Co-Founder of InterChange in Denmark, Art of Hosting Community of Practice. Monica guides dialogue based, participatory processes, engaging larger groups of people in co-creating solutions and strategies for the future they want.

Frank Heckman, Owner of Spirit in Action. Frank designs interventions around complex issues helping organizations/communities, unions and government agencies to think and act as ‘open systems’ and boost their social capital, resulting in better outcomes.

Peter Merry, Director at the Hague Centre for Global Governance, Innovation and Emergence in the Netherlands. Peter is an Evolutionary Change Facilitation and Spiral Dynamics/Integral Practitioner. “My purpose is to facilitate evolution in the personal, cultural and organisational sectors. Given that the Universe is an interconnected and evolving whole, the Work is to align ourselves as that.”

Hein Dijksterhuis, Owner of CORDES Leadership and Change Consultants, Founder and Partner at UNOO, Member of the Presencing Institute and Partner at Global Leadership Network. Hein has a Masters degree in Clinical Psychology and designs and leads processes and breakthrough events to facilitate corporate and societal transformation within and between individuals, teams & organisations.

Thank you all for enriching us and sharing yourselves.

Christopher Baan

Phil Long

Dana Pearlman
Glossary

ABCD Process: A four step planning process used to help organisations and communities move toward sustainability, utilising backcasting. It includes the following steps:
A) Systems Awareness and creating a shared vision of success based on the organisation’s vision and four sustainability principles;
B) Assessing the organisation’s Current Reality;
C) Brainstorming compelling measures to move from current reality towards the shared vision;
D) Prioritising measures based on certain strategic planning prioritisation principles (Ny et al. 2006).

Art of Hosting: a global community of practitioners using participatory processes and planning tools to engage groups in meaningful conversations, deliberate collaboration, and group-supported action around complex topics. It is an approach for deepening competency and confidence in hosting group processes utilising tools such as Circle, World Café and Open Space, among others (Woolf et al. 2010).

Authenticity: being true, open and honest about who you are.

Backcasting: a planning method in which participants first build a shared vision of success in the future, and then steps are planned and taken to work towards that future.

Backcasting from Sustainability Principles utilises a shared vision of success aligned with the four sustainability principles, which can be planned towards in a strategic step-by-step manner (Holmberg & Robert 2000).

Basic (human) goodness: the assumption that if people are stripped bare and reintegrate (rather than deny) their shadows, there is goodness, there is an individual desire in everyone to want the best for themselves and for others and to move beyond basic human needs and to help people reach their fullest potential.

Co-Learning and Co-Creation: people collaborating and learning together and sharing their collective wisdom for innovative resolutions to new ideas, products or solutions to problems. Co-learning and co-creation is used synonymously with collective learning- and decision-making processes, which are a key part of strategic planning processes towards sustainability.
Collective Intelligence: a collective process of learning, understanding and using new knowledge gained from group interaction. When facilitated successfully, the intelligence within the group is greater than the individuals in the group.

Collective Learning- and Decision-Making Process: see co-learning and co-creation.

Collaboration: groups working together and sharing knowledge to achieve a common goal.

Compassion: having unconditional acceptance and kindness toward yourself and other sentient beings.

Embodiment: the process of reintegrating the imaginary separation between body and mind, especially applied in physical theatre practice (Wikipedia 2011) and theatre improvisation (Hayashi 2011). A similar notion includes embodiment as ‘a way to synchronise the energy of the body, speech and mind with emotions and intuition, thus increasing our capacity for somatic intelligence, discriminating wisdom and unconditional love’ (Palmer 2011b).

Facilitative leaders: these include facilitators who find themselves in leadership roles. Facilitative leadership is less about persuasion, influence or top-down decision-making, and more about creating a space in which groups can co-learn and co-create new solutions.

Five Level Framework: an approach to structure information to help planning in complex systems by clarifying the distinctions and interrelationships between the elements of strategic planning (Robèrt et al. 2002).

Funnel Metaphor: illustrates how systematically increasing demand for resources and biosphere services (‘draw-down’) is exceeding the earth’s carrying capacity (Robèrt 2000).

Intention Aligned with Higher Purpose is the capacity to connect to and manifest your deepest passions or inspirations with what is needed most in the world.

Personal Capacities: qualities of ‘being’, which can be developed through experience and practice, and can be the source from which our actions flow. Alternative notions with a similar meaning are interior states (Scharmer 2007a), inner dispositions, or qualities.

Practice: “to do repeatedly to acquire or polish a skill” (Szpapowski 2010).

Personal Power The active ability to use your energy and drive to manifest actions with intention in the world for the greater good.
**Self-Awareness**: see Whole Self-Awareness

**Strategic Sustainable Development** enables consensus as to where society (and organisations/communities) should be heading, so the gap to becoming sustainable can be identified, and thus enable people to be strategic about bridging that gap.

**Suspension and Letting Go**: the capacity to experience an emotion, sensation or thought (a judgment) and actively allow a gap between the experience and labelling the experience (and putting it aside)

**Sustainability Principles**: a principle-based, operational definition of sustainability. ‘In a sustainable society, nature is not subject to systematically increasing

… concentrations of substances from the earth's crust (SP1)

…. concentrations of substances produced by society (SP2)

… degradation by physical means (SP3)

and, in that society,

… people are not subject to conditions that systemically undermine their capacity to meet their needs (SP4) (Ny et al. 2006, 64).

**Upstream Thinking**: addressing the root cause of problems rather than the symptoms. One of the benefits of using upstream thinking is that ‘complexity is kept low as far as possible without losing comprehension of the whole system’ (Broman et al. 2000, 5).

**Whole Self-Awareness**: The continual lifelong process of paying attention to knowing oneself; it involves consciously and intentionally observing various dimensions of the self (including the body, mind, senses, emotional and spiritual realms). It is the capacity to observe how one is thinking, relating, feeling, sensing and judging. Self-Awareness includes perceptions beyond cognition, such as intuition.

**Whole System Awareness**: The capacity to quickly switch between different perspectives, scales and worldviews to see the big picture, interconnections within the system, and being able to scale down to small details. Whole System Awareness is not just perceiving the system cognitively, but sensing it. It is also understanding everything is interconnected within a system.
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1 Introduction

This thesis explores personal capacity building that supports facilitative leaders engaged in complex and transformational change in organisations and communities. We argue that personal capacity development improves facilitation of collaborative engagement processes in Strategic Sustainable Development (SSD). Our focus is on developing the ‘interior state’ of facilitative leaders using SSD, as a foundational component to help move society towards sustainability. Specifically, we research what personal capacities are most helpful to SSD facilitators and what personal and collective practices support in their development.

1.1 The Sustainability Challenge

Today, human society is facing a systemic and complex sustainability challenge, manifested in many interdependent crises, including biodiversity loss, climate change, top soil erosion, deforestation and desertification, rising food prices, and resource scarcity (Meadows et al., 1992; Steffen et al. 2004) and socio-economic imbalances (Jackson 2009), enormous public health challenges, conflict, decreasing social trust and social capital (Putnam 1995) and institutional failure (Scharmer 2007a).

There have been many different definitions characterising the sustainability challenge and the need to move towards a sustainable society. A widely used definition coined by the Brundtland Commission explains sustainable development as meeting “the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs” (WCED 1987, 43). This definition has created wide consensus around what a sustainable society would be. However, in order to combat these complex challenges on an organisational level, a strategic approach is essential. One way of dealing with this complex challenge is through a Strategic sustainable development approach.

Strategic Sustainable Development (SSD) provides a solid and functional definition of sustainability based on scientific consensus (Ny et al. 2006). This definition enables organisations and communities to operationalise sustainability in their own context. SSD provides a number of core
concepts that clearly articulate the challenges we are facing as society and how to strategically move toward sustainability.

The ‘funnel metaphor’ (see Figure 1.2) illustrates how continually increasing demand for resources and eco-system services is exceeding the environment’s capacity (Robèrt et al. 2000). It paints a picture of declining eco-system services and systematically increasing human population growth coupled with growing intensity of socio-economic activity as shaping our sustainability challenge. The sustainability challenge is illustrated by the narrowing walls of the funnel, and eventually ‘hitting the walls of the funnel’. Room for manoeuvre is becoming increasingly limited as society moves deeper into the funnel. The challenge, therefore, is to navigate, and actively ‘open the walls’ of the funnel by not systematically compromising our environment’s carrying capacity, while supporting human development.

*Figure 1.1: The Funnel metaphor to visualise the sustainability challenge*

**1.2 A strategic approach to addressing the sustainability challenge**

**1.2.1 The sustainability principles**

An SSD approach on an organisational level articulates success in moving society toward sustainability by creating a future vision of the organisation based upon four principles. These principles are compared to the organisation’s current operating reality, to identify their gap to becoming sustainable. Understanding this gap enables organisations to be strategic
about planning toward sustainability. These principles, informed by the laws of thermodynamics, systems thinking and ‘thinking upstream’ (Broman et al. 2000), are defined as four ‘sustainability principles’:

“In a sustainable society, nature is not subject to systematically increasing … concentrations of substances from the Earth’s crust (SP1) … concentrations of substances produced by society (SP2) … degradation by physical means (SP3) and, in that society, … people are not subject to conditions that systemically undermine their capacity to meet their needs (SP4)” (Ny et al. 2006, 64).

1.2.2 The Five Level Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development

The sustainability principles are often applied as part of a ‘five level framework’ for planning in complex systems, called the Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development (FSSD; see Figure 1.3) (Robèrt et al. 2002). The FSSD is used to bring clarity, rigour and insight to help planning and decision-making in any organisation or community moving strategically towards sustainability. The FSSD provides a common language for sustainability for a diversity of stakeholders, and it stimulates dialogue across boundaries within and across organisations and sectors.

![Figure 1.2.2: The Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development](chart.png)
1.2.3 Backcasting and the strategic planning process

Up to today, hundreds of organisations have successfully applied the FSSD to strategically plan towards sustainability, mainly by consulting with the international non-profit organisation The Natural Step (TNS 2011). In order to create a sustainable society, organisations cannot continue violating the four sustainability principles. Therefore, a central process element in strategic planning towards sustainability is ‘backcasting’. Backcasting implies planning from a desired future and making strategic steps now that help an organisation get to the desired outcome. In the FSSD, backcasting is done from a shared vision of success that is defined by compliance with the four sustainability principles (Holmberg & Robert 2000). Backcasting is particularly useful when:

- “The problem to be studied is complex
- There is a need for major change
- Dominant trends are part of the problem
- The problem to a great extent is a matter of externalities
- The scope is wide enough and the time horizon long enough to leave considerable room for deliberate choice” (Dreborg 1996, 816).

When planning for sustainability in organisations and communities, backcasting is at the heart of the SSD strategic planning methodology. A widely used method to implement backcasting from sustainability principles is a four-step process, referred to as the ABCD process:

1. A-Step: Building capacity around sustainability literacy, building systems awareness and creating a vision of success based on the organisation’s vision aligned with the four sustainability principles;
2. B-Step: Current reality assessment;
3. C-Step: Brainstorming compelling measures to move from current reality towards the vision;
4. D-Step: Deciding which measures to prioritise, based upon certain prioritisation questions (Ny et al. 2006).

Oftentimes, in SSD facilitators lead groups through an ABCD strategic planning processes in organisations or communities. Generally, a facilitator
uses group collaboration and engagement to help create new solutions and approaches. It is these facilitators our thesis focuses upon to provide insight on how to develop their personal capacities.

1.3 Group Collaboration for Complex Transformational Change in SSD

The growing global complex sustainability challenge that society is facing today calls for facilitators and leaders that are adept at engaging groups in a collaborative manner. Group collaboration processes enable people to develop an ability to see the larger picture beyond individual perspectives in order to support complex planning and decision-making. Through this type of learning, people are able to create results they truly want (Senge 1990). These multi-stakeholder collaborative engagement processes include people learning from each other, with each other, and is a cornerstone in organisational learning theory (Senge 1990). It relates to the notion of ‘team learning’ (ibid) and the process of unearthing a group’s ‘collective intelligence’ (Pór 1995), the idea that in collective learning or collaboration, the intelligence of a group is greater than any individual.

Through these group engagements, complex problems are seen more holistically through a wider stakeholder perspective. The sustainability challenge is complex; impacts and outcomes are not predictable due to non-linear interactions between parts within the system. In other words, we cannot foresee how social, environmental and economic modifications will affect the system. Therefore, the wider stakeholder perspective obtained in a system, the more holistically a system can be perceived. We argue that in order to engage groups, SSD facilitators that are adaptive and create an environment conducive for collaboration will be more effective dealing with complexity (Brown 2011) and therefore in helping move society toward sustainability. We believe facilitators equipped with personal mastery will increase their depth at engaging group processes with a more holistic understanding of self, others and society. Therefore capacity building that develops deeper and more holistic perspectives in facilitative leaders is paramount.

Collaboration in this thesis is used synonymously with co-learning and co-creation. This shifts the emphasis from a goal defined outside of the system
by an ‘expert,’ to one which is developed collaboratively by stakeholders within the system, in a social learning process that builds collective engagement towards a meaningful common goal (Cuginotti 2010). In SSD this common goal consists of an organisation’s shared vision of success aligned with the four sustainability principles.

We argue that application of an SSD approach calls for:

1. Group engagement processes based on dialogue that engage multiple perspectives from stakeholders and collaboratively builds group intention and cohesion towards a shared vision of success (Senge 1990; Hassan 2006; Scharmer 2007a; Carstedt 2010; Cuginotti 2010; Robèrt et al. 2010).

2. Highly skilled and experienced facilitators or leaders who are committed to the development of self (personal mastery), others and society; and who are able to guide groups through a collective learning and decision-making process (Dunphy et al. 2003; Jenkins et al. 2006; Scharmer 2007a). Well-acknowledged in the literature is the need for facilitative leaders that can facilitate co-learning and co-creation in organisations and communities, knowing how to unearth ‘collective intelligence’ in a group (Pör 1995; Frieze et al. 2010; Woolf et al. 2010) and create lasting results that have ownership among the relevant stakeholders. This new paradigm of facilitative leadership is a response to the increasing complexity of global society, the intensifying sustainability challenge, and the changing nature of organisations (Wheatly 1992; Jenkins et al. 2006; Scharmer 2007a; Barrett 2010; Carstedt 2010).

We see both of the items mentioned above as intimately connected and highly essential. Group engagement is an important element in strategic planning processes towards sustainability, and it is the focus of recent and on-going research (Cuginotti 2010; Cretney et al. 2011). However, our research focuses on facilitators’ personal mastery that supports their ability to guide teams through complex, transformational change towards sustainability.

Facilitators or facilitator teams are instrumental in leading a group or organisation through collective learning and decision-making processes towards sustainability, thereby practicing a form of collaborative
leadership. In this thesis, we refer to facilitators and leaders as ‘facilitative leaders’. We use the term facilitative leader to include “facilitators who find themselves in leadership roles” (Jenkins & Jenkins 2006, 1).

Facilitative leadership is not about making people do things, but rather enabling them to collaborate and create new solutions. This type of leadership is less about persuasion, influence or top-down decision-making, but rather about creating an environment where groups can co-learn and co-create and develop a holistic perspective.

The challenge for facilitative leaders is not only being ‘SSD-literate’ and guiding teams through a collective learning and decision-making process to achieve deep and long-lasting commitment from teams. Facilitators must also excel at engaging people in “questions that challenge current experiences and assumptions while evoking new possibilities for collective discovery” (Senge et al. 2001).

1.4 Personal capacities for facilitative leadership in SSD

“The great turn needed to reverse problems like climate change and the growing gap between rich and poor is none other than the one that we can accomplish in our own ways of thinking and living together. I believe much of the discouragement and fear that pervades our world today comes from not seeing this connection between the outer circumstances of our world and our inner landscape. Once we have seen it, however, our core work becomes clear. We must bring our outer and inner change strategies into ever-greater alignment” (Senge 2011a).

We contend the continuous mastery of personal capacities is a foundational component to facilitators leading change towards sustainability. The facilitation literature focuses either on (a) the effective use of group processes, tools and techniques (Chambers 2002; Brown et al. 2005), or (b) competencies and skills related to activities performed within the group process (Schwarz 2005). A parallel line of thought argues that the effectiveness of a facilitative leader is determined not only by the skills, techniques, or processes used but also through personal mastery (Senge
A great deal of literature on leadership and facilitation focuses on ‘how to do things, how to communicate, how to lead, how to give feedback, and how to motivate’ (Jenkins et al. 2006, 15). The focus of our research however, is not on leadership traits, skills or personality characteristics (see Dunphy et al. 2003, 298). Our research inquiry is not about the ‘how to’ facilitate but about what happens inside the facilitative leader – ‘what and how a leader thinks and decides, and how he or she is a whole person’ (Jenkins et al. 2006, 15).

Guided by Bill O’Brien’s argument that ‘the quality of an intervention is dependent on the interior state of the intervener’ (Scharmer 2007a, 7), the assumption behind our research is that a facilitator’s ‘personal capacities’ are as important as the process and content (e.g. guiding the group with clear methods and processes). Here, we define ‘personal capacities’ as qualities of ‘being’, and can be the source from which our actions flow. Alternative notions with a similar meaning are interior states (Scharmer 2007a), inner dispositions, or qualities. Personal capacities of facilitative leaders, we claim, are developed through practice, exercise and experience (Cabeza-Eriksson et al. 2008; Woolf et al. 2010; Szpakowski 2010; Scharmer 2007a). They are not learnt directly in the way that process or action-oriented skills may be; rather, they are attained through repetition and intention. The role of ‘practice’ in developing these capacities is of interest to our research. The simplest definition of ‘practice’ is “to do (something) repeatedly to acquire or polish a skill” (Szpakowski 2010).

Various authors support this argument and have identified (variously-termed and differently interpreted) personal capacities that are instrumental in facilitation. We drafted a conceptual model in our research (see Methods chapter) to determine personal capacities used by facilitative leaders in the field. The literature includes the following capacities, among others:

**Presence**
Being attentive and intentional with what is happening in the current moment (Senge et al. 2004; Hunter et al. 1995 in Thomas 2006; Scharmer 2007a; Jenkins et al. 2006; Woolf et al. 2010)

Confidence, Trustworthiness Having faith in how outcomes develop (Ghais 2005 in Thomas 2006; Mase 2010)

Awareness Being conscious of circumstances (Schley 2011; Scharmer 2007a; Hay 2005; Mase 2010)

Detachment Letting go of being in control (Jenkins et al. 2006)

Engagement Collaborating with others (Jenkins et al. 2006)

Sense of wonder Being curious and open to something new (Jenkins et al. 2006)

Intentionality Having focus on a desired outcome (Jenkins et al. 2006); Purpose of helping others beyond self-interest (Harman 1996);

Service to something greater Purpose of helping others beyond self-interest (Harman 1996);

Empathy Resonating with another’s circumstances (Thomas 2006)


Emotional intelligence Being aware of and validating one’s own emotions and others emotions (Goleman 1995)

Our research seeks to identify personal and collective practices that support the development of personal capacities influenced by the capacities outlined above.

1.5 Purpose of this research

In summary, the role of the facilitative leader or facilitation team affects the outcome of collaborative processes in SSD. The main aim of the research is to identify practices that support the development of personal capacities that are helpful to facilitative leaders working in sustainability. On a practical level this research is of value to anyone shaping a facilitation team for an SSD engagement process, and more broadly to facilitative leaders guiding complex and transformational change. This leads us to the following two research questions:
1.6 Research Questions

Research Question 1: What personal capacities enable leaders to facilitate co-learning and co-creation in Strategic Sustainable Development?

Research Question 2: What personal and collective practices do facilitative leaders use to develop their personal capacities?

1.7 Scope and Limitations

The scope of our research does not include skills or personality characteristics of facilitative leaders, as mentioned earlier. The scope of this research is limited to identifying personal capacities (‘interior states’ or inner dispositions) of facilitative leaders engaging in complex, transformational and collaborative group processes as well as the practices that develop those capacities.

Recent research has addressed specific competences of sustainability leaders with complex worldviews (Brown 2011), looking at sustainability leadership from a constructive-developmental perspective. Although this is considered highly valuable research with profound consequences for leadership development, our research does not include a similar theoretical framework of adult development. However, it can be argued that the personal capacities identified in our research, in their most mature stage, most likely apply to sustainability leaders with complex worldviews (Brown 2011).
2 Methods

2.1 Model for Qualitative Research Design

The methods chosen for the research were informed by Maxwell’s qualitative research design (Maxwell 2005), to remain flexible throughout the research design process. The research design that we created allowed us to make necessary changes based upon occurrences during the research process, while also providing the structure that helped us plan and implement our methods. All the while, the design helped us reach a conclusion successfully and efficiently in an iterative process. The research design included five phases as depicted in the diagram below (Figure 2.1):

Figure 2.1: Five research phases

In order to triangulate the research findings, we used a variety of methods (survey, interviews, literature review, and personal experience and deduction) to seek evidence from multiple individuals (35 participants).

2.2 Development of Conceptual Model 1

Based upon the personal capacities discovered in the literature review (see Appendix A), exploratory interviews with field experts, and our personal experiences, we developed a conceptual model (draft 1) of personal capacities (see Appendix C). This approach helped us synthesise personal capacities in the literature. In order to select the capacities deemed most helpful to facilitative leaders, we discussed the reviewed literature, the personal capacities found, and we categorised overlapping capacities.

2.3 Expert Panel (RQ 1 and 2)

The second research phase consisted of interviews with an expert panel of 8 facilitative leaders to assess if the personal capacities identified in
Appendix A were useful in their work and what personal capacities were missing from the conceptual model to answer research question 1. After two interviews, we did an intermediate refinement of the conceptual model (draft 2) and used this in the remaining 6 expert panel interviews. Secondly, the expert panel was asked how they develop the specific capacities, in order to help answer research question 2.

2.3.1 Sample Selection

The expert panel consisted of 8 highly experienced facilitative leaders working with or part of the following groups: Presencing Institute, Art of Hosting, ALIA (Authentic Leadership in Action), Society for Organisational Learning and the Berkana Institute (see Appendix B for expert panel profiles).

Selection criteria for the expert panel ensured they had:

- Facilitated groups for a minimum of 10 years;
- Focused upon the development of self, others and society;
- Performed co-creative group engagement processes to solve complex, large-scale problems using approaches like systems thinking;
- Developed rapport with us prior to the interview process through a rapport-building interview in person or through Skype.

An information package (see Appendix C) was delivered in advance to the expert panel in order for them to be clear about the specific content of the interview, provide enough time for the panel interviewees to reflect upon the material and write any reflections in preparation to the interview. The information package contained definitions and clarifying quotes.

2.3.2 Interview Design

The expert panel package (Appendix C) contained an illustration of the conceptual model, definitions of personal capacities in the model and questions for reflection during the interview regarding:

- What capacities were useful in their work;
- How they would define the capacity;
- How they developed the capacity themselves; and
• What capacities were missing from the conceptual model.

All interviews were audio recorded with permission of the participant and transcribed. Expert panel dialogue interviews were approximately 1 hour and scheduled as follows:
• Five minutes of introduction including research questions and check-in on why the participant was volunteering for the research;
• Reflection and reviewing answers and critique on the conceptual model package;
• Feedback and additional comments; and Closing.

2.4 Development of Conceptual Model 2

The expert panel interview results were analysed in an iterative fashion. We discussed the expert panel responses with a focus upon what capacities are useful in the respondent’s work and what capacities were missing from the conceptual model 1. We used the revised conceptual model to build the base for the second group surveys and interviews.

2.5 Second group survey and interviews (RQ2)

The fourth research phase consisted of a combined online survey and interviews with an additional 25 facilitative leaders in the field, in order to help answer research question 2; here we explored practices that support the development of personal capacities. An interview followed the survey.

2.5.1 Sample selection

We invited facilitative leaders we met during Art of Hosting and ALIA trainings, to the research based upon experiences we had with them. We built rapport with them through in-person meetings, during Skype conversations or during workshops. In addition, other facilitative leaders were solicited from various platforms such as LinkedIn groups for sustainability and leadership, an online members community of the Presenceing Institute, the ALIA website and the Art of Hosting platform to participate in the research. Participants were given an online survey to
complete, followed up by an interview to discuss the answers in the completed survey. See Appendix B for a listing of the sample of interviewees.

2.5.2 Survey and interview design

A pre-interview survey asked participants about their personal practices that support their personal development in order to explore research question 2. Objectives of the interview were to identify: (1) personal practices used by interviewees described in detail; and (2) a correlation between practices and specific personal capacity development. The survey included a comprehensive, structured list of practice areas as well as free-text entry to enable respondents to add additional practice areas and elaborate more richly on the nature of their practice (See Appendix D for an overview of the survey carried out). The survey was referred to during the interview for elaboration upon personal practices and how the practices correlate to personal capacities in conceptual model 2. All interviews were recorded with participant approval.

2.5.3 Analysis

Recordings were re-played alongside the interview transcripts to ensure accuracy of the data recorded. We compared all responses on practices described by participants during the interviews. The interview transcripts were coded with implicitly or explicitly stated correlations between practices and capacities. All three authors analysed the data separately, and then organised the listed practices into two categories:
1. Practices linked to the development of specific personal capacities listed in conceptual model 2; and
2. Practices linked to the development of personal capacities not listed within the conceptual model.

2.6 Expected Results

We expected to find out what personal capacities facilitative leaders find useful in their work and how they develop those capacities. Furthermore, we expected to find a correlation between certain practices and personal capacities.
3 Results

A literature review and synthesis of specific personal capacities mentioned resulted (see Appendix A for an overview of theoretical foundations and an initial conceptual model) resulted in a \(2^\text{nd}\) conceptual model with seven personal capacities, illustrated in Figure 3.1 and listed in Table 3.1.

![Figure 3.1: Seven personal leadership capacities to facilitate co-learning and co-creation in SSD](image)

After implementing the methods described in the previous chapter, the results consist of (1) a critique of the conceptual model by the expert panel to answer research question 1 (this includes data on reported additional
capacities both from the expert panel and second group interviews), and (2) the results of the survey and interviews on practices used by facilitative leaders to develop personal capacities to answer research question 2.

3.1 Results for Research Question 1

The results of personal capacities were acquired using the methods outlined in the previous chapter to answer research question 1. These are results from the following questions asked to the panel to determine if the capacities listed in the conceptual model were (1) important in their work, and (2) how they would describe the capacity and (3) at the bottom of this section the expert panel answer what personal capacities were missing from the conceptual model that is essential to their work. Following is a synthesis of the expert panel’s take on the personal capacities within the (2\textsuperscript{nd}) conceptual model. Included for each capacity is an overview of variations and themes of feedback we got, given its wide diversity of interpretations.

Table 3.1: Seven personal capacities to facilitate co-learning and co-creation in Strategic Sustainable Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal capacities</th>
<th>Brief description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being Present</td>
<td>Being fully aware and awake in the present moment – physically, mentally, and spiritually. This includes connecting oneself to others, the environment and circumstances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Awareness</td>
<td>The continual lifelong process of paying attention to knowing oneself; it involves consciously and intentionally observing various dimensions of the self (including the body, mind, senses, emotional and spiritual realms of oneself). It is the capacity to observe how one’s self is thinking, relating, feeling, sensing and judging. Self-Awareness includes perceptions beyond cognition, such as intuition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspension &amp; Letting Go</td>
<td>The ability to actively experience and observe a thought, assumption, judgment, habitual pattern, emotion or sensation like fear, confusion and conflict and then refraining from immediately reacting or responding to the situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compassion</td>
<td>The continual act of having unconditional acceptance and kindness toward all the dimensions of oneself and others, regardless of circumstance. Compassion involves the ability to reflect upon oneself and others without judgment, but with</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
recognition and trust that others are doing the best that they can in any given situation.

| Intention Aligned with Higher Purpose | Aligning one’s authentic nature with the natural order in the world. This alignment trickles down to all facets of life including our personal, professional and spiritual dimensions. “Where your deepest personal passion and the world’s greatest needs align, there is opportunity” (Senge 2011b). Embodying this capacity helps one embrace the unknown with profound trust. |
| Whole System Awareness | The capacity to quickly switch between different perspectives, scales and worldviews to see the big picture, interconnections within the system, and being able to scale down to small details. Whole System Awareness is not just cognitive understanding – you ‘sense’ it’. It is the understanding that everything is interconnected within a system. |
| Personal Power | The ability to use one’s energy and drive to manifest wise actions in the world for the greater good, while being aware of one’s influences on a situation. It includes the ability to face one’s fears with courage and to persevere in difficulty. |

3.1.1 Being Present

8 out of 8 expert panel members found it essential to their work.

Being Present means being fully aware and awake in the present moment – physically, mentally, and spiritually. This includes connecting to others, the environment and circumstances.

Variations and Themes

- It is a feeling of clarity. “Shifting my state to being present is a choice, I can bring my self to centre whenever I want” (T. Merry 2011). It is a natural state of being; we are born to be present (Møller 2011). It is being at peace with oneself, a moment of stillness when the different voices in one’s head are not troubling the clarity of the present moment or dictating an outcome.
- Being Present is a path with gradation (Chender 2011).
- When fully present in the current moment, there is no boundary between the observer and the observed; object and subject merge into one. It is a form of connectedness or oneness. “When you are present, you’re no longer a spectator: you’re part of it all” (Heckman 2011). It
is being in a state of ‘flow’. “When you are fully present and in flow, the future automatically presents itself to you” (Dijksterhuis 2011).

- Being present is a different experience for everybody, every day.
- “It is about bringing the entire ‘you’ to each activity that you agreed to. Allowing in the moment I am doing something I’m committed to, I am not distracted by anything else” (Kalungu-Banda 2011).

### 3.1.2 Self-Awareness

8 out of 8 expert panel members found it essential to their work, with one stating, “It is the essence of my work” (P Merry 2011).

Self-Awareness is the continual lifelong process of paying attention to knowing one’s self; it involves consciously and intentionally observing various dimensions of the self (including the body, mind, senses, emotional and spiritual realms). It is the capacity to observe how one is thinking, relating, feeling, sensing, and judging (Kalungu-Banda 2011). Self-Awareness includes perceptions beyond the rational mind, such as intuition (Dijksterhuis 2011; T Merry 2011).

**Variations and Themes**

- Shadow or unconscious dimensions of the self were stressed as important to understand. This includes the process of uncovering unconscious aspects, such as when you are irritated or triggered by an event or person (Nissén 2011; P Merry 2011).
- Self-Awareness is developing the discernment of noticing when you are reacting to habitual patterns from the past and when you are being present (P Merry 2011).
- The more self-aware you are, the more able you are to suspend reactions (Rusza 2011).
- One respondent saw it as the same as Whole System Awareness (Rusza 2011).
3.1.3 Suspension and Letting Go

8 out of 8 expert panel members found it essential to their work.

Suspension and Letting Go is the ability to actively experience and observe a thought, assumption, judgment, habitual pattern, emotion or sensation like fear, confusion and conflict, and then refraining from immediately reacting or responding to the situation.

In order to suspend we must first notice the ‘reaction’ and choose to attend to it. As David Bohm states, “it does not mean repressing or suppressing or, even, postponing them. It means, simply, giving them your serious attention so that their structures can be noticed while they are actually taking place” (Bohm 2011).

Variations and Themes

• Suspension is noting an inside trigger and then allowing a gap or opening to occur before reacting (Kalungu-Banda 2011). Suspension is being aware of one’s own judgments, sharing them and then parking them (Dijksterhuis 2011). Sharing one’s judgments or reactions with others helps surface them enabling one to read between the lines of a conversation.
• One respondent referred to a Rumi poem: “‘Beyond right-doing and wrong-doing there is a field, I will meet you there’. It is going beyond right and wrong, holding both and becoming conscious” of what is happening and not holding on to what you wish it to be (Møller 2011).
• It is the act of letting go of collective and personal limiting beliefs and seeing people’s grace (T Merry 2011).
• Others described it as having a ‘beginners mind’ and sense of curiosity or wonder (Heckman 2011).
• Suspension is being able to sit with discomfort, and embracing a lack of understanding. Suspension is not easy and takes much effort because we all have opinions and emotions (Nissén 2011).

3.1.4 Compassion

8 out of 8 expert panel members found it essential to their work.
Compassion is the continual act of having unconditional acceptance and kindness toward all the dimensions of oneself and others, regardless of circumstance. Compassion involves the ability to reflect upon oneself and others without judgment, but with recognition and trust that others are doing the best they can in any given situation.

Variations and Themes

- Compassion is about having kindness toward oneself (T Merry 2011).
- “Compassion is allowing yourself to share in another person’s humanity. I may not agree with them, but what does it feel like to be in another person’s shoes?” (Kalungu-Banda 2011).
- “Compassion is about resonance and literally means ‘to feel with’. When that is present you come in resonance with other people you are with, and you become co-creators of life and spirit. It is about stepping in and stepping forward, and implicating yourself. It is what creates relationship essentially, along with trust and the space to be able to co-create. It is a sense that we are one; it means stepping beyond self-limited boundaries” (P Merry 2011).

3.1.5 Intention Aligned with Higher Purpose

7 out of 8 expert panel members found it essential to their work.

Intention Aligned with Higher Purpose is the alignment of one’s authentic nature with the natural order in the world. This alignment trickles down to all facets of life including one’s personal, professional and spiritual dimensions. “Where your deepest personal passion and the world’s greatest needs align, there is opportunity” (Senge 2011b). Articulating one’s higher purpose helps one embrace the unknown with profound trust.

Variations and Themes

- Several members of the expert panel spoke about this alignment in terms of oneness: “It is getting out of the illusion of separateness” (P Merry 2011). “…All is one; I am part of everything and everything is part of me” (Møller 2011).
"I am not separated from the world around me, I am a part of it...fragmentation has happened to us on the planet, in spirit and in sacredness. How are we re-integrating that fragmentation? Actually, there is no difference between higher purpose and your self." When one realises this, "humans become a bridge between the finite and the infinite. We become in service of infinite. We become bridges or actors of consciousness" (T Merry 2011).

Intention has a sense of Calling in it (what is my Call? Why am I here on Earth?) (Chender 2011). Intention Aligned with Higher Purpose is my “sacred intent, an unwavering intent” that has always been there (Møller 2011). It is about knowing why I came here; I know what I am doing now, why I said yes to come to Earth (ibid 2011).

“Higher intention is serving life, something bigger than yourself. Are you serving life, or serving yourself? Are you coming from a pure place?” (Nissén 2011).

One respondent saw ‘higher purpose’ as an assumption, dependent upon one’s worldview or belief system (Rusza 2011).

A few respondents compared this alignment as being open to synchronicity: “How can you commission nature to conspire with you to bring about your particular intention?” (Kalungu-Banda 2011).

### 3.1.6 Whole System Awareness

8 out of 8 expert panel members found it essential to their work.

Whole System Awareness is the capacity to quickly switch between different perspectives, scales and worldviews to see the big picture, interconnections within the system, and being able to scale down to small details. Whole System Awareness is not just cognitive – you ‘sense’ it’ (Nissén 2011). It is the understanding that everything is interconnected within a system.

**Variations and Themes**

- While it is important to have the intention of being aware of the entire system, it is not something one is able to do fully (P Merry 2011; Kalungu-Banda 2011).
- Interactive group engagement processes help people within the system
see more of the whole system and reveal its ‘collective intelligence’, by hearing different perspectives and encouraging stakeholders to share ideas.

- It includes gaining awareness of interacting people (social awareness) and other various systems within the biosphere and the universe (other-awareness).

### 3.1.7 Personal Power

8 out of 8 expert panel members found it essential to their work, albeit it was the most controversial capacity.

Personal Power is the ability to use energy and drive to manifest wise actions in the world for the greater good, while being aware of one’s influences on a situation.

*Variations and Themes*

- Personal Power is about having perseverance despite difficult circumstances.
- It is the ‘engine’ that drives one’s intention.
- There are elements of courage and fearlessness in it. It is also the ability to empower (Kalungu-Banda 2011) others and manage one’s personal power wisely. It is the capacity to deal with and face one’s deepest fears (P Merry 2011).
- Stepping into one’s personal power means stepping up and being vulnerable. It is the capacity to “show up as the fullest expression of life, feeling the life force flow through you” (P Merry 2011).
- Personal Power is explored through self-awareness. “If you want to work with power in the world, you first have to work with your own personal power” (T Merry 2011).

### 3.1.8 Missing capacities

When asking the expert panel and second interview group what was missing from the conceptual model, respectively what personal capacities are essential to their work that are not in the conceptual model, various responses were given; see the Table 3.1.8. Many respondents discussed a
‘sense of humour’ or ‘light-heartedness’ as missing from the model. Additionally, a person’s ‘shadow dimensions’ were a recurring theme in missing capacities: “not in the model is the voice of judgment, cynicism, super ego, and projection. It is important to see the voices within yourself that you don’t dare to relate to in a different way, to get a heart connection” (Dijksterhuis 2011). These ‘shadow dimensions’ are further elaborated upon in the discussion.

The idea of multiple intelligences as capacities was also raised a number of times, especially in the context of integrating and balancing them in a holistic way. Types of intelligence mentioned included intellectual, somatic, emotional, spiritual, energetic, collective and indigenous intelligences. Another missing capacity was energetic intelligence. “You can absolutely look at it, and I think it is also going to be key to the future of this kind of work; it is in its early days however.” (P Merry 2011).

Table 3.1.8: Missing Capacities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Missing Capacity</th>
<th>Expert Panel</th>
<th>Secondary Interview Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humour</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow-work</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective-Intelligence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energetic-Intelligence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somatic-intelligence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act-in-an-instant</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consciousness</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional-Intelligence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerability</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alignment</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authenticity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking-for-help</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connectedness/oneness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holding paradoxes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inner-knowing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>Essential</td>
<td>Useful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light-heartedness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perseverance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playfulness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense-of-Wonder</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holding ambiguity</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humility with confidence</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking Action</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transparency</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.2 Results for Research Question 2

#### 3.2.1 Survey Results

This section includes a selection of results of the survey on practices for the secondary interview group (see Appendix D for the complete survey design), highlighting practices considered most essential in supporting the respondents’ work. There were 25 respondents to the survey. Figure 3.2 plots the responses to two of the survey’s questions:

1. *How important would you rate this practice in supporting your work?* The chart shows the percentage of respondents who rated the practice as ‘essential’ or ‘very useful’.
2. *Do you participate in this practice currently or have you participated in this practice in the past?* The chart shows percentage of respondents who indicated they are currently participating in the practice.
The practice rating highest as ‘essential’ or ‘very useful’ was Peer Support (96%) described in the survey as: ‘Asking for help, having a mentor or coach, collaboration, authors or others that help you develop personal capacities’. This broad practice area ranged from a formal mentoring set-up, to a practice of seeking feedback, and one mentioned the importance of their partner in providing ‘fearless feedback’. 88% of respondents rated Meditation as ‘essential’ or ‘very useful’. This practice area included a diverse range of meditation forms from secular and spiritual traditions (e.g. Vajrayana, Zen, Mindfulness, Shambhala), to simply a practice of attention to breath. For 64% of respondents meditation was reported as a daily practice. Spending time in nature was described to be beneficial in a number of ways, this being a typical description: “nature relaxes the mind and inspires me to be creative... I feel more wholeness and oneness with everything” (Magnus 2011). With reflective practices such as journaling, there were a variety of approaches including a morning intention-setting practice, to an end of day ‘check-in’. One participant described a reflective self-inquiry practice that he would do periodically after a facilitation process where he asked himself: “What did I learn? What did I discover? What surprised me? What dis-satisfied or satisfied me?” (Reis 2011).
The data reveals some inconsistencies between practices, which although described as essential or very useful, were not currently being practiced. The interpretation of this is elaborated on in the discussion.

3.2.2 Correlations between practices and capacities

With regard to identifying specific practices as helpful in developing specific capacities, all interviewees were able to positively correlate one or more practice to the development of a capacity. There were a total of 158 correlations.

In general, interviewees found the most direct correlations between practices that cultivated Self-Awareness, followed by Being Present, Suspension, Compassion and Whole System Awareness. Cultivating ‘Intention aligned with higher purpose’ and Personal Power were less well correlated with specific practices. See Table 3.2.2 for a summary. Meditative practice was the only practice area that was correlated with all seven capacities and had twice as many correlations as any other practice area. These results are further elaborated upon in the discussion.

Table 3.2.2: Correlations between practices and capacities. Note: this table categorises practices into practice areas using a classification scheme shown in Appendix F.
Expert Panel

The expert panel was asked “how do you develop these personal capacities?” This question was open and various responses were given, which are elaborated upon below.

Practices developing **Being Present**: Meditation was mentioned four times. Focusing upon breath was mentioned twice. Getting feedback from others and martial arts were mentioned twice. The following were mentioned once: sailing, archery, and pottery, learning a musical instrument, physical practices and Qigong. Shadow work, clairvoyance work, cleansing your chakras, cleansing your aura, actively working with light dimensions, and energetic management practices, for “you can only see clearly if you are clear yourself” (P Merry 2011). Two respondents recommended sitting in silence for five minutes when preparing the space prior to an event as the difference between “being present or absent, if it is not a conducive work environment it is not going to work” (Kalungu-Banda 2011).

Practices developing **Self-Awareness** included reflective journaling mentioned twice; when in bed at night reflecting upon the day and noticing what went well and what difficulties arose. Meditation practices were mentioned 5 times. “If I can sit with myself [and meditate], I can sit with
Developing body awareness through Tai Chi was mentioned twice, ‘16 Ways’, or other physical experiences. Asking yourself questions such as ‘how do you respond when physically challenged?’ Contemplative practices or Bohmian dialogue were useful, and peer support and feedback were mentioned twice.

Practices developing Suspension and Letting Go: Vipassana Meditation “helps us witness consciousness” (P Merry 2011). Meditation was mentioned 5 times. Focusing on breath was mentioned twice, as was Bohmian Dialogue. Aikido and artistic expression was also used.

Practices developing Compassion: Meditation; relationship therapy. Deep Ecology work with John Seed helped one respondent open his heart to all forms of life and understand we are co-inhabitants of Earth. Being with and helping others not as physically strong as you are (children and elders), not in pity, but with people that touch your core (Kalungu-Banda 2011).

Practices developing Intention Aligned with Higher Purpose: Reflective questions helped three respondents. One respondent mentioned the importance of being intentional with your thoughts and spoken words as an important practice (Kalungu-Banda 2011).

Practices developing Whole System Awareness: Speaking with many people within a system (stakeholders) for a larger perspective and getting their stories. Being a fly on the wall observing the system (Kalungu-Banda 2011) helps you develop this capacity, as well as meditation, Tai Chi, Contemplative Practices, Bohmian Dialogue, Systems Constellation Work, Deep Democracy and witnessing others hold space. Playing folk music (P Merry 2011). Participatory processes like the Art of Hosting meaningful conversation practices also develop it. In order to see more of the whole: a dialogue with multiple perspectives within the system is needed (Rusza 2011).

Practices developing Personal Power: The following were mentioned: Aikido, clearing second and third chakras, playing music, meditation, walking in nature, having good sleep, starting conversations on a high note, acknowledging people’s strengths and infecting them with positive energy, sports, swimming and other physical activities.
4 Discussion

This chapter discusses the personal capacities, practices, implications for leadership theory and development, and their relevance to SSD facilitation.

4.1 Overview

The expert panel and facilitative leaders deepened our perspectives of the personal capacities that support their work, and their lives in general. Their insights cover personal capacities both within and outside the conceptual model. Our discussion covers these capacities as best we can, for we understand our grasp of these concepts is still evolving. We aim to reveal how the capacities relate to one another, their attributes and nuances as well as their relevance in facilitating collaboration in SSD. Our aim is to help facilitative leaders, including ourselves, develop a greater internal understanding of these capacities as a foundation for increasing wholeness of our cognitive, emotional, physical and spiritual dimensions, both personally and professionally. Our research has found personal and professional life to be inextricably linked or essentially the same; for how you do anything, is how you do everything (Huber 1988).

At the outset of this research we proposed personal capacities of facilitative leaders can be developed through practice, exercise and experience. We made no assumptions about what could or could not be called a practice, and simply defined it as “to do (something) repeatedly to acquire or polish a skill” (Szpakowski 2010, 7). Our surveys and interviews with facilitative leaders revealed a rich and diverse world of practice. We discovered quite detailed exercises and techniques through these conversations (see Appendix E). Despite the diversity and nature of practice, some clear and sometimes overlapping practice areas emerged and we found some strong correlations between certain practices and the development of specific capacities. In this section we look more closely at how respondents described the effect of practice on developing specific capacities and discuss some of the relationships between practice and capacity development. In concluding the research, our understanding of what qualifies as a practice has been refined. Certainly some kind of structure and discipline to practice seems important, described beautifully by one
respondent as a ‘container that can’t be manipulated’ (Chender 2011). We also found the importance of a mirroring quality to the practice as essential to help one observe themself during practice, as well as the necessity to balance the mind, emotions and body for a more complete and whole practice. “When a person is anchored in nowness, the great hall of mirrors arises” (Møller 2011).

We see that the essence of practice is not so much what one does, but how one does it; it’s the quality of consciousness and intention that one brings to the practice that determines the outcome and development of personal capacities. Finally, practice can be demanding and often not immediately rewarding so it must be something one is willing to do repetitively, or else one simply won’t keep up with the practice.

4.2 Personal capacities

4.2.1 Being Present

Being Present is the capacity of being fully aware and awake in the present moment – physically, mentally, and spiritually. This includes connecting yourself to others, the environment and current circumstances.

Developing the capacity to be Present

The strong correlation between the development of Being Present and various meditation and mindfulness practices could be explained by its connection to the breath. The breath is one of the only continuous, unchanging patterns in one’s life, independent of the turbulence and diversity of thought streams and changing moments. The breath is what connects most of the responses on practices; they help align mind, body, heart and spirit.

Relevance to facilitating co-learning and co-creation in SSD

Being Present is an essential capacity for SSD facilitators. It could be argued that a root cause of the sustainability crisis is that we are not fully present with one another, both individually and collectively or with the present circumstances. This is opposed to continually engaging with
streams of thoughts or misperceiving reality. Thus, the sustainability challenge calls us to be Present, to clearly perceive reality, rather than through projections from the past (operating as though we have infinite resources at our disposal) or denial of the sustainability challenge facing our planet (massive species extinction occurring systematically), or blaming others for our global crisis. As a facilitative leader, Being Present allows one to collaborate and innovate with groups more effectively and efficiently because one is dealing with current reality and one meets people where they are. Backcasting is about moving towards an envisioned future; being grounded in the current reality however is essential in order to have the clarity of what that shared envisioned future is, and being able to facilitate such a process. When present, one’s focus is with the group one is with and one is able to sense, feel, understand, and resonate with what is happening right now, in order to make wise actions. Facilitators who use the capacity of Being Present have the ability to invite participants to do likewise, keeping the task at hand on target and moving the group forward. Therefore, integrating an SSD approach and backcasting from the four sustainability principles in decision-making with the capacity of Being Present, will help move society toward sustainability.

Relation with other capacities

A facilitator (or anyone) can choose to Be Present, and when one does so, all the other capacities become available as well. If not present one is absent; one is unable to become aware of themself in the system, unable to Suspend and Let Go of habitual patterns from the past. Compassion is an active undertaking and needs presence. To use one’s Personal Power wisely one must be in tune with one’s surroundings, and to have Intention with Higher Purpose one senses one’s role in what the world needs. “Being Present is the resting place from which everything happens” (Nissén 2011). For these reasons, and based on clear confirmation from respondents, we maintained this capacity placed in the centre of the conceptual model linking it as a source from which the other capacities flow.

4.2.2 Whole Self-Awareness

Whole Self-Awareness is the continual lifelong process of paying attention to knowing oneself; it involves consciously and intentionally observing
various dimensions of the self (including the body, mind, senses, emotional and spiritual realms). It is the capacity to observe how one is thinking, relating, feeling, sensing, and judging (Kalungu-Banda 2011). Self-Awareness includes perceptions beyond cognition, (Dijksterhuis 2011) such as intuition.

The conceptual model initially had Self-Awareness as a capacity; we changed it to Whole Self-Awareness. The term Whole was added because the respondents stressed the importance of the various dimensions of self. Whole Self-Awareness includes developing and becoming conscious in many ways including emotionally, physically and spiritually.

*Developing one’s Whole Self-Awareness*

We found that the practices that develop Whole Self-Awareness overlapped with practices that develop Being Present. Since Being Present is the capacity from which all other capacities flow, perhaps one must first be present to develop Whole Self-Awareness. Mindfulness practice, where one observes their own stream of consciousness, was particularly useful in developing awareness of thoughts and emotions, while relaxation meditative practices helped some people tap into their intuition or inner knowing. These practices drops one into Being Present, and helps participants observe themselves. Some respondents indicated seeking feedback from peers, colleagues, friends and family to cultivate self-awareness. These practices helped one see their own blind spots.

Furthermore, embodied movement practices that integrate the body, mind and emotions were also mentioned as useful in cultivating a more holistic ‘whole-body awareness’. These types of practices aim to integrate the body and mind, supporting congruency of these dimensions rather than letting the head always lead the body. This helps the participant learn when they are making choices that are not aligned with their whole self. Self-inquiry practices such as reflective journaling and self-observation helped many respondents increase their Whole Self-Awareness. Participants examine themselves to increase their self-perception. An example of this is assessing what the participant’s core values are and helping them determine what values they operate from, and how these values resonate or conflict with others’ values in a facilitation process.
Relevance to facilitating co-learning and co-creation in SSD

Developing Whole Self-Awareness enables people to perceive the world through various dimensions of themselves. This holistic perspective helps facilitative leaders sense what is happening in themselves, and the whole of the group in an engagement process, not only through their mind, but on an emotional, physical and spiritual level. SSD group collaboration, we believe, could be enhanced through facilitators using this holistic understanding of self. This would allow them to engage people beyond cognition and invite people’s emotional, spiritual and physical dimensions to the collaboration processes. By inviting these various dimensions of self, we assert, would enhance outcomes and create stronger ownership amongst stakeholders. With head, heart and hand aligned, we believe people are more inspired and engaged in facilitation processes and therefore participants are more willing to follow through with projects. Further, if shadow or unconscious dimensions are perceived and tended to rather than projected in group engagement, facilitative leaders may work more effectively and efficiently because they are not reacting to the group, rather they are observing and sensing the group dynamics.

Relation with other capacities

Some respondents felt Whole Self-Awareness was central to the conceptual model. Its very essence is so important, for how people perceive themselves is how they perceive the world. Whole Self-Awareness involves self-observation and self-monitoring, as well as exploring shadow dimensions (see section 4.2.2.1); noticing when something is amiss (such as a person or situation irritating or triggering you) and taking note, but not reacting. This requires the personal capacity of Suspension to prevent an unconscious reaction to a situation, or parking the irritant and exploring it at a later time for awareness (Dijksterhuis 2011).

Facilitative leaders that chose to develop this capacity noticed it increased their discernment between unconscious habitual patterns from the past impacting them today or stepping toward authenticity in the present moment. Whole Self-Awareness helps one understand one’s responses to situations in co-creative processes. One respondent said self-awareness becomes easier as you become older and involves the stripping away of
non-essential or non-genuine parts within you and reintegrating disowned parts of your self. It is reclaiming all parts of one’s self, the positive and negative attributes and gaining awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses, best accomplished with Compassion. Whole Self-Awareness is increasing the ability to become more and more genuine and is enabled by Being Present, for being awake in the moment allows one to see the mirror in front of them.

4.2.2.1 **Shadow dimensions: barriers to developing personal capacities**

Opening to your authentic nature involves exploring, as Jung (1951) referred to, the shadow or unconscious dimensions within you. Shadow aspects generally form from disowned and disliked parts of yourself that you repress and project onto other people or situations, although the aspect exists within you. “The shadow is a moral problem that challenges the whole ego-personality, for no one can become conscious of the shadow without considerable moral effect. To become conscious of it involves recognising the dark aspects of the personality as present and real. This act is the essential condition for any kind of self-knowledge, and it therefore, as a rule, meets with considerable resistance. Indeed, self-knowledge as a psychotherapeutic measure frequently requires much painstaking work enduring over a long period” (Jung 1951, 112). Below is a table we created from our own experience and deduction, from interviews, as well as from the literature. These shadows are examples of how one may be inhibited from developing their own personal capacities.

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**Table 4.2.2.1: Possible Shadow aspects inhibiting developing personal capacities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Capacity</th>
<th>Possible Shadow aspects inhibiting the personal capacity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole Self-Awareness</td>
<td>Over-identification with ego or personality; narcissism; unconscious behaviours and reactions; fragmentation of body, mind, emotion and spirit; 'projections' (Jung 1951) and seeing the dislike 'out there'; not integrating aspects of the self.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compassion</td>
<td>Cruelty; repression (Jung 1951) of emotional reality; cynicism; fear; 'de-sensing' (Scharmer 2007a, 266); indifference; resistance to vulnerability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Jung explains, “with insight and good will, the shadow can to some extent be assimilated into the conscious personality, experience shows that there are certain features which offer the most obstinate resistance to moral control and prove almost impossible to influence. These resistances are usually bound up with projections, which are not recognised as such” [by the individual] (Jung 1951, 112). It takes great courage and willingness to explore shadows, however, to increase self-awareness this work is necessary (see Appendix E for practices for dealing with shadows).

### 4.2.3 Suspension and Letting Go

Suspension and Letting Go is the ability to actively experience and observe a thought, assumption, judgment, habitual pattern, emotion or sensation like fear, confusion and conflict and then refraining from immediately reacting or responding to the situation.

‘Letting go in order to let come’ is a principle behind several of the change theories, philosophical and spiritual teachings that informed our respondents, such as Theory U, the Art of Hosting and ALIA (Scharmer 2007a, Woolf et al. 2010, Szpapowski 2010). Suspension can therefore be seen as an enabler of Letting Go, and although most participants spoke of both capacities together, at least one respondent felt Suspension was
perhaps more of a practice that may help to develop the capacity to Let Go. Others regarded Suspension as more of a cognitive act whereas Letting Go is something you do with your heart, or even your soul (P Merry 2011).

One participant cautioned against the concept of ‘letting go’ as potentially ‘tyrannising’ - if someone thinks they must let go, they are more likely to hold on tightly. “You can’t let go, things let go of you”, so letting go is a more organic process and the best we can do is “hold things lightly” (Chender 2011). Letting go is the result but not the practice and people cannot force themselves to let go if they are not ready. This is an important principle for SSD facilitative leaders to grasp: that interior change in themselves and others is the organic outcome of an experiential process and cannot be forced by facilitators or by participants themselves.

**Developing the capacity to Suspend and Let Go**

Bohmian dialogue (Bohm 1996) principles and practice were consistently indicated as being useful in developing Suspension: the practice involves simultaneously listening to what comes up in oneself, others and the group as a whole, and suspending assumptions and judgments. It helps one observe internal belief systems as assumptions, not truths and that for every person that exists, that many perspectives exist. Dialogue offered participants a mirror that helps one to question beliefs rather than depend upon them. Dialogue is also a technique for solving complex problems by obtaining multiple viewpoints to see the bigger picture rather than fragmentation. Other practices mentioned include meditation, which enabled many respondents to observe having a thought and letting it go, the essence of Suspension. One respondent mentioned a simple practice of counting to 10 when one senses a need to suspend (Kalunga-Banda). He suggested noticing the urge to react, and instead taking a deep breath, taking a walk in nature, and taking distance from the situation before coming back. He also mentioned suggesting to others to keep quiet for a moment to reveal discomfort or vulnerability that is arising in the group or in a relationship. In order to do this, Kalungu-Banda said one must “give up being in charge” (Kalungu-Banda 2011).
Relevance to facilitating co-learning and co-creation in SSD

Having a beginner’s mind by practicing Suspension and Letting Go is particularly important for facilitators in the co-learning phase where part of the role of the facilitator is to hold a safe space where all voices in the system can be heard without judgment, thus enabling the system to see itself. It is suggested that the facilitator also suspends their own assumptions about the system and be prepared to let go of previously established beliefs. Suspension and Letting Go also enabled leaders to tolerate being in chaos and accepting the possibility of failure. This opening gave many respondents the courage to be creative and think outside the box for real transformation. The capacity for teams to let go of established ideas and worldviews is at the heart of the collaborative facilitation process that the sustainability challenge demands. Using this capacity in facilitation helps create the space for new realities to emerge.

Relation with other capacities

There is a close relationship between Suspension and Being Present. In order to suspend one must be present to notice one’s reactions. The act of noticing makes one present to one’s true self and more self-aware. Suspension and Letting Go can be viewed in polarity relationship with Intention aligned with Higher Purpose, while at the same time being mutually supportive. When a facilitator lets go of judgments, attachment to outcomes, or habitual patterns of thinking, and opens up to the unknown, the result can be clarity of intention about their work, and aligning with the greater good. It is similar to the U-process of ‘letting go’ on the left side of the U, and ‘letting come’ or clarity of intent on the right side of the U (Scharmer 2007a; Kahane 2010). Simultaneously, having a clear Intention aligned with Higher Purpose gives a facilitator the trust, willingness and ability to suspend things that are not essential, while trusting the outcome of a process.

4.2.4 Compassion

Compassion is the continual act of having unconditional acceptance and kindness toward all the dimensions of oneself and others, regardless of circumstance.
Developing Compassion

Various practices cultivate Compassion, originating from spiritual traditions. Examples include ‘loving-kindness’ visualisation and Tonglen (see Appendix E). These practices help one imagine others they are sending compassion to, including people they may not necessarily feel compassion for, in order to hone this capacity to people universally. Others highlighted the role of meditation: “if I can sit with myself, I am able to sit with anything” (T Merry 2011). It was also highlighted that meditation is a way of developing self-compassion and to “make friends with yourself on a fundamental level”, without which compassion for others is really not possible as your self-criticism will want to “bleed out into your relationships with other people” (Szpapowski 2011). Several interviewees spoke of the importance of a dialogue practice, where an atmosphere of connection in the group helps develop compassion, understanding and empathy (Baeck 2011; Magnus 2011; Michels 2011).

Relevance to facilitating co-learning and co-creation in SSD

Compassion enhances collaboration in SSD processes, because it helps improve the quality of relationships in a team. It enables people to create an atmosphere of trust and understanding, while moving toward sustainability and a shared vision. Compassion incites a connection with other sentient beings impacted by the sustainability challenge.

One story that exemplifies the role of Compassion and Whole System Awareness in the work place was told by Martin Kalungu-Banda. In Africa, young orphaned children of parents with AIDS were paired with various heads of state. The orphans and the politicians were charged with spending two hours together to experience one another’s reality. While the heads of state supported legislation involving AIDS orphans, they had not had a first-hand experience with the children they were attempting to support. The co-sensing experience gave them a real taste of the children’s plight. The experience shifted the heads of states’ perspectives to a more compassionate understanding of the situation and supported their motivation for further assistance in combating HIV and AIDS through their work.
Relation with other capacities

A tender, compassionate heart helps one embrace other personal capacities. When one understands the essence of Compassion they gain a broader and deeper perspective enhancing one’s Whole System Awareness. People are then able to embrace what is occurring with tenderness and they seek out understanding rather than defending one’s own point of view. People listen to others more intently, not because they agree with each other, but because they are fellow human beings. Compassion helps one muster up courage and Personal Power to make wise actions for the greater good, beyond self-importance. When being self-aware with Compassion, one is able to hold what is true about one’s self gently, rather than with criticism or denial. This helps one be more genuine and accepting with who they are while modeling this for others. Similarly, Whole System Awareness with Compassion helps people “feel another person’s humanity” (Kalungu-Banda 2011) rather than rejecting them, their ideas, or their emotions, regardless of their stance. Compassion helps people be more open to see the interconnections that exist between people, beyond words, minimising differences. Collaboration is enhanced with Compassion, because it helps build relationships within group engagement processes. Personal Power with Compassion keeps people open to considering other people’s feelings when making decisions and exerting themselves in the world. There is also an inherent need to balance Compassion with Personal Power in a facilitated session (see section 4.3.3).

Intention Aligned with Higher Purpose with Compassion enables one to find alignment with the natural world in a considerate way to support all sentient beings when moving society toward sustainability, not only for our current world, but for the future generations of all species. Suspension with Compassion allows one to suspend more easily; when Compassion is available it is easier to let go and embrace a sense of wonder rather than resist not knowing the answers or needing to be ‘right.’ And lastly, being Present enables Compassion. When an emotion emerges, if you are able to stop and notice the feeling occurring before reacting to them, you can latch onto Compassion to support the situation. Without Compassion, the other capacities would not elicit the essential emotional acceptance and connection to reality that is central to being whole.
Intention Aligned with Higher Purpose

Intention Aligned with Higher Purpose includes aligning one’s authentic nature with the natural order in the world. This alignment trickles down to all facets of life including our personal, professional and spiritual dimensions. “Where your deepest personal passion and the world’s greatest needs align, there is opportunity” (Senge 2011b). Articulating one’s higher purpose helps one embrace the unknown with profound trust.

Although the expert panel held a range of ‘spiritual’ beliefs, no one related the concept of higher purpose directly to a specific belief system, rather the essential value seemed to be aligning a personal path with a larger purpose, wherever this sense of purpose came from. For example for one respondent described this sense of purpose as “a sense of yearning, but yearning for what? There is something larger that we can’t put our finger on and name it” (Chender 2011).

The many responses clustered around the idea that we are all one and addressing fragmentation of wholeness are interesting, but they do have an overlap with Whole System Awareness with its emphasis on interconnectedness. Some respondents saw both capacities as highly interrelated. We see a wide variety of interpretations of this capacity, with some respondents having resistance to the word ‘higher purpose’ or ‘serving life’.

Developing Intention Aligned with Higher Purpose

Repeatedly, reflective questions helped people clarify their Intention Aligned with Higher Purpose. Including questions such as ‘what is the essence of your work in the world? Can you look back at your life and see a pattern that seeks to be lived through you?’ These questions were referred to as a personal tuning fork (Nissén 2011) and questions helped respondents come back to their core purpose when making choices about how to proceed in work and in life. It offered participants a check-in practice with themselves to help them choose their actions in alignment with their higher purpose.
Relevance to facilitating co-learning and co-creation in SSD

The Shambhala tradition adopts a belief that at the root of all human beings is basic goodness. This is not saying humans are good versus bad; it is embracing all of it. When one aligns with the reality of the here and now, one aligns with basic goodness in order to confront situations as they are. This naturally supports sustainable development because one surrenders to the circumstances of today while aiming to act with purpose. When a facilitative leader is coming from a ‘pure place’ (Nissén 2011) based upon Being Present that is beyond one’s individual motivations or ego, it helps the facilitator to serve the greater good and thus support sustainable development.

When you make choices and act upon them, ask yourself: are you moving toward alignment with your greatest passion and the greatest need in the world or are you moving away from alignment? If one can keep this alignment on center during facilitation processes, it will help one be successful in co-learning and co-creation; it will help one align participants with their higher purpose, motivating personal and collective purpose. Finally, Intention Aligned with Higher Purpose helps a facilitator ground through purpose in turbulent moments, and embrace uncertainty with trust.

Relation with other capacities

By getting in touch with one’s core and deepest passion, one is in touch with Compassion and accessing Whole Self-Awareness. Being Present allows one to cease the moment and notice synchronicity at work assisting one’s alignment with the natural world. Personal Power helps one manifest action in the world to achieve Intention Aligned with Higher Purpose. Suspension helps one let go of the non-essential elements in one’s life that may be hindering moving toward their Higher Purpose.

4.2.6 Whole System Awareness

"We are here to awaken from our illusion of separateness"
— Thich Nhat Hanh

Whole System Awareness is the capacity to quickly switch between different perspectives, scales and worldviews to see the big picture,
interconnections within the system, and being able to scale down to small details. Whole System Awareness is not just cognitive – one ‘senses’ it’ (Nissén 2011). It is the understanding that a change within the system impacts the rest of the system. This capacity ranked highly relevant. However, three respondents mentioned that it is impossible to completely comprehend the whole system. These respondents claimed it is the intention to see as much of the whole system that is most important, despite one’s inability to see the whole in totality.

An important aspect discussed by respondents was the paradox around complexity vs. simplicity: the notion that what we see as complex can be simple in reality. We argue SSD facilitators would benefit from an ability to see through the complexity and background noise, to recognise patterns, to grasp the simplicity. It is the ability to see clarity, commonality and patterns in the diversity of comments and contributions from participants and stakeholders, and helping a team move towards an outcome resembling the collective intelligence of the group. One respondent argued “we have been in love with complexity through the use of, for example system dynamics, but it is often an illusion, or a mind/ego trip” (P Merry 2011). An example of applying pattern recognition and ‘thinking upstream’ is the four sustainability principles (Ny et al. 2006) introduced earlier.

Furthermore, social awareness derives from applying Whole System Awareness in facilitation: what is a team doing, where is it going, how is the energy dynamics in the group, how do other external factors influence the energy in the group? Whole System Awareness, similar to all other capacities, is a constant practice. As one respondent called it, “always holding it [what you think you know] with a question mark” (Nissén 2011). You never fully know yourself (Whole Self-Awareness), and the same counts for the whole system one is a part of, or operating in. It is a constant effort to do it, of constantly expanding your boundaries of perception.

*Developing Whole System Awareness*

Studying theoretical frameworks such as systems theory, systems thinking, chaordic theory, complexity theory and deep ecology (Karman 2011; P Merry 2011; Van Der Windt 2011) are useful entry points for developing Whole System Awareness. However, one increases one’s perception of the
system by moving beyond a cognitive understanding alone. As SSD facilitators working in co-learning and co-creation increase their ability to see the interconnections within groups, they can determine how just one person or one element in the group impacts the whole group. Asking questions about how to include all the voices increases awareness of the whole system. According to Evitts et al. (2010) developing an interconnected worldview implies an understanding of interconnectedness beyond the cognitive; it requires embodiment and emotional understanding as well. In order to guide a team through such a process, a facilitative leader needs to have an inherent understanding (beyond cognition) of the whole system in which he/she operates, and its primacy of interconnectedness and relations, rather than parts. We argue if a facilitator increases their Whole Systems Awareness they are more apt to increase the facilitated group’s ability to gain this awareness as well. Involving participants on the emotional, physical, and spiritual level as well as on the cognitive level enables facilitators to connect with groups more holistically, more personally and ultimately creating a foundation for transformation. It is here, an SSD facilitator reflects back to the group who they are as a system so the group may choose to transform or not.

Spending time in nature was useful for developing Whole System Awareness (Karman 2011; Magnus 2011; Lægreid 2011) because it helps respondents see the interconnectedness of nature, how things live harmoniously together as well as how natural discord impacts the system. Some described this as similar to a meditative practice that helped them tune into the interconnected web of life, sensing the reality of being part of a natural living system. This perspective helped them restore humility and a sense of wonder (Karman 2011; P Merry 2011; Van Der Windt 2011) and the ability to accept not being able to understand the system in its totality.

Practicing Bohmian Dialogue helped respondents develop social awareness. This allows SSD facilitators to see fragmented thought patterns within individuals and to build a space where people tolerate and embrace social differences, and create a shared pool of meaning (Bohm 1996). Dialogue helps shift people’s perspective from ‘I’ to ‘we’, seeing each opinion as a piece of a jigsaw puzzle, as part of a larger whole. Having awareness of the whole system is essential to facilitate co-learning and co-creation, because it enables SSD facilitators to ‘weave’ together wisdom or
meaning created within the group to grasp an increased understanding of the system to see a more consistent whole.

Relevance to facilitating co-learning and co-creation in SSD

The capacity of Whole System Awareness is essential in facilitating SSD engagement processes, as it allows a facilitator to develop a deeper understanding of the systems level of the FSSD, where the self is seen as an inherent interconnected part of the system, and it allows a facilitator to develop such a deep systems understanding among stakeholders as well. Furthermore, it helps a facilitator hold multiple worldviews without being too attached to either of them, thus being able to engage a variety of stakeholders.

Relation with other Capacities

Whole Self-Awareness is an enabler or a prerequisite of Whole System Awareness; both capacities are two sides of the same coin. How you make sense of the world begins with how you make sense of your internal experience. One of us stated ‘I make sense of things through me: looking at patterns inside myself helps me understand patterns outside of myself.’ The more completely one is aware of patterns within (emotionally, mentally, physically and spiritually) the more you know the world around you.

Whole System Awareness is best expressed when related or integrated with other personal capacities, following its primacy of the whole and of relations over the parts. Intention Aligned with Higher Purpose with Whole System Awareness helps a facilitator to see the essence of his/her work as part of a bigger, interconnected whole. Compassion with Whole System Awareness results in a sense of wonder, a deep respect and care for all life that surrounds us, while knowing that we can’t cognitively understand all of it completely. It reminds us to “have compassion for humans, we are a young species” (Møller 2011). It also helps a facilitator give space for all the voices in the room to be heard and seen, to invite ‘the whole system’ to the table by listening to all stakeholders. Suspension with Whole System Awareness helps a person notice, observe, and sense the world around them, without having to label and judge what they see (as in Goethe’s phenomenology; Seamon et al. 1998). Personal Power with Whole System
Awareness helps a facilitator ‘get one’s job done’, with perseverance and courage in situations of great complexity, uncertainty, tension or chaos.

**4.2.7 Personal Power**

Personal Power is the ability to use energy and drive to manifest wise actions in the world for the greater good, while being aware of one’s influences on a situation. It was oftentimes described as the ability to face one’s fears with courage and to persevere in difficult circumstances.

There was an interesting set of responses in the interviews with resistance to the word ‘power’, with varying interpretations. It was recommended that we specify it as Personal Power rather than Power. One respondent asked why we had it. When we gave him a description of how we were using it, he conveyed his personal journey from dissonance in his relationship to power, to becoming aware of his struggle with power through practice:

“If you want to work with power in the world you have to work with your own power, however you perceive power to be, either in hierarchies or in the hearts of people, probably both. I resonate with all of that. I am glad you have it in here... Meditation has given me the realisation that I have a fundamental mistrust of power. I have consistently seen power abused in my life, by people in schools as I grew up. I have rarely seen power held with integrity, so the story I live in and how I relate to the world, that’s where I am trying to put power back in the hands of people most affected by it” (T Merry 2011).

Resistance to the word Power and the variety of interpretations made us realise a need for facilitators to investigate their relationship to their own Personal Power and other people’s power. Responses to this capacity were seemingly dependent upon a facilitator’s ability to overcome any distrust of power. Many had a resonance with the notion of Personal Power but preferred words such as courage and perseverance. We decided to include it in the conceptual model to highlight a need for facilitators to investigate their relationship to power.
Developing one’s Personal Power

Respondents used simulations of fear or feelings of power and powerlessness in practices to gain self-awareness. This helped them understand how they respond to these types of experiences. For instance, by practicing Aikido one is confronted with moments of being “attacked” by one’s opponent and dealing with this allows self-observations of reactions to aggression. Aikido helps participants see their responses, helps them learn to suspend these reactions and become mindful about how to proceed when dealing with power, fear or aggression. When facilitating collaborative processes, facilitators oftentimes must face and engage with power within groups.

We got very few responses on the question what practices help develop one’s Personal Power. In the second group survey there were a total of 8 practices distinguished for Personal Power, as opposed to 42 practices for developing Whole Self-Awareness. This provides interesting food for thought. It might be due to the wide range of interpretation of the word ‘power’, it might be because some respondents had resistance to it or had not yet reintegrated shadow dimensions of their own Personal Power.

Relevance to facilitating co-learning and co-creation in SSD

Having the capacity to handle one’s Personal Power enables SSD facilitators to discern when to step up to impact the system and when to empower others within the system. Self-Awareness of one’s Personal Power helps SSD facilitators navigate power within groups. Power dynamics exist within SSD facilitation processes including within groups, and among group members in co-learning and co-creation. Based upon our respondents, facilitators are encouraged to become aware of their relationship to power. Using Personal Power in facilitation is key, especially in situations of great uncertainty and complexity. It helps a facilitator get the job done in the face of resistance, tension and chaos.

Relation with other capacities

Personal Power requires thoughtful balancing with Compassion in order to not transgress into power-over, aggression, or being ‘too pushy’. There is an inherent paradox in Power as it relates to Compassion, explained by
Adam Kahane’s notion of ‘power’ and ‘love’. Kahane (2010) argues how, in order to address complex social problems and create lasting change, you have to learn to work fluidly with two distinct but fundamental drives that are always in tension with each other: power – the single-minded desire to achieve one’s purpose; and love – the drive towards unity. Both drives seem contradictory but in fact they are complementary, Kahane (2010) argues. “Power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic” (King in Kahane 2010, 8). In the Shambhala tradition, this power-love paradox is reflected in the notions of ‘warriorship’ (Szpapowski 2010) and the ‘sad and tender heart’ (Rinpoche 2010; Chender 2011). By showing up as a person, by ‘passing through’ your fears (Møller 2011), you step up, but simultaneously you are also deeply vulnerable and tender. Trungpa Rinpoche (2010) describes this in the following way: “The genuine heart of sadness comes from feeling that your nonexistent heart is full. You would like to spill your heart's blood, give your heart to others. For the warrior, this experience of sad and tender heart is what gives birth to fearlessness. Conventionally, being fearless means that you are not afraid or that, if someone hits you, you will hit him back. However, we are not talking about that street-fighter level of fearlessness. Real fearlessness is the product of tenderness. It comes from letting the world tickle your heart, your raw and beautiful heart. You are willing to open up, without resistance or shyness, and face the world. You are willing to share your heart with others.” (Trungpa 2010, 3)

Throughout SSD facilitation processes, there is typically a power shift from the facilitator towards participants in a team, when a facilitator is truly able to empower the group, most effectively done with Compassion as the foundation. When bringing a group together, Compassion becomes the glue that supports the group and Power becomes their actions in the world.

### 4.3 Additional capacities

From the interviews we collected a range of additional capacities; two of which kept coming back consistently: a sense of humour, and dealing with paradoxes. Both are elaborated upon below.
4.3.1 Sense of Humour

Ten of the respondents (both expert panel and second group interviews) mentioned having a ‘sense of humour’ or ‘light-heartedness’ as an essential capacity missing from the conceptual model. There was a view often expressed that many people working in transformational change and sustainability are “over earnest” (T. Merry 2011) and when working with such serious issues, a sense of humour is vital in maintaining an optimistic outlook, without which such work could be a recipe for depression. One sustainability practitioner described the essence of this capacity when working in transformational work:

“It’s a dire situation we are in in many ways, but if you don’t have a gap and see the ironic and sweet edges of the whole travesty you become very grim. I have met a lot of people I agree with in terms of positions, but they are miserable and they are angry and that anger is not the best ground from which to exercise any transformational activity” (Janowitz 2011).

Another respondent agreed, describing sustainability practitioners (and environmentalists especially) as often rather serious, tired, stressed and passionate people, but it’s the bubbly and light-hearted people that really succeed in engaging others (Walford 2011).

Developing a Sense of Humour

Both meditation and play were mentioned as useful practices to help not take ourselves too seriously. Indeed a mindfulness practice of observing the antics of the mind should perhaps itself be accompanied by a Sense of Humour, which may ease witnessing our often neurotic stream of consciousness. Self-awareness practice without light-heartedness could lead to a self-conscious or self-absorbed frame of mind.

Relevance to facilitating co-learning and co-creation in SSD:

A Sense of Humour helps facilitators hold paradoxes, polarities and ambiguity with a sense of delight and even joy, with a large dose of irony, which creates “a sparkle rather than a grind” (Chender 2011). Humour by its very nature can help open people up to incongruity and experience a sudden shift in perspective, which may be conducive to seeing things with
fresh eyes and suspending old beliefs, which is at the heart of facilitating collaborative change. “Part of the problem is that different parts of the system aren’t seeing themselves with a sense of humour”; indeed one interviewee described the role of humour as “the handle on the door of awareness” (Janowitz 2011). Humour is also a great social lubricant and can help create buoyancy during a difficult phase of a facilitation process. It can be especially useful in helping people take conversations to difficult places and “making going deep more comfortable” (T Merry 2011).

*Relation with other capacities*

Some also felt that “not taking yourself, others and the universe seriously” (Møller 2011) helped them engage people in facilitation. Another way this was described was to “hold it all lightly” which speaks to the importance that several participants mentioned not being overly attached to outcomes. Having a Sense of Humour helps one develop Compassion and Whole System-Awareness, by seeing the interconnected experiences between people. A Sense of Humour also helps hold a mirror up to people, allowing them to see the more difficult and dire situations with lightness and irony.

### 4.3.2 Dealing with Dualities and Paradoxes

Dealing with Dualities and Paradoxes is the capacity to deal with dualities and paradoxes includes sitting with ambiguity in a facilitation session, managing polarities, and holding multiple perspectives. In the conceptual model of personal capacities we see an implicit dynamic of paradoxes and dualities *between* the capacities, and sometimes *within* the continuous process of their development.

The notion of paradoxes as a fundamental part of reality is informed among others by ancient wisdom traditions such as Taoist thinking (yin and yang) and the Shambala Buddhist tradition. Fritz (2010) argues how ‘Yin and Yang is a phenomenon in which a whole divides itself into two contrasting parts of itself. Examples of these paradoxes include: feminine/masculine principle (Hayashi 2010), being/doing, self/others; and interior/exterior (Schley 2011). In the discussion about power we highlighted the paradox of power and love, identified by Adam Kahane (2010).

A core element of the capacity to deal with paradoxes is holding creative
tension. A key skill of creativity is the capacity to remain inwardly structured, that is, in one's thoughts, feelings, and volition, even if one is in completely unstructured, unknown conceptual or relational territory (Barnum 2011). By balancing the capacities of Suspension, Whole Self-Awareness and Whole System Awareness one can develop this capacity. As a facilitative leader learns to suspend his/her own labeling and judging, while sensing into the system in which he/she operate, trying to understand the interconnectedness of everything in the system (including themselves), he/she learns to ‘embrace the unknown with profound trust’ (Brown 2011; Dijksterhuis 2011). It is this capacity that successful facilitative leaders identify as ‘life as an inquiry’, “always holding it with a question mark” (Nissén 2011), and “sitting with a question without having to resolve it immediately” (Barnum 2011). Poet John Keats called this ‘negative capability’: “the ability to contemplate the world without the desire to try and reconcile contradictory aspects or fit it into closed and rational systems” (Keats 2011). In practice, this translates into a capacity where a facilitator guides a team through a creative process in a short period of time with high stakes in an unknown and uncertain territory (Barnum 2011).

There is another paradox in the continuous mastery and development of the personal capacities. As respondents frequently mentioned, everything about these capacities is extremely simple and intuitive, yet it is hard to practice and embody. This especially applies to Being Present: it is not a complicated thing, it is really simple, but ‘tuning into’ that natural state is hard work. This might be a reason why so many respondents struggled with adopting a personal practice – why there is this discrepancy between respondents acknowledging meditation as being essential, while some of the same respondents are not practicing.

A third paradox inherent in all personal capacities is successful facilitative leaders having both a deep acceptance of what is, and simultaneously have a profound yearning for something else; for something better than current social reality (what should be); a yearning to solve today’s huge crises. We see the importance of handling this paradox especially in the sustainability realm. Successful facilitative leaders are people who can work and live in those two worlds simultaneously, they can engage both with the realists, the pragmatists and the idealists.
Finally there is a further paradox at the heart of facilitative leadership. On the one hand, the facilitator’s principal role is typically to manifest the collective intelligence of the group in a neutral way. However those facilitators (e.g. using an SSD approach) who have a personal stake in the subject, may also have a desire to steer the group towards a specific outcome. It is important for facilitators to recognise this and if necessary be very clear to the group from which space they are operating, so they don’t subtly manipulate the outcome.

**Developing the capacity of dealing with dualities and paradoxes**

As a facilitative leader learns to balance paradoxical personal capacities (such as Suspension with Intention; Compassion with Personal Power, Whole Self-Awareness and Whole System Awareness) through practice, she/he also gradually masters the ability to hold paradoxes and multiple worldviews in a complex facilitation situation, to manage polarities (Johnson 1992, 1993; in Brown 2011), to ‘hold tension and ambiguity with a sense of delight, to hold opposites with a sense of joy’ (Chender 2011). This ‘ninth capacity’ may be the most dynamic, as it is developed through balancing different other capacities. It is intimately related to having a sense of humour; it requires one to hold things lightly.

**Relevance to facilitating co-learning and co-creation in SSD**

The capacity of holding the paradox of accepting current reality while yearning for something profoundly different, is essential in facilitating collaboration in SSD: it translates into the capability of holding the creative tension of both accepting current reality (what is), and building a shared vision of the organisation (what should be). Furthermore, the capacity of holding multiple worldviews is essential in facilitating collaboration towards sustainability with large numbers of stakeholders, where a facilitator needs to hold and engage with multiple and sometimes even conflicting worldviews, without defending or rejecting either of them.

**4.3.3 Towards a third conceptual model**

We have argued how all the capacities have many different layers and aspects, and how some of them by their very nature are ambiguous and multi-faceted. We see that this is the nature of the beast: that in order to be
applicable to a wide range of contexts and practitioners, these personal capacities have to be open-ended and multi-faceted. The feedback from the expert panel validated our conceptual model with the seven personal capacities. Besides, the consistent responses we got on missing capacities have been grouped into two additional capacities, (1) a Sense of Humour and (2) Dealing with Dualities and Paradoxes. The nine personal leadership capacities that together enable leaders to facilitate co-learning and co-creation in SSD are summarised in the illustration below (see Fig 4.3.3).

![Conceptual model III](image)

*Fig 4.3.3: Conceptual model III*
4.4 Practices

All the facilitative leaders we interviewed and surveyed said practice was useful in their work; some were less able to articulate or describe exactly *how* it was useful. Some felt practices related more holistically to all of the capacities, rather than specific practice-to-capacity correlations: “I see it all as pretty integrated, rather than one practice having one benefit” (Anon 2011). Another group of respondents emphasised the importance of finding a combination and diversity of practices, which when combined, developing the whole self. “All these practices have helped me, otherwise I wouldn't use them. I seriously think it is the combination of many of them that make them work. The more entry points you have, the easier any change - growth - transformation can happen” (Baeck 2011). Another respondent mentioned: “I try to balance energy by staying physically energised (body movement), mentally focused (meditation), emotionally connected (relations), spiritually aligned (silence and philosophy)” (van der Windt 2011). Another respondent described the combination of practices in the following way: “I see it as the tides, or seasons of the year - some practices are in the foreground and others fall back depending upon how the pace/life situation is. It is also linked to the type of work/groups I work with. Since the last three years I have been in a more strict business environment and have matched this with more physical than energetic practices” (Tandberg 2011).

Clearly meditative practices stood out as particularly important, which is not surprising considering the sort of communities of practice from which we sourced the respondents. However the importance that many facilitators placed on having a meditative practice was perhaps surprising. As the co-founder of Reos Partners put it, “Being Present necessarily requires a meditative discipline. Without meditative practice, I say ‘good luck, you will run out of fuel.’ Meditation builds the capacity to remain structured in not knowing” (Barnum 2011). Meditation is definitely more of a maintenance practice for awareness, like continually cleaning a window that wants to get dirty, or like “soul hygiene— like brushing the teeth for the soul” (Barnum 2011). Most respondents described the essence of meditation practice as noticing movements of the egoic mind, without getting attached to it, or as one respondent described “witnessing consciousness” (P Merry 2011).
Many respondents described how they noticed the difference in the quality of their day and work when they didn’t meditate: they were less present, more caught up in negative self-talk, easier to fall into stress and conflict, less perspective on the big picture, less able to tune into their intuition, less able to focus (Brack 2011; Magnus 2011). And equally many stressed the importance of not just leaving meditative practice ‘on the cushion’, but integrating it into everyday life throughout the day with techniques such mindfulness of or attention to breath (Cushing 2011; P Merry 2011).

One respondent described how, when she first began mindfulness meditation practice, she almost had a breakdown and emphasised the importance of practices in relaxation, to build up inner strength to tolerate increasing awareness: “awareness can kick your ass” (Anon 2011). Examples of practices that help build up this inner strength include chanting, affirmations, visualisation, breath-work and body practices to help you relax and calm down by activating the parasympathetic nervous system (Palmer 2011).

In various ways respondents spoke of the importance of movement and energy practices to embody these capacities. Some described this as developing somatic intelligence. A lot of experience shows up in the body and its important to be able to tune-in and trust your body in terms of what messages and information it gives you (P Merry 2011). As Wendy Palmer, founder of Conscious Embodiment put it “We inhabit a body that communicates and processes information on a sensory level far more encompassing than our cultural views leads us to believe” (Palmer 2011b). Others spoke of it more in terms of balancing body and mind and inhabiting your whole self so you are not “living from the throat up, with no-one at home in the heart and the belly” (Magnus 2011).

Many respondents spoke of the various ways they engaged in collective practice either through peer/mentor support networks or communities of practice. It was typical for respondents to use teachers or classes to develop their practice, and for many this support was critical in maintaining a practice routine in their daily lives.

The expert panel was able to correlate specific personal capacities directly to practices that help develop capacities; whereas the second interview
group was less likely to correlate specific practices to personal capacities. This may be because the interview process for these two groups was different. With the second interview group we referenced the capacity model less explicitly during the interview and asked more open questions about *How the capacity helped in their facilitation work?* However, many respondents in both groups found the interview process personally helpful and stimulated their own consciousness of how practices developed their personal capacities. “…it made me realise a few things as we discussed last night. I think there are many things that we don't explicitly know (or we don't put them together) until someone asks us. I found your interview very useful for me personally” (Adarves-Yorno 2011).

### 4.5 Unexpected Results

In addition to finding expected results and a fine-grained view on the development of personal leadership capacities, we also found a couple of unexpected results. First of all, the prominence of spiritual practices such as meditation and the spiritual approach to leadership, were surprising results. As mentioned in the introduction, we did not make any assumptions about the kind of practices needed, and we certainly did not expect such a prominent role for meditation in developing one’s leadership capacities.

Second, the overwhelming response from interviewees about a sense of humour as an additional capacity was surprising. This however resonates with recent research on sustainability leadership from a constructive developmental perspective (Brown 2011), where the most sophisticated and complex worldview is labelled ‘Ironist’ (Rooke & Torbert 2004), exactly because of this capacity of seeing the ironic edges of reality. Perhaps this capacity helps one remain present in the moment in difficult circumstances.

### 4.6 Implications for leadership development theory and practice

The questions we have explored in this thesis, the rich feedback from our interviewees, and our personal reflections, have given rise to a couple of observations and implications for theory and practice of leadership development in the context of sustainability.
First, we argue that the conceptual model with personal capacities offers a useful way of framing the personal dimension of facilitative leadership towards sustainability in a more holistic way, appreciatively building on existing social change and facilitation theories (such as Theory U, Power and Love, 9 Disciplines, Dialogue and Organisational Learning). It adds a more personal dimension to many of these approaches and puts them in a practical perspective, acknowledging that the development of these capacities is a continuous path of gradation and practice.

Second, we realised how one of the underlying beliefs and values behind successful facilitative leadership for sustainability is a belief in ‘basic human goodness’ (Rinpoche 2010). It is both an acceptance of what is (not necessarily having an allegiance to good and rejecting bad), and simultaneously a yearning to fundamentally improve the human condition. The assumption here is that if people are stripped bare and reintegrate (rather than deny) their shadows, there is goodness, there is an individual desire in everyone to want the best for themselves and for others and to move beyond basic human needs and to help people reach their fullest potential. Starting from this assumption, we contend that adopting such a worldview as a facilitative leader will make a high leverage impact on the co-learning and co-creation process; indeed being a ‘positive deviant’ (Parkin 2010) might be the only way for facilitative leaders to address our complex sustainability challenge, to ignite positive social change in themselves, in others and in the world. Margaret Wheatley summarises this argument eloquently: ‘there is no substitute for human creativity, human caring, human will’ (Wheatley 2001).

Third, drawing from the results of our interviews and survey, we argue that personal mastery of the capacities identified in this thesis is instrumental for facilitative leaders to successfully guide a co-learning and co-creation process, specifically when applying a Strategic Sustainable Development approach. SSD’s basic principles of systems thinking, ‘thinking upstream’ (Broman et al. 2000) and collaboration are a good starting point for facilitating collective learning- and decision-making processes. This thesis has shown how, specifically in situations of complex and transformational change, additional capacities are needed for facilitators that enrich the current paradigm of systems thinking with a more holistic view on the personal dimensions of facilitative leadership and one’s personal role in a
system in which a facilitator is intervening. Additionally, there is a need in the SSD approach to acknowledge the human dimension to engagement processes: connecting with one’s self and others takes time. If a facilitative leader has done this ‘inner work’ (personal mastery, personal practice), they are more adept to helping the group do their own ‘inner work’ to create meaningful and lasting change (Avolio 1995).
5 Conclusions: Towards Authentic Leadership in SSD

In order to address the complex sustainability challenges facing society today, the more adaptable and developed a leader becomes, the greater they are able to handle complex planning processes (Brown 2011). Through personal development, SSD facilitative leaders are more able to utilise hindsight, hold multiple worldviews, and sit with current reality while simultaneously aiming toward a desired future. The adaptability achieved by facilitators honing these capacities, we argue, lends itself to enhancing SSD collaborative group processes and outcomes.

This is a continuous path towards using more and more of one’s authentic self in SSD facilitation. This path helps facilitators improve the quality of relationships in a team while engaging people cognitively, mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. We contend that facilitative leaders bringing their authentic selves into the facilitation process are more likely to guide a team towards successful, lasting and sustainable results that have ownership among the stakeholders. Authentic leaders that hold the ‘container’ for collaborative processes more personally (TMerry 2011) are better able to engage people in multi-faceted and multi-dimensional ways, resulting in more embodied and empowered outcomes. We have also concluded that the developed sense of awareness inherent in the personal capacities can be critically valuable in enabling facilitative leaders to know when and what to do during a group process by ‘sensing’ what is happening with the group in the present moment (Nissén 2011).

These personal capacities by their very nature cannot be learnt only on a cognitive level; they must be embodied. Our research has shown that one path to the embodiment of these capacities is through personal and collective practice. The implication of this is clear: as one respondent put it, “no real transformation can take place without personal and collective practice” (Møller 2011). In addition to the personal capacities identified in this research we found conditions for success for developing personal capacities through practice:

*Conditions of success for developing one’s personal leadership capacities:*
• A combination of personal and collective practice is a pathway to the development of personal capacities;
• A combination of contemplative, physical and spiritual practice helps people align body, mind and spirit, in order to maximise personal development;
• The integration of practices in one’s personal and professional life helps one take the learning from the practice back into the facilitation process.

Conditions of success for practices:
• The practice must have a mirroring quality, to help the participants observe themselves;
• The practice has to provide ‘a container you can’t manipulate’ with structures that are adhered to; and
• The quality of one’s personal attention in the practice is more important than the type of practice performed;
• The practice must be something one is willing to do repetitively.

It can be said that the continuous mastery of personal capacities not only improves one’s leadership performance as a facilitator; it also helps one get in touch with his/her own authenticity. When one is more in touch with one’s authentic self, one’s actions are easier to embed in one’s life and thus lead to stronger follow-through in a facilitated engagement process. The literature highlights the importance of self-mastery in leaders and through “increased self-awareness, self-regulation and positive modelling, authentic leaders foster the development of authenticity in followers” (Avolio et al. 2005, 317). Authenticity is about being true to oneself, “one’s relationship with oneself” (Erickson 1995, 124; in Avolio et al. 2005). It is about “owning one’s personal experiences, be they thoughts, emotions, needs, wants, preferences, or beliefs, processes captured by the injunction to ‘know oneself’ and further implies that one acts in accord with the true self, expressing oneself in ways that are consistent with inner thoughts and feelings” (Harter 2002, 382; in Avolio et al. 2005). Leaders modelling awareness and authenticity invite participants to do likewise, and if one is engaged on an authentic level, engagement processes are likely to result in more desirable outcomes (Avolio et al. 2005).
We argue that authentic leadership development offers SSD facilitators a foundation from which to engage group beyond their just a cognitive level and includes the emotional, physical and spiritual dimensions to increase congruence between outcomes created collaboratively with participants’ authentic selves, creating stronger results. Facilitative leaders bringing their authentic selves into the SSD engagement process, we argue, would benefit outcomes. However, it is not enough in order to successfully address the sustainability challenge. One must have the ability to plan in a strategic manner within the confines of the Earth’s carrying capacity. The sustainability principles introduced at the start of this paper, define such boundary conditions. Combining an authentic and holistic approach along with an SSD structure, we contend, will benefit collaborative engagement processes and outcomes that help move society toward sustainability.

Application: practices to start leading from authenticity and wholeness

The key results of our research are compiled in a Practice Guide for Authentic Leadership in SSD aiming to develop their facilitator’s personal leadership capacities (see Appendix E).

Further research

This thesis has explored the question of personal capacities to facilitate co-learning and co-creation through personal and collective practices. We have focused primarily on ‘qualities of being’ rather than skills or personality characteristics. However, a frequent question raised in the interviews was: how do you move from those ‘qualities of being’ into the doing of facilitation? Once you are on this path of practice where you are developing your personal capacities, it is not enough to just ‘be’ in front of the room and let everything emerge. How does one integrate these personal capacities in the collaborative process? How does one ‘act in an instant’ as facilitative leader, in order to truly enable co-learning and co-creation in a team? This is a question that so far has to remain unanswered, but which can be an important part of future research. However, Cretney et al. (2011) have engaged in similar research on integrating dialogue-based participatory processes in an SSD-based strategic planning process. Related to that, how do the personal capacities identified in this thesis show up in a strategic planning process towards sustainability such as the one outlined in
the introduction? If a facilitator begins working on building the capacities in the conceptual model, what different outcomes occur in the engagement process? How does the development of capacities impact both the facilitator and the participants?

Second, this research has mainly focused on the personal development of facilitators or facilitative leaders. A key question for further research is how a group participating in a collective learning- and decision-making process, can practice this personal development, and what the role of the facilitator is in such a situation.

Another question mark that remains is the role of multiple intelligences in the conceptual model. This element came back consistently in interviews, however we found an overlap between the intelligences and certain capacities (e.g. Emotional Intelligence: Self- and Whole System Awareness). Possible forms of intelligence that could be regarded here are: Emotional Intelligence (Goleman 1995), Energetic intelligence (Senge 2011; T Merry 2011; P Merry 2011), Spiritual Intelligence (Wigglesworth 2002), and Somatic Intelligence (Palmer 2011). These forms of intelligence could be regarded as a foundation in developing and supporting the personal capacities, but further evidence for this is needed.

Furthermore, we acknowledge that a developmental perspective may help refine the conceptual model. By exploring the capacities with developmentally tested participants, the model may be refined according to developmental stages. This research could help facilitative leaders determine where they are developmentally compared to determine their next developmental stage to aim for as identified by Cook-Greuter (2004) and Rooke et al. (2005).

Last but not least, the conceptual model and the practices identified in this thesis would benefit field-testing, scrutinising and refinement in order to solidify our research outcomes. A draft version of a Practice Guide for Authentic Leadership in Strategic Sustainable Development is attached (Appendix E) and will be disseminated, field-tested and continually refined and adapted in the near future to address this need.
In order to discuss the personal dimensions involved in doing our research we feel it is essential to share our personal journey. We have experienced facilitation processes that move us at our core. They get us back in touch with the essence of our true nature and our sources of inspiration. The common elements to these processes are simple: being authentic with who you are and what you do in the world. Facilitative leaders that bring their authentic selves into the room, invite participants to bring their authentic selves into the room. It almost appears as magic, as these facilitators draw you in to the present moment. Their ability to be present enables our ability to be present; however it is far from magic. It is simply the true nature of who one is as a human being that brings us back to wholeness, back to a place where community and ‘basic goodness’ reside. Basic goodness is where we find resonance; regardless of what someone is saying and doing, if it is coming from a genuine place within themselves and for the greater good, it inspires us. It is like the line in a Marianne Williamson poem, Our Deepest Fear, “as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.” Once the non-essential layers of our selves dissolve and we reintegrate ourselves to being more whole with compassion, humor and humility we are more apt to align with ourselves, with nature and with community so that sustainable development is naturally supported and embraced.

Our thesis team began this journey hoping to find out how to leverage our selves as the greatest tool in moving society toward sustainability. We hoped to discover what ways we could make the biggest impact in our work in the world. Unbeknown to us, our thesis journey led us on a path to the core of authenticity: ‘basic human goodness’. We were embraced by the organisation Authentic Leadership in Action (ALIA); a community of practice that supports, embraces and helps hone authenticity within ourselves as individuals and as a community. This group has adopted a belief in ‘basic human goodness’ being at the core of all people and the pathway to this is by being genuine with who and what you are, and embracing all the dimensions of yourself through a relentless practice of
consciousness of your whole self, accompanied by a sense of humor to boot and keep us sane.

We believe this is essential if we are to move away from a society where so much is organized around destructive motivations - greed, self-interest, competition - and we abandon a basic assumption that human nature breeds a lived experience which is exhausted, cynical, and focused only on self-protection. “We’ve taken the very things that make us human – our emotions, our imagination, our need for meaning – and dismissed them as unimportant” (Wheatley 2001). By assuming basic human goodness, we break this cycle and open up a possibility to connect with one another with our whole selves, fully human, with compassion and courage.

Our journey has inspired us to continue connecting with our true selves so that we may help others see their true selves. This is a lifelong undertaking, we are all apprentices in this domain. It entails dedication, courage and a commitment to practice, to align your whole self (mind, emotions, body and spirit) and reveal basic goodness. We set out to find multiple entry points through practice for the development of facilitative leaders, including ourselves, so that we may sharpen and soften our most important tool: our selves.

So for facilitators working with SSD the most important thing is to show up as your whole, authentic self, even if this is awkward, and you feel vulnerable, because this opens up a path for others to get in touch with, and express their authentic selves (Chender 2011). We believe human authenticity is a foundation for a sustainable society. Furthermore, facilitators are encouraged to engage people holistically and design processes that engage whole selves: head, heart and hands.
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---. 2007b. *Theory U Executive Summary: Adressing the Blind Spot of Our Time*.


## References - interviews

### Expert Panel


Merry, Peter. 2011. Skype interview by authors. Sweden/Netherlands. 4th April.

Merry, Tim. 2011. Skype interview by authors. Sweden/Canada. 11th April.
Nissén, Monica. 2011. Interview by authors. Karlskrona, Sweden. 16th March.
Rusza, Ágota. 2011 Skype interview by authors. Sweden/ Hungary. 17th March.

Second Group Interviews
Baeck, Ria. 2011. Skype interview by authors. Sweden/Belgium. 7th April.
Barnum, Jeff. 2011. Skype interview by authors. Sweden/United States. 11th April.
Bremer, Maarten. 2011. Skype interview by authors. Sweden/Netherlands. 7th April.
Chender, Michael. 2011. Skype interview by authors. Sweden/Canada. 22nd April.
Cushing, Daniel. 2011. Skype interview by authors. Sweden/Canada. 5th April.
Janowitz, Marty. 2011. Skype interview by authors. Sweden/Canada. 29th March.
Laegreid, Oddne Dahle. 2011. Skype interview by authors. Sweden/Norway. 8th April.
Magnus, Konrad. 2011. Skype interview by authors. Sweden/Norway. 7th April.
Nyoni, Stanley. 2011. Skype interview by authors. Sweden/Switzerland. 29th March.
Reis, David. 2011. Skype interview by authors. Sweden/Denmark. 8th April.
Szpapowski, Susan. 2011. Skype interview by authors Sweden/Canada. 22nd April.
Tandberg, Johan. 2011. Interview by authors. Lund, Sweden. 18th April.
Troften, Dorthe. 2011. Skype interview by authors Sweden/Norway. 30th March.
Walford, Rosie. 2011. Skype interview by authors Sweden/New Zealand. 24th February.
Windt, Hannie van der. 2011. Skype interview by authors Sweden/Denmark. 10th April.
7 Appendices

A. Theoretical Foundations

Facilitative leadership: a review of the literature

Our epistemological framework has been informed by a variety of literature, conversations with experts, participation in leadership trainings and our own experience throughout the time of the research. This section lays the groundwork for the draft conceptual model of personal capacities that we have developed at the early stage of the research, and to identify the thinking that inform this conceptual model. The conceptual model has been based on a literature review and on exploratory interviews with experts.

The U-process: leading from the emerging future

An important part of this research is informed by the thinking of Otto Scharmer and his colleagues’ work on Theory U and Presencing (Scharmer 2007a; Senge et al. 2004). Scharmer (2007a) explains how Theory U encompasses three things. First, it is a framework describing a change process. Second, it is a method for effecting change personally and organisationally, in communities and globally. And third, it is a description of naturally happening phenomena in the world. The approach to leadership as outlined in Theory U can be compared to the work of artists: the ability to operate from a ‘blank canvas’. The work of leaders, according to Scharmer (2007a) is to reveal the ‘blind spot’ of our time, the source from which our actions and inspiration flow, and becoming aware of this “source dimension from which effective leadership and social action come into being” (Scharmer 2007b, 1). The rationale behind Theory U is that ‘successful leadership depends on the quality of attention and intention that the leader brings to any situation’ (ibid, 1). “Two leaders in the same circumstances doing the same thing can bring about completely different outcomes, depending on the inner place from which each operates” (ibid, 1). Important ‘instruments’ for tapping into this source dimension have been identified; these include an open mind (suspension of the ‘Voice of Judgment’), an open heart (suspension of the ‘Voice of Cynicism’) and ‘open will’ (suspending the ‘Voice of Fear’; see Figure 3.1). The process of the U, which in its essence is the ability to innovate on a profound level, to ‘learn from the future as it emerges’, can be described as a sequence of three core movements as explained by Brian Arthur: (1) observe, observe, observe, (2) retreat and reflect, allow the inner knowing to emerge, and (3) act in an instant (Scharmer 2007a).
In the search for personal capacities or qualities of ‘being’, rather than skills or personality traits, especially the capacities of open mind, open heart and open will, and attention to the present moment, are instrumental. The state of consciousness called ‘Presence’ is central in the U-process. It is a state of consciousness that everyone have had once or more, but which is extremely challenging to enter into deliberately.

Additionally, the notions of co-sensing (part of the ‘left side of the U’, similar to co-learning) and co-creation (part of the right side of the U) are at the core of Theory U. At the same time they are key ingredients for facilitative leadership, as we have identified in the introduction.

![Figure 7.1: The U-process, including three infrastructures for profound innovation (co-sensing, co-presencing and co-creating) and three personal ‘instruments’ (open mind, open heart, open will). (Scharmer 2007a).](image)

**Facilitative leadership: 9 core disciplines**

Throughout years of facilitation experience, Jon and Maureen Jenkins (2006) have identified 9 ‘disciplines’ that can be considered part of the ‘interior state’ of the intervener, the hearts and minds of the facilitator. These disciplines are divided in three ‘developmental paths’: regarding others, regarding oneself, and regarding life. The facilitative leader’s internal relationship with others includes the disciplines of Detachment, Engagement, and Focus. The inward relationship with
oneself includes the disciplines of Interior Council, Intentionality, and Sense of Wonder. The third developmental path is about one’s internal relationship with life itself, which includes Awareness, Action, and Presence. Jenkins & Jenkins (2006) identified how in these disciplines there is an inherent tension (respectively between Detachment and Engagement, Interior Council and Intentionality, and between Awareness and Action), and how the last three disciplines encompass the art of standing in tension in between the other two (resp. Focus, Sense of Wonder, and Presence; see Figure 3.2).

Jenkins & Jenkins (2006) also identified how these disciplines can be developed through practice and exercise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental Path</th>
<th>Regarding Others</th>
<th>Regarding Myself</th>
<th>Regarding Life</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Detachment</td>
<td>Interior Council</td>
<td>Awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Sense of Wonder</td>
<td>Presence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Intentionality</td>
<td>Action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 7.2: The nine disciplines of a facilitator (Jenkins et al. 2006, 4).*

After a literature review, we discussed the insights from the ‘9 Disciplines’ approach and tried to identify the most ‘upstream’ variant of the subsequent disciplines, asking ourselves the question: what is the core essence of this ‘quality of being’ and what is the source from which this capacity flows? Having the ability to compare the 9 Disciplines framework with Theory U greatly added to our ability to see the ‘big picture’ and lay potential connections between the frameworks. Although specific definitions and descriptions of the different capacities varied greatly between the two frameworks, they both touched upon a deeper essence.

**Dialogic Leadership: creating meaning together**

Other schools of thought that have informed our thinking and assumptions include David Bohm’s (1996) and William Isaacs’ (1999) notion of dialogue and its key
practices, such as suspension of thoughts, impulses, and judgments, and noticing and unearthing commonly held values and assumptions in a group. It is considered that the practice of dialogue and its definition of ‘the art of thinking together’ (ibid) is a cornerstone of co-creation in both large and small groups and organisations.

What the above approaches (Theory U, 9 Disciplines, and dialogue) hold in common is the view on leadership as enabling and facilitating the co-creation of new solutions in an organisation or community through learning, collaboration and dialogue, rather than only directing change in a hierarchical manner.

Towards seven capacities: a conceptual model

The review and synthesis of the literature above, exploratory interviews and our own experience and analysis resulted in the first draft of the conceptual model with seven personal capacities. The seven personal capacities identified are:

- Being Present
- Whole System Awareness
- Self-Awareness
- Intention Aligned with Higher Purpose
- Suspension and Letting Go
- Compassion
- Power (added in draft 2)

In the literature, ‘being present’, or ‘presence’, tends to take a central role as a facilitative leader’s personal capacity. The personal capacities are not considered to necessarily have a hierarchical or causal relation with each other. We argue that this is a good basis for depicting the capacities in the shape of a wheel.

B. List of Interviewees

Expert Panel

1. Toke Møller  
2. Monica Nissén  
3. Ágota Rusza  
4. Hein Dijksterhuis  
5. Martin Kalungu-Banda  
6. Frank Heckman  
7. Tim Merry  
8. Peter Merry

Denmark  
Denmark  
Hungary  
The Netherlands  
United Kingdom/ Zambia  
The Netherlands  
Canada  
The Netherlands
Second Group Interviews sample

1. Chris Chapman
   Ireland
2. Daniel Cushing
   Canada
3. David Reis
   Denmark
4. Dorthe Troften
   Norway
5. Erika Karman
   Hungary
6. Harry Michels
   The Netherlands
7. Inmaculada Adarves-Yorno
   United Kingdom
8. Konrad Magnus
   Norway
9. Maarten Bremer
   The Netherlands
10. Marty Janowitz
    Canada
11. Stanley Nyoni
    Switzerland
12. Oddne Laegreid
    Norway
13. Ria Baeck
    Belgium
14. Tom D’Aquanni
    United States
15. Susan Szpapowski
    Canada
16. Wendy Palmer
    United States
17. Michael Chender
    Canada
18. Johan Tandberg
    Sweden
19. Jonas Dieden
    Sweden
20. Anouk Brack
    The Netherlands
21. Hannie van der Windt
    Denmark
22. Jeff Barnum
    United States
23. Anonymous
24. Anonymous
25. Anonymous

Exploratory interviews

1. Hein Dijksterhuis
   The Netherlands
2. Peter Merry
   The Netherlands
3. Rosie Walford
   New Zealand
4. Göran Carstedt
   Sweden
5. Regina Rowland
   United States/ Austria
C. Expert Panel Interview Package

Personal Capacities and Practices for Facilitators

Holding space for complex, transformational co-learning and co-creation group engagement process

Introduction & Overview

Thank you for taking time to be a part of our research. We will ask you to reflect upon our draft conceptual model explained below with questions and then do a follow up dialogue interview as scheduled.

We are three graduate students doing research on personal capacities and practices that support facilitative leaders in co-learning and co-creation in strategic sustainable development. The development of these capacities, and practices that support them, will help other facilitative leaders in their own development by bridging the capacities that need development with specific practices that will support them. We are contacting you for expert advice and analysis of a draft conceptual model we have devised as explained below, as well as an understanding of your own practices. We ask you to reflect upon your personal experiences and history in holding space for transformational change as a facilitative leader to determine what capacities help you in your work, and what practices you use to support these capacities.

Following a literature review, and drawing from our personal experience we have developed a draft conceptual model of key personal capacities that enable facilitators to ‘hold space’ for complex co-learning and co-creation work in group engagement processes. The specific context we are looking to apply these is in strategic sustainable development within organisations and communities. These core capacities will nonetheless be largely universal to facilitators working in transformational change.

When we speak of ‘personal capacities’ we are referring to qualities of ‘being’ developed through experience and practice. On the one hand, we are not really looking for personality characteristics, nor are we looking for ‘doing’ skills, but rather something in between. We chose this term as it seemed to express a ‘capacity of being’ that can be a source from which actions flow. Other terms considered included competencies, interior states, and qualities. We recognise there is a fine line between this spectrum. Any feedback on whether the concept of
‘personal capacities’ is the best term, and whether the concept is valid and/or well defined would be appreciated.

**What we are seeking advice on**

This document outlines a DRAFT conceptual model with definitions of the key personal capacities we have identified. Please reflect on the following general questions with regard to the model prior to the interview. In addition please review the conceptual model outlined below, within which there are some specific questions related to those capacities. If you would like to enter comments within this document and return it prior to the interview that would be helpful but not essential.

*Keep in the back of your head while going through the conceptual model:*

Think of a specific experience in your history as a facilitative change agent, where you changed the way you facilitated (aha-moments). What were those shifts? How have you changed as a facilitator since you began your facilitation or hosting work? Where did a shift in your perspective (awareness) occur? Which specific personal capacities became clear in your performance? What challenges do you face yourself in developing those capacities through personal practice?

1. **What personal capacities help you in co-learning and co-creation group processes?**
2. **What personal capacities are missing from the conceptual model?**
3. **What wording or definitions needs to be altered to align with your perspective capacities?**
4. **After reviewing your capacities, do you have any strategies, practices or exercises, which help you to develop this capacity in yourself?**
5. **If you were describing these personal capacities or had our research to perform, how would you describe them in a way that is universal and understandable to participants?**
6. **Do you have any way of assessing the strengths and weaknesses of this capacity in yourself and/or others?**
7. **Are there alternative ways to structure/divide the capacities that you prefer?**
8. **Are there any capacities that seem particularly interdependent on one another, or causally or hierarchically related?**
9. **Our next research step will be to approach a wider group of experienced facilitators and to conduct an inquiry around personal capacities and ways to develop these, from the viewpoint of their own personal experience as a facilitator. Do you have any advice on how to structure the dialogue**
interviews with respondents based upon the conceptual model below?

For each capacity we ask you to reflect the following questions:

1. How would you describe this capacity?
2. Do you clearly understand the definition of this capacity?
3. What is missing from this definition/description?
4. Is this capacity useful in your work? Why? How?
5. What practices do you find helpful in developing this capacity?

**Overview of conceptual model draft 1**

Below is a visual representation of our initial conceptual model. ‘Being Present’ is placed at the centre because this seems like a central capacity required in facilitation, to which the other capacities help to enable. An alternative we have considered is placing self-awareness at the centre as a foundational capacity.

**Overview of conceptual model draft 2**

Below is a visual representation of our initial conceptual model. ‘Being Present’ is placed at the centre because this seems like a central capacity required in facilitation, to which the other capacities help to enable. An alternative we have considered is placing self-awareness at the centre as a foundational capacity.
However our aim is not specifically to identify causal relationships or hierarchies, so we would invite feedback on whether this is a appropriate way to visualise the model.

Definitions for the capacities

Below is a definition of each capacity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capacity Name</th>
<th>Being Present</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Definition</td>
<td>Focusing your awareness to the present moment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Definitions</td>
<td>Flow, Presence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Being present means showing up, undistracted, prepared...It allows you to check-in with yourself and develop the personal practice of..."
curiosity about the outcomes of any gathering. Presence means making space to devote a dedicated time to working with others”. (Woolf *et al* 2010, 15)

Being in flow (Csikszentmihaly 1991)

Using the senses and integrating the mind and body to connect with the current moment. (Own definition)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capacity Name</th>
<th>Self-Awareness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Our Primary Definition</strong></td>
<td>“Self-awareness is... a process where one continually comes to understand his or her unique talents, strengths, sense of purpose, core values, beliefs and desires.” (Avolio &amp; Gardner 2005, 324)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alternative Definitions</strong></td>
<td>(Intuition, Mindfulness, Inner Knowing, and Consciousness) “The ability to read one's emotions and recognise their impact while using gut feelings to guide decisions.” (Goleman 1998)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The capacity to observe, inquire and trust our internal state of mind, body and spirit

**Clarifying quotes**

“Personal awareness. A really strong facilitator needs to be able to understand what is going on within herself when she is with a group, as much as what is going on in the group. This is quite a profound meta-skill of facilitation, which is particularly important in less structured, more open-ended processes, and especially the more psychologically oriented processes. The facilitator is essentially holding the group, and needs to avoid projecting her own issues and insecurities onto the group. Personal awareness also relates to confidence, humility, the ability to be honest about one’s own limitations (what one is and isn’t capable of), and the willingness to not control or ‘over-facilitate’, and to hand over a process to participants when they are ready.” (Bojer *et al* 2006)

“None of our sociological scholars fully considered what Bill O’Brien called ‘the interior condition of the intervener.’ But we are at a stage now where we can begin to understand that our awareness and our consciousness determine the qualities of our actions and results.” (Scharmer 2007, 121)

The journey to sustainability begins with emotion.... and “As you increase your commitment to creating a planet where life thrives, you
will find that a deepening understanding of your own emotional energy is essential, as is time for quiet reflection.” (Schley 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capacity Name</th>
<th>Suspension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Definition</strong></td>
<td>The suspension of habitual patterns and opening oneself to the unknown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alternative Definitions</strong></td>
<td>Sense of Wonder, Letting Go, Open Mind, Detachment/Non-attachment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clarifying quotes</strong></td>
<td>“The capacity to suspend one’s Voice of Judgment (VoJ) and to attend to the situation at hand.” (Scharmer 2007, 494)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Letting go: The capacity to let go of your old self and your old identities and intentions in order to create an open space for your emerging or authentic Self to manifest.” (Scharmer 2007, 492)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open mind: “The capacity to suspend judgment and to inquire; to see something with fresh eyes; to access our sources of IQ (intellectual intelligence)”. (Scharmer 2007, 493)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capacity Name</th>
<th>Intention Aligned with Higher Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Definition</strong></td>
<td>“The open will relates to our ability to access our authentic purpose and self. This type of intelligence is also sometimes referred to as intention or as SQ (spiritual intelligence). (Scharmer 2007, 41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alternative Definitions</strong></td>
<td>Open Will, Letting Go &amp; Letting Come, Intentionality, Selfless Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Intentionality is the act of being that takes place during the microsecond before we act…. It is the act of looking at the myriad of possibilities that the future presents and choosing the one that best fits…and willing it into existence…doing the day to day actions to bring it into existence” (Jenkins &amp; Jenkins 2006, 171)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The will to be in pursuit of grounding [aligning] the higher intent through the actions we take regardless of the challenges that may arise.” (Woolf et al 2010, 14)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Brian Arthur once said to me: “Intention is not a powerful force. It’s the only force.” Connecting to the intention of our life’s journey establishes a vertical alignment and deepens our experience: “Who Am I?” and “What Am I Here For?” Therefore I can connect to that deeper place – to what is essential for me – the more I can clarify what I want to be in service of, the better I can act as an instrument for that emerging future to come into being.” (Scharmer 2010, 2)

“The seventh level of human motivation is selfless service to the cause that is the object of your soul purpose. This occurs when making a difference becomes a way of life. You know that there is nothing else for you to do with your life. Your ego and your soul are completely merged”. (Barrett 2010, 50)

“When our intentions and actions are aligned with a greater purpose, our personal issues and limitations drop away. We find ourselves energised behind a greater goal, and feel our personal purpose fitting with the needs of the world around us.” (Merry 2004, 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capacity Name</th>
<th>Compassion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Definition</td>
<td>The capacity to intentionally open oneself (emotionally), being vulnerable and compassionate in service to others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Definitions</td>
<td>Engagement, Open Heart, Empathy, Emotional Intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarifying quotes</td>
<td>“Engagement is the capacity to care, to commit and be generous with who and what you are, without knowing what the outcome will be”. (Jenkins &amp; Jenkins 2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appreciation and seeing with the heart [and emotions]. (Scharmer 1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Unrecognized and unspoken emotions seem to hold the keys to initiating the deep changes that lead to shifts in organizational fields. This is not easy for individuals who have succeeded in their careers by burying their emotions, especially difficult emotions like despair, sadness, and fear” (Jaworski et al. 1998, 6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capacity Name</th>
<th>Whole System Awareness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Definition</td>
<td>“A commitment to ‘the interest of the system as a whole’ beyond any individual self interests.” (Scharmer 1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Definitions</td>
<td>Social Awareness; Other-Awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complex ‘systemic’ problems require a whole-system perspective and they often require ‘the whole system’ (all</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
relevant stakeholders) to be in the room. (Own definition)

“Awareness is thus the process of sensing into a system, detecting something ‘invisible’, making it ‘visible’ by seeing and understanding it.” (Melnick et al. 2006)

“[...] fostering an awareness of how social systems interact and are interconnected with ecological systems, so the group may consciously choose to move towards sustainability.” (Kaiten et al. 2010, 23)

“As people see their part in creating their current reality, they begin to see that it can change, and they come to believe that they have a part to play in that change.” (Jaworski et al. 1998, 19)

The essence of systems thinking is to help people close the feedback loop between the enactment of system on a behavioural level and its invisible source of awareness and thought.” (Scharmer 2007, 80)

Clarifying quotes

‘We have been culturally conditioned to think that parts are more fundamental than wholes, that things are more ‘real’ than relationships. Given this assumption, our efforts to ‘see the big picture’ are doomed to failure. When we try to ‘put the pieces together,’ as Bohm said, ‘it is like trying to assemble the fragments of a broken mirror.’ But reality is already whole. Relationships are more fundamental than things. They define the processes which continually regenerate the things. Virtually all problems tackled by management are embedded in complex interrelationships, most of which are ignored when people set out to ‘fix’ things. The result is inherently low-leverage change that at best masks symptoms temporarily, while leaving underlying causes of problems unaddressed.’ (Scharmer 1998)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capacity Name</th>
<th>Personal Power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Definition</td>
<td>‘The drive of everything living to realise itself, with increasing intensity and extensity. Power in this sense is the drive to achieve one’s purpose, to get one’s job done, to grow’ (Tillich in Kahane 2010, 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Definitions</td>
<td>Brave heart, Manifestation, Action, Self-actualisation, Audacity to show up, Authenticity, Warriorship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related skills</td>
<td>Perseverance: a day-by-day decision not to give up (Wheatly 2010); Courage; Fearlessness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarifying quotes</td>
<td>‘You begin to understand that warriorship is a path or a thread that runs through your entire life. It is not just a technique that you apply...’</td>
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when an obstacle arises or when you are unhappy or depressed. Warriorship is a continual journey: To be a warrior is to learn to be genuine in every moment of your life.’
―Chögyam Trungpa (in Szpakowski 2010, 101)

‘Shambhala warriorship is a journey of discovering that we are authentic, dignified human beings capable of transforming aggression in order to create more enlightened societies and a more sustainable world. To do so requires a warrior’s spirit, which is gentle and intelligent, while also firm and brave.’ (Szpakowski 2010, 102)

D. Pre-interview survey for second group interviews

Greetings,
We have sent you this survey in preparation for our dialogue interview. The survey will explore your development of personal capacities and practices that support your facilitation work.

It would be ideal if you could complete the survey at least a day before our scheduled interview time. It should take no more than 30 minutes to complete. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Confidentiality: All responses will be confidential. If we want to use a quote from you we will seek your permission.

Directions: Please take a moment of stillness before starting the survey in order to empty your mind. Then answer each question according to your life of practice, including practices no longer used and practices used currently.

**Background Information**
1. What is your name? _____________________
2. Please describe the work you are doing and how long you have been facilitating organisational or community transformation? _____________________
3. How old are you? _____________________
4. Please check off all of the practices you have engaged in during your lifetime and the additional data asked. Any practices that you have not participated in may be skipped.
For each practice, answer the following questions:

- Do you participate in this practice currently or have you participated in the practice in the past? [past/current]
- How long have you been performing this practice? [less than a year/1-5 yrs/5-10 yrs/10+ yrs]
- How often do you typically perform this practice? [daily/weekly/monthly/occasionally]
- Typical time spent on the practice (per session)? [less than 1 hour/1-2 hours/2+ hours]
- How important would you rate this practice in supporting your work? [unsure/1-somewhat useful/3-very useful/5-essential]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meditation</th>
<th>Energy work</th>
<th>Reflective journaling</th>
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<td>Relaxation exercises</td>
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<td>Yoga</td>
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<td>Therapy</td>
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<td>Tai Chi</td>
<td>Guided imagery</td>
<td>Retreat</td>
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<td>Attention to Breath</td>
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<td>Chanting</td>
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<td>Generative Dialogue</td>
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<td>Spending time in nature</td>
<td>Silence</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Asking for help, having a mentor or coach, collaboration, dialogue circle, authors or others that help you develop personal capacities</td>
<td>Singing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Are there any other practices you have performed that are not listed?

6. When reflecting on the practices you have participated in, which ones have been most useful? Have these practices benefited your growth? How so?

7. If possible, please describe these practices in more detail. These details may include: how do you perform this practice and the length of performance, specific preparation, description, design and guidance used.
E. The Lotus - A Practice Guide for Authentic Leadership in SSD

This is a sample – the complete guide will be downloadable as PDF from www.thelotus.info

To become a leader, look within
- Deepak Chopra

To become a leader, you must first become a human being
- Peter Senge

He who controls others may be powerful, but he who has mastered himself is mightier still
- Lao Tzu

About this guide
This guide is the result of thesis research, executed by Dana Pearlman, Christopher Baan and Phil Long, for the Master’s in Strategic Leadership towards Sustainability, at Blekinge Institute of Technology, Sweden, 2011. The research consisted of literature review, personal experiences and deduction, and interviews and surveys with 33 facilitators, hosts and change agents working on transformational change and/or sustainability, from around Europe, North America and Africa.

How can you lead from your best self and effectively engage groups in collaboration processes in Strategic Sustainable Development? Find out what personal capacities authentic leaders find essential in their work when facilitating large scale, complex, transformational change in organisations and communities. We will share practices that develop your capacity to lead authentically and guidance to create a personal practice scheme that is holistically integrative and transformative.

Who is this guide for?
• Sustainability practitioners using the FSSD/Natural Step Framework.
• Facilitators, coaches and leaders working with complex transformative change committed to the authentic development of self, others and society at large.
• ALIA (Authentic Leadership in Action) community of practice and related networks, such as the Berkana Institute and the Presencing Institute.
• The Art of Hosting communities of practice.

I. Being Present

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What is it? Being Present means being fully aware and awake in the present moment – physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. This includes connecting to others, the environment around you and circumstances.

Principles: Show up, choose to be present. Pay attention to what has heart and meaning. (adapted from ‘Four-Fold Way: Principles To Guide A Learning Community’; www.equalvoice.com)

Our true home is in the present moment
To live in the present moment is a miracle.
The miracle is not to walk on water.
The miracle is to walk on the green Earth
... to appreciate the peace and beauty available now
... in our bodies and our spirits.
Once we learn to touch this peace, we will be healed and transformed.
It is not a matter of faith; it is a matter of practice.
- Thich Nhat Hanh

Self-reflection questions:

● Sit still for a moment in silence. What do you notice happening around you? When you observe yourself in the environment or space you are in, what are you sensing, hearing, smelling, feeling and noticing? How is your body, mind, spirit and heart in this moment?

Reflection questions during facilitation:

● What questions about the system you’re operating in helps you understand their current reality more fully? For example, how does the social system function (do people share viewpoints, listen to one another, have solidarity or use critical thinking?).

● What does the group need right now in order to proceed with the agenda? You could ask questions about the organisational structure, and any other part of the system you are working with.

● How am I feeling right now with this system or group (emotionally, spiritually, physically, mentally)? What do I need to acknowledge, and then put aside for later or focus on right now to be present with this group and help them become present?

Practices for developing your capacity to Be Present
Mindfulness meditation practice - helps you discern the reality of things rather than believing in false impressions or misinterpreting information. By sitting and doing nothing, this practice helps you train your mind to be calm and stable. An inexperienced practitioner may find the practice overwhelming at first. If this is the case, use concentration meditations (see Whole Self-Awareness) before beginning

**Breath exercises.** When you wake up first thing in the morning lie flat on your back and use a deep breath to scan the body. Find any existing tension in the body and breathe deeply into that area for 8 rounds of breath. If no tension exists, breathe through the chakras starting with the crown to the third eye to the throat to the heart to the solar plexus to the lower abdomen and to the root chakra on the inhale and on the exhale reverse the attention on the chakras beginning with the root chakra. Bring this breath work with you out in the world during the work-day, in your car, when listening to others. Try using the breath throughout the day to connect to the present moment.

**Resources for exploring Being Present**
- Rudolf Steiner: *Philosophy of Freedom* (originally published 1894)
- Owen Barfield: *Saving the Appearances: a Study in Idolatry* (1957)
- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe literature on phenomenology
- John Kabatt-Zinn’s literature on Mindfulness
- The Art of Hosting Conversations that matter: [http://bit.ly/jbRHeW](http://bit.ly/jbRHeW) for the fourfold path to enable being present while hosting or facilitating groups

**II. Suspension and Letting Go**

**What is it?** Suspension and Letting Go is the ability to actively experience and observe a thought, assumption, judgment, habitual pattern, emotion or sensation like fear, confusion and conflict, and then refraining from immediately reacting or responding to the situation.

**Principles:** Notice your judgments and assumptions coming up with yourself or other people. Either share them or park them and explore them later.

"For things to reveal themselves to us, we need to be ready to abandon our views about them."
— Thich Nhat Hanh

**Self-reflection questions:**
- Notice when you are judging yourself or others. What is your judgment? What is the source of this judgment? What do the judgments tell you about your values? If you did not have this judgment what else is possible?
- If you stop and listen deeply to yourself or others, what is being said beyond your comprehension? If you let go of habitual beliefs and assumptions, what is happening?
- Do you remember ever assuming something and letting it go to see what happens? What were your assumptions? Were your assumptions wrong? What did you learn?
Reflection questions during facilitation:

- What am I holding onto from the past that is hindering my ability to work with this group right now to be effective? What do I have to let go of in order to meet this group’s highest potential?
- What is possible if I give space for others to voice their ideas and opinions?
- If I let go of judgments or assumptions, what is possible that I cannot see yet?

Practices for developing your capacity to Suspend and Let Go

Meditation is very useful for developing the capacity to Suspend and Let Go. Vipassana meditation helps you witness consciousness; it is a practice of observing your emotional and mental states. Vipassana trains you to have a thought, and let it go or experience an emotion and witness it move through you. During this mediation, you aim to be detached to thoughts and sensations while observing them. For an explanation on Vipassana Meditation visit [http://bit.ly/kFuQjt](http://bit.ly/kFuQjt)

Bohmian Dialogue is a structured technique that helps you witness judgments, assumptions, cultural beliefs and personal values objectively within the context of a group. Dialogue provides a mirror to individual and collective consciousness. The Greek word for dialogue originally means ‘meaning flowing through’, as opposed to discussion meaning ‘breaking things apart’. It is a conversation with a centre, not with sides (Isaacs 1999). A group of people form a circle with no agenda, just a dialogue revolving around thinking collectively. The group gathers with the intention to observe what is being said in a non-judgmental way. Bohmian Dialogue Principles include:

1. The group agrees that no group-level decisions will be made in the conversation.
2. Each individual agrees to suspend judgment in the conversation.
3. As these individuals "suspend judgement" they also simultaneously are as honest and transparent as possible.
4. Individuals in the conversation try to build on other individuals’ ideas in the conversation. (Bohm 1996) but individuals do not argue, counter or break apart what is being said.

Resources


III. Intention Aligned with Higher Purpose:

What is it? Intention Aligned with Higher Purpose is the alignment of one’s authentic nature with the natural order in the world. This alignment trickles down to all facets of life including one's personal, professional and spiritual dimensions. “Where your deepest personal passion and the world's greatest needs align, there is opportunity”
Articulating one's higher purpose helps one embrace the unknown with profound trust.

**Principles**: Seek out what moves you at your core with how you can assist others and the world.

‘Intention is not a powerful force – it is the only force’
- W. Brian Arthur (in Scharmer 2007)

**Self-reflection questions**. Reflect upon these questions as though they are a ‘tuning fork’ for your purpose in life:
- When you imagine your highest self in the future, accomplishing your goals, what do you see? What are you accomplishing personally and professionally?
- How would you like people to remember you? What did you accomplish in your life that is worth remembering? What kinds of relationships did you have?
- What do you care about most in the world? What is/are your greatest passion(s)? How does this align with the world’s greatest needs?
- What moves you at your core? What is your calling?
- Why are you here on Earth at this time? If you look at the biography of your life what always comes back for alignment, and calls you to act for something beyond your own self gain?

**Reflection questions during facilitation**:
- If I look at the history of this community or organisation what always comes back for alignment or is at the core of these people coming together?
- What calls this group to act beyond their own individual self-interest?
- What is this group’s core purpose and greatest passion?

**Practices for developing Intention Aligned with Higher Purpose**
Andrew Cohen’s Five Tenets of Psychology Liberation (Source: [http://bit.ly/kGi1Oe](http://bit.ly/kGi1Oe)). This can be used as a tool for affirmations during concentration meditations. Take one tenet and repeat it to yourself as an affirmation during a meditation practice:
- Clarity of Intention: is foundational to spiritual life. Liberation is achieved by refraining from self-deception and seeking freedom.
- The Law of Volitionality: rather than assuming you are an unconscious victim, you know exactly what you are doing.
- Face Everything and Avoid Nothing: an ultimate form of spiritual practice asking, “how awake are you to what is motivating you to make the choices that you make? Because only if you’re paying close attention are you going to be able to bring the light of awareness into the darkest corners of your own psyche.”
- The Truth of Impersonality: All we do as humans is an impersonal affair. The “illusion of uniqueness the narcissistic self-sense that is ego, is created moment by moment through the compulsive and mechanical personalisation of almost every thought, feeling and experience we have.”
• For the Sake of the Whole: “The pursuit of enlightenment is for the transformation of the whole world, the enlightenment of the whole universe. It’s ultimately for the evolution of consciousness itself.”

U-journaling: use these guided journaling questions based upon Theory U to articulate your higher purpose: http://bit.ly/iOHFaa

IV. Compassion:

What is it? Compassion is having unconditional acceptance and kindness toward all the dimensions of oneself and others, regardless of circumstance. Compassion involves the ability to reflect upon oneself and others without judgment, but with recognition and trust that others are doing the best they can in any given situation.

Principles: Have compassion, for yourself and for others. Share in another person’s humanity.

‘The longest road you will ever walk is the sacred journey from your head to your heart’
- Phil Lane (native American)

Self-reflection questions:
• When you are sad or emotional, what do you do? Are you judging yourself or allowing feelings to move through you?
• Are you okay asking others for help?
• When someone else is sad, how do you respond? When you hear of a stranger suffering, how do you feel?
• Describe a time you felt pain or joy when listening to another’s story. Describe a time you enjoyed helping others. Describe a time you accepted or felt compassion for others different from yourself or doing things you thought were ‘wrong’.

Reflection questions during facilitation:
• What worldviews and perspectives exist in this group? How can you understand other people’s viewpoints and enable them to see others’ viewpoints? How can you hold all these viewpoints simultaneously as a facilitator?
• What are others feeling that I need to try to understand? Am I ignoring feelings within the system?
• What is the level of compassion in this group I am working with? How could I help increase the level of compassion in this group?

Practices for developing your capacity to have Compassion
Tonglen. Lojong mind training consists of various practices you may find easily online. Tonglen is a concentration meditation practice on compassion. The practitioner breathes in another person or animal’s suffering on the in-breath, and on
the out-breath sends them relief. You can focus on an individual or a group of people, animals or environmental suffering. On the in-breath imagine taking away suffering (breathe in as much as you can), and on the out-breath (breathe out as wide as you can) imagine sending relief, comfort and happiness to the people or animals you are focusing on.

**Loving-kindness meditation.** There are many visualisations, reflections, and guided meditations for developing loving kindness. The traditional pattern is to move outward from oneself, to a good friend, to "neutral" person to a difficult person or enemy and then gradually to the entire universe. A typical mantra would begin:

- *May I be safe and protected.*
- *May I be peaceful and happy.*
- *May I be healthy and strong.*
- *May I have ease of well being (and accept all the conditions of the world)*

- Then replace “I” with a good friend... then a neutral person... then a difficult person or enemy... then the entire universe with the same mantra above.


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**Resources**


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**V. Whole System Awareness:**

**What is it?** Whole System Awareness is the capacity to quickly switch between different perspectives, scales and worldviews to see the big picture, interconnections within the system, and being able to scale down to small details. Whole System Awareness is not just cognitive – you ‘sense’ it’. It is the understanding that everything is interconnected within a system.

**Principles:** Sense the system, pay attention to patterns. Invite essential stakeholder input to gain a wider perspective. Harvest collective intelligence surfacing from the group.

**Self-reflection questions:**

- What can I see, sense, feel, and intuit, about the system in which I’m living and working?
- How far have I set my system boundaries? What are the system boundaries in which I’m living and working? Are they determined by my family, my friends, my neighbourhood, my tribe, my city, my region, my country, my language, the world, all of humanity, all sentient beings, or the whole universe?
- How big are my spheres of control, influence, and concern respectively?
To what extent do I see myself as part of a larger whole, as dependent upon a larger, interconnected system?

**Reflection questions during facilitation:**
- What stakeholders could I talk to within the system to get a wider perspective of the system or for stronger collaboration and ownership among stakeholders?
- What patterns exist within the system that I can recognise?
- What is not being talked about within the system?
- What questions need to be asked for the system to reveal, sense and see itself?
- What experience does the system need to sense to see itself?

**Practices for developing Whole System Awareness**

*Body Whole System-Awareness, Notice yourself being aware of your own body as a whole system: all of your organs, your digestive system, and circulatory system are interconnected. Your body cannot function optimally if the one part of the system is not operating optimally. Now connect this concept to everything else (relationships, your home, the environment etc.). Ask yourself reflective questions: what is not whole in my relationship, my body, my workplace? If I work improve that area, how will it affect the whole system?*

A thought exercise: “What happens to one breath of air?” by astronomer Harlow Shapley: ([http://bit.ly/j9ve8N](http://bit.ly/j9ve8N)) demonstrating the gas argon in the air we all breathe is the same breath of argon used by Jesus Christ, Joan d’Arc and Mahatma Gandhi, for example. We literally all breathe the same air, and it cycles through us from all past generations to all future generations. This demonstrates the interconnections existing between everyone, as well as the laws of thermodynamics stating that matter within our biosphere does not disappear and all matter spreads within the biosphere.

**Resources:**

**VI. Whole Self-Awareness:**

What is it? Whole Self-Awareness is the continual, lifelong process of paying attention to knowing one’s self; it involves consciously and intentionally observing various dimensions of the self (including the physical, mental, shadow, emotional and spiritual realms). It is the capacity to observe how one is thinking, relating, feeling,
sensing, and judging. Whole Self-Awareness includes perceptions beyond the rational mind, such as intuition.

**Principles:** Pay attention to all the dimensions of yourself (physical, emotional, spiritual, shadow and mental dimensions). Your body is not a transporter for your head, you are a whole system.

**Self-reflection questions**
- How would others describe you? What do you tell yourself about yourself?
- Think of someone you admire, what do you admire about them? What does this tell you about your values? What can you learn about yourself from this admiration?
- Think of someone that irritates you, why do they irritate you? What does this tell you about your values? What can you learn about yourself from this irritation?
- When something is physically challenging to you, how do you respond?
- Are you aware of how you are feeling throughout the day?
- When you or someone else is emotional, how do you respond?
- How do I feel physically, emotional, spiritually, energetically and mentally right now?

**Reflection questions during facilitation:**
- What reactions am I having with this group that need to be explored or shared now or later?
- What do I perceive to be occurring beyond my cognition?
- Is my whole self (body, mind, spirit, emotion, and shadow) in alignment? Is my head agreeing to do something and another dimension of myself not in agreement?

**Practices for developing your Whole Self-Awareness**
*Concentration meditation practice.* These practices focus your thoughts on a particular object (such as the chakra system or visualising white light moving through the body) to shut out the outside world and prevent the mind from wandering. For example, focus upon the inhale and the exhale breath. On the inhale breath your posture elevates and on the exhale breath your posture settles. Repeat for a few minutes and extend this time with practice. This helps calm the parasympathetic nervous system to help you relax. Once calm from the concentration breathing, an awareness meditation practice like Mindfulness (See Being Present Practices) helps you see the nature of your mind. With compassion move toward embracing all of yourself and seeing the patterns of thinking including judging, planning, yearning and fearing that show up. This enables you to begin to discern between unconscious material surfacing in your thoughts from the past and accurately receiving information in the present moment.
‘Core Qualities’ practice (by Frank Heckman - [www.frankheckman.nl](http://www.frankheckman.nl)). Tell a story to a peer or mentor about a time when you were doing something challenging in which you persevered by stepping up and being courageous. Have the other person listen to your story and take note of the qualities you displayed in that situation to feedback to you. These qualities are your core qualities of personal strength you embody in your life. Repeat with another story. This practice also helps you become aware of your Personal Power.

**Giving and receiving feedback.** Intentionally ask others (peers, co-workers, mentors, family members) for feedback on your behaviour to see areas for your growth in order to increase the quality of your work, relationships and self-understanding. Being open to feedback and listening is key. Start this process with someone you trust most. *Notice* if and when you feel defensive, refrain from responding, and explore how receiving feedback impacts you. Use specific examples and reflect back to the person what you think you heard them say for accuracy and clarity. Use an actual experience. Ask the person giving feedback to focus upon:

- What behaviours they observed you doing?
- What was the outcome of the situation and how did it impact them?
- What feelings did they feel?
- Now ask yourself, what future opportunities for new actions are available to you now given the feedback? And remember to have compassion with yourself.

A **physical practice** such as yoga, Thai Chi, martial arts to integrate a holistic approach and address more dimensions of yourself.

Practice for working with Shadows: Facilitators work with all kinds of people and situations and are bound to be irritated or triggered sometimes. If you focus your energy on the ‘outer’ trigger, you are missing the gem in the lesson from self-reflection; by being angry at the person triggering you, you are really just shooting the messenger. When in process, try to notice when an irritant or trigger or dislike arises and write it down, suspend it temporarily and return to it for exploration when appropriate. Describe the event, how you felt, what reaction you normally would have had if you had not suspended your reaction, and how that situation may represent a repressed part of yourself from long ago. Seeing irritations as shadows that need to be explored helps you gain acceptance, compassion and awareness of yourself and others, it teaches you to suspend when an irritation occurs.

**Resources:**

- The Johari Window: mapping personality awareness: [http://kevan.org/johari](http://kevan.org/johari)
- Goleman, Daniel; Richard E Boyatzis; Anne McKee. 2004. *Primal Leadership: Learning to Lead with Emotional Intelligence*
VII. Personal Power

What is it? The ability to use energy and drive to manifest wise actions in the world for the greater good, while being aware of one’s influences on a situation.

Principles: Step up, be courageous, acknowledge your influence in this system, and know when to give space for others to step up.

Self-reflection questions
- Imagine a time when you felt powerful/powerless/afraid and ask yourself how did you respond/feel/act in that situation?
- Have you ever agreed to do something you did not want to do? Did you ever compromise your own ideas/plans when someone else had a different plan, or vice versa?
- Are you willing to take risks and do things others may not approve of? Who do you try to get approval from?

Reflection questions during facilitation:
- How much power do I have in this situation or with this group? Am I okay with having this amount of power? If not, what do I need to do?
- What powerful mentors, images or experiences can I call upon to support me in this facilitation process?
- How is power manifesting within this group? Who has power, who does not? What power shifts are possible within this group for the greater good for all?
- What steps do I need to take to empower this group, so they can continue their work after I’m done, without depending on me as an external intervener?

Practices for developing Personal Power

Aikido or other martial arts. Using simulations eliciting fear or feelings of power or powerlessness helps you gain self-awareness of your relationship to power and how you respond to these types of experiences. For instance, by practicing Aikido you are confronted with moments of being ‘attacked’ and dealing with personal reactions to aggression. The practice helps participants see their responses, helps them suspend them and be mindful about how to proceed. When facilitating collaboration, facilitators oftentimes must confront fear and power within groups.

Use mentors or archetypes to embody the power and support needed during facilitation work. One example includes calling upon the wisdom of the Dalai Lama to come through your mind, the love of Mother Theresa to come through your heart and the courage of Martin Luther King, Jr. come through your gut. Imagine their energy, determination and personal power being channeled through you to support your work (See Wendy Palmers website for more information: Conscious Embodiment. http://bit.ly/aVlKS9)
VIII. Sense of Humour

What is it? It is the universal experience of simultaneous amusement, laughter and joy culminating from an experience, thought or sensation. Having a ‘sense of humour’ or being ‘light-hearted’ is an essential capacity. Many people working in transformational change and sustainability are ‘over earnest’, and when working with such serious issues, a sense of humour is vital in maintaining an optimistic outlook, without which such work could be a recipe for depression.

Principles: Do not take yourself, others and the world too seriously. Pay attention to the ironic and sweet edges of reality around you.

Relevance for facilitation

Why is it important to have a sense of humour in facilitation? It is a great social lubricant and can help create buoyancy during a difficult phase of a facilitation process. It can be especially useful in helping people take conversations to difficult places and “making going deep more comfortable”. A Sense of Humour helps you hold paradoxes, polarities and ambiguity with a sense of delight and even joy, with a large dose of irony, which creates “a sparkle rather than a grind” (Chender 2011). Humour by its very nature can help open people up to incongruity and experience a sudden shift in perspective, which may be conducive to seeing things with fresh eyes and suspending old beliefs, which is at the heart of facilitating collaborative change.

“It’s a dire situation we are in in many ways, but if you don’t have a gap and see the ironic and sweet edges of the whole travesty you become very grim. I have met a lot of people I agree with in terms of positions but they are miserable and they are angry and that anger is not the best ground from which to exercise any transformational activity”
- Marty Janowitz

“Humour can be seen as the handle on the door of awareness”
- Marty Janowitz

Self-reflection questions

- What is keeping you from shifting your perspective and being light-hearted?
- Are you taking yourself too seriously? How can you lighten up and see the humour?

Reflection questions during facilitation

- In the midst of chaos and difficulty, if I turned this situation around and saw the irony or the humour, what would I see differently?
- Are you taking the process, the group and the outcome too seriously? How can you shift this seriousness to a sense of light-heartedness?
Practices for developing a Sense of Humour

Both meditation and play are useful practices to help you not take yourself too seriously. Indeed a mindfulness practice of observing the antics of the mind should perhaps itself be accompanied by a Sense of Humour, which may ease witnessing our often neurotic stream of consciousness. Self-awareness practice without light-heartedness could lead to a self-conscious or self-absorbed frame of mind.

Resources:

● For ideas on how to add more humour to your life see 19 Ways to Enhance your Sense of Humour from the Reader’s Digest: http://bit.ly/eN9oyv

IX. Dealing with Dualities and Paradoxes

What is it? Dealing with Dualities and Paradoxes is the capacity to sit with ambiguity in a facilitation session, manage polarities, and hold multiple perspectives.

Principles

Have deep trust in yourself, others and outcomes, even if the outcome is uncertain. Be okay with whatever is occurring, while simultaneously guiding the group toward a desirable outcome.

Relevance to facilitation:

Why is the capacity to deal with dualities and paradox important for facilitators? A core element of the capacity to deal with paradoxes is holding creative tension. A key skill of creativity is the capacity to remain inwardly structured, that is, in one’s thoughts, feelings, and volition, even if one is in completely unstructured, unknown conceptual or relational territory. In practice this translates into the capacity as a facilitator to guide a team through a creative process in a short period of time where stakes are high in an unknown and uncertain territory.

An essential capacity for successful facilitative leaders is holding the paradox of having both a deep acceptance of what is, and simultaneously have a profound yearning for something else; for something better than current social reality (what should be); a yearning to solve today’s huge crises. We see the importance of handling this paradox especially in the sustainability realm. Successful facilitative leaders are people who can work and live in those two worlds simultaneously, they can engage both with the realists, the pragmatists and the idealists.

Self-reflection questions

● When have you shifted your perspective? What happened to enable this shift? What was the process and what did you learn? Reflect upon how this process unfolded to see how you shift your beliefs.
When have you sat with ambiguity and irritation, accepting not knowing, and trusting that the outcome would be okay? How were you able to let go of control and not resolving the situation? How did that help you gain a wider perspective? Did you achieve a more desirable result?

Reflection questions during facilitation

- What multiple perspectives exist within this group? How can you engage all these people by speaking to their worldviews?
- What polarities exist within the facilitation process? How do these polarities enhance the critical thinking within the group? How can you manage these polarities for the best outcome for everyone?

Practices for developing Holding Polarities and Ambiguity

- This capacity may be developed through the continuous balancing of the previous capacities and their interrelationships that seem to be in tension with each other, e.g. Whole Self-Awareness vs. Whole System Awareness, Compassion vs. Personal Power.
- Yoga helps you develop the ability to hold polarities and sit with ambiguity. During yoga practice, you are taught to intermittently exert yourself with strength and then rest in stillness. You increase mental stamina and physical power while learning to be physically flexible and allowing yourself to surrender mentally. A yoga practitioner learns to surrender into a posture by softening their body, rather than through force. The practice of yoga helps you learn to accept the posture you manifest, even if it is awkward and imperfect, all the while maintaining a desire for improvement.

Resources

- Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching: www.thetao.info

General Sample Practices and Exercises: it is best to incorporate an integrated and holistic practice scheme to exercises all of your dimensions (physical, mental, spiritual, emotional) for the greatest personal growth, oftentimes incorporating more than one practice. Find practices you enjoy. An integrated, holistic practice is supported by the quality of intention and attention given to the practice. Below are some sample practices and links to further resources that were described to us by facilitative leaders during our research.

Further reading and practice

Sustainability

100
Leadership/ hosting

- Art of Hosting: [www.artofhosting.org](http://www.artofhosting.org)
- ALIA (Authentic Leadership in Action): [www.aliainstitute.org](http://www.aliainstitute.org)
- Presencing/Theory U (tool books and principles): [www.presencing.com](http://www.presencing.com)
- Berkana Institute: [www.berkana.org](http://www.berkana.org)

Personal development


Practice

F. Practice Classification

The many practices identified by respondents during the survey and interview process were classified into practice areas for the purpose of analysing correlation between practice areas and the development of specific capacities. The below table describes the classification groups. Although a practice could easily be classified in more than one group, for the purpose of the analysis each practice was assigned to only one group, and which ever classification that chosen was used consistently across the entire data set.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creative Practice</td>
<td>Any practice primarily involving using the creative arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue Practice</td>
<td>Conversation practice where two or more sides work together toward a common understanding using the principles of deep listening, suspension, voicing and respect (Isaacs 1999; Bohm 1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy Practice</td>
<td>Any type of practice primarily concerned with working with Qi energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games</td>
<td>Any practice involving gameplay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meditative Practice</td>
<td>Any type of meditation that is primarily 'on the cushion'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindfulness Practice</td>
<td>Any mindfulness awareness practice that is not 'on the cushion' such as walking meditation, or sense awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement Practice</td>
<td>Any type of body movement practice that is not primarily concerned with working with Qi energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature Practice</td>
<td>Being in nature in a conscious/contemplative way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Support</td>
<td>Asking for help, seeking feedback and getting support from others either formally through a mentor/coach or through friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Practice</td>
<td>A contemplative practice that involves reflecting on experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study (Theory/Texts)</td>
<td>Studying and practicing a specific theory, sacred texts or belief system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice Practice</td>
<td>Any practice using the voice such as singing, mantras, chanting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>