

# THE ART OF

## Participation and Engagement



Leeds  
August 2013

### Day One - Check in

A brilliant way to start any meeting helping us to become present and ready - use a talking piece, sit in circle and have a good question:

#### What in you responded to this invitation?

*Making space for the new - doing it differently*

*Space to think, reflect, slow down to go faster*

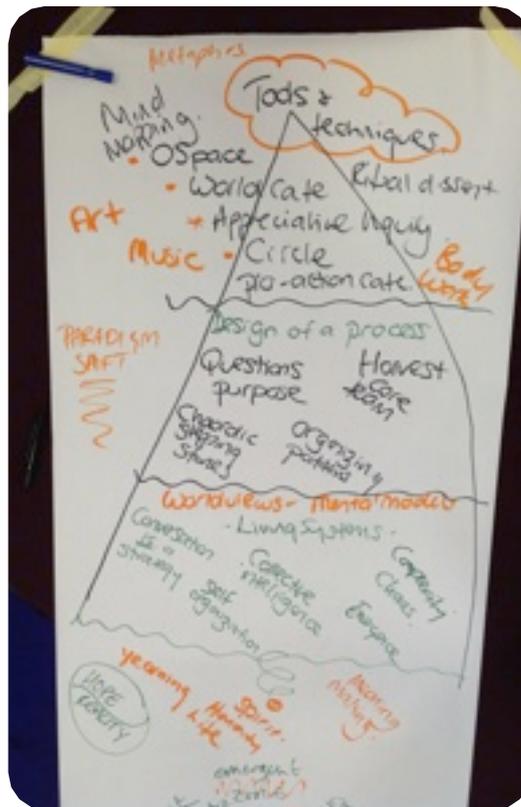
*Why am I here really ?*

*Silenced communities*

*Sick of meetings and activism - shaking up*

*Humanity in the workplace*

*Healing, recovery in a new hard complex world*



**Tools and techniques are the visible part of hosting. Strong design, good harvesting and calling in meaning and purpose are what makes a good meeting great**

**Some mental models: the Chaordic path, navigating between order and chaos, and Divergence, Emergence. Convergence. Good patterns to bear in mind**



### It's all about conversation...

- World Café is a method for fostering interaction & dialogue with both large and small groups.
- It's effective in surfacing the collective wisdom of large groups of diverse people around questions that matter in real life situations.
- It helps a community to surface and deepen its conversation to action.

More:

[www.theworldcafecommunity.org/](http://www.theworldcafecommunity.org/)

## What question, if given attention, would revitalize our work around participation and engagement?

- What's worth doing even if you fail?
- How do I empower and become empowered?
- Do we live according to the values and purpose we seek to share in engaging and participating with others?
- What do we think our purpose is?
- What are we doing well and what does that mean for us
- WHY - People self?
- Time allocation, emergence
- How do we collectively identify and share purpose

### Still and fizzy water - **Checking out**

Feeling humility and grace and getting to the heart of the matter slowly, but quickly.

Is the system I work in really ready to open up? How do you get people on board?

Making meaning together and asking questions about deeper purpose, mine and ours.

Tell me how to deal with difficult conversations and difficult people.

This feels right, opening up conversation like this and knowing that silence is part of the conversation.

Translate this into my reality, how do you use this in communities, in local authorities – what will I do next?

I want to come back to it tomorrow and learn more of this craft of meaningful dialogue.

Yet it feels right, I'm in the right place at the right time.

I can see the light at the end of the tunnel. I'm being generous with my curiosity.

Something clicked, I can see the care that went into this and I can feel the enormous possibilities in the room, all the connections. What might we do together? – the art of conversation.

And..... I'm starting to feel more confidence .....but wondering what my role is

What does the future hold, how do I bring this into my context?

I'm really part of this, my values might be challenged but I can do it. I know you, I'm on the right path.

**Is the system willing to open up?**

## Day Two

### Check in - Aikido and body work

First host yourself

Learning through the body, different ways of dealing with pressure and attack. Being centered and blending and redirecting.



What are your hotspots?

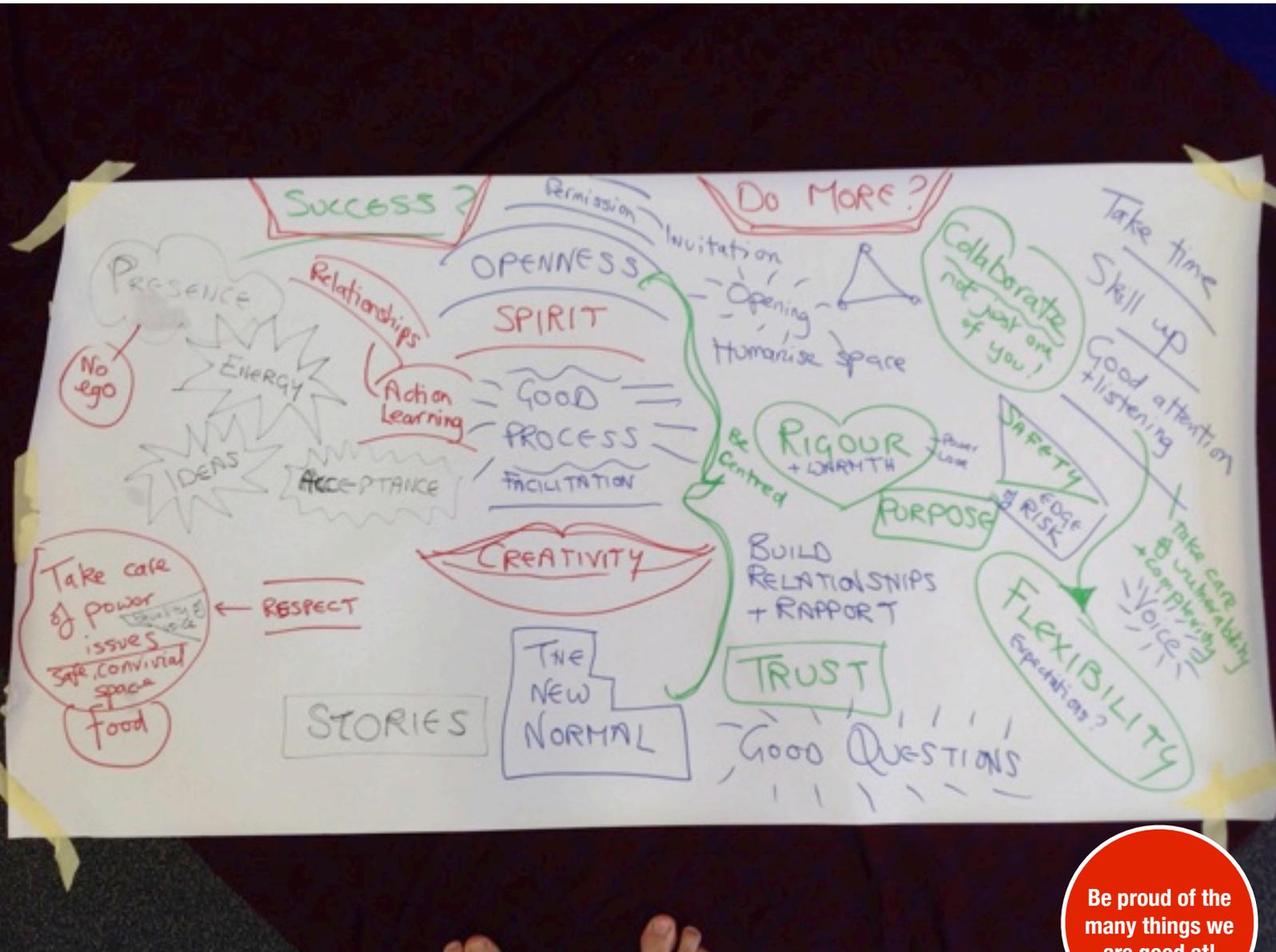
### Appreciative Inquiry

Tell a story of a time when you were in a really good participative meeting - what made it possible and made the difference? What would we need to be doing more of to make this the new normal?



# The Art of Harvesting

Making sense of the stories, what leads to success and what do we need to do more of ?



- Energy
- Relationship
- Respect
- Acceptance
- No Ego
- Take care of power issues
- Presence
- Creativity
- Openness
- Good process



- Invite
- Humanize space
- Rigour
- Warmth
- Purpose
- Good Questions
- Trust
- Flexibility
- Edge of risk
- Voice

## What happens when you open space?

Another name for this way of working might be “participant led sessions”, an opportunity for anyone to propose the topic of a conversation session and see who might come to contribute their expertise and thinking. Often we are surprised at how much we can expand our thinking when we think together.

More: [www.openspaceworld.org](http://www.openspaceworld.org)



Wally  
I want to host an event themed on promoting a "Community of Colour"....  
Please help... **THEMBU!**

Suzanne  
If you were starting a project / new job or in transition. What thing would you do in the 1<sup>st</sup> 30 days to get you going / what would you want to achieve?

How can we stimulate and support partnership working so that Leeds can be the best city for all its communities? **Mhe**

How to make a conversation between people of difference seem attractive - is it so people come?  
*xxxxxx*

As a diverse changing City (Leeds) How do we continue to engage with marginalised groups?  
- celebrate uniqueness  
**Nattylyn** 😊 *active*

How can conversation become an art practice?  
**Lesley**

How can we help/support people suffering from mental health issues to be more productive rather than being seen as a liability to the system or economy. **Walter**

HOW DO WE / I ENGAGE YP IN SEEMINGLY "BORING" CONVERSATION?  
**CADHERA**

Freelancing - who? where? how? hosting + facilitator  
**LARVA**

How can we encourage busy volunteers to engage with organisational issues not just projects  
**Peter**

How do we create co-operative learning spaces?  
Balance of input/dominating or collective wisdom  
**Jonathan**

How can the importance of the work I'm doing be recognised and be sustainable/commie?  
**TRUDY**

MIGRANTS INTEGRATION  
**JACQUE**

# CHECK OUT

What are you taking from this training and what are you committing to do now?

I want to learn more about AI and DO IT

I love the check in and check out - going to try this out soon

I'm not gonna work alone, I'm gonna get support get some real allies

I feel really excited to try out these new processes

make this way of working the new normal

I have learnt to trust people to self organise

Im going to put myself forward more, be braver

Im ready to start putting this into practice in community

This has affirmed my values and makes me feel good about the work I do

I'm taking away the incredible power of working with quesitons

I feel more comfortable to get involved in politics in Leeds now

The power of conversation when we talk about what really matters to us

This really works and I cant wait to try it out

I want to learn more and share what I've learnt

I have really appreciated the space and time to think about the meaning of my work

Let's do it again together soon !

## Hosting and Training Team:

- Linda Mitchell [www.lindajoymitchell.org.uk](http://www.lindajoymitchell.org.uk)
- Mike Love and Ed Carlisle: Together for Peace [www.t4p.org.uk](http://www.t4p.org.uk)
- Lesley Wood
- Paul Magnall [www.redkitecomputers.co.uk](http://www.redkitecomputers.co.uk)