

A WORKBOOK AND ONLINE COMMUNITY for Co-CREATING OUR SUSTAINABILITY ETHIC

Section III – Transformative Learning Chapter 2 - Paradigm Shifts

... there are two fundamentally different sources of cognition. One is the application of existing frameworks (downloading) and the other accessing one's inner knowing. All true innovation in science, business, and society is based on the latter...

Brian Arthur, Santa Fe Institute
in conversation with Otto Scharmer
Executive Summary of 'Theory U', p.5

How can we open our hearts and our minds to learning from other cultures, our own misunderstandings, and nature?

This book is largely about transformational learning and its organic quality of serving as the basis for discerning deeper insights. There are several transformational changes that have been covered already, like finite and infinite games; 'Chaordic Governance' with its notion of blending apparent opposites, and articulating clear purpose and principles; selection of a dominant paradigm when blending apparent opposites; and incorporating 'Living Systems' as the primary science in our education systems.

Let me share a story of learning that came from paying attention to my own dissonance. It occurred while feeling stuck, trying to write this book. A friend called and asked me to attend his graduation from a Landmark course. I knew of Landmark and their focus on transformation so I joined him and his wife for an evening of celebration and recruitment of new Landmark students. As I listened to testimonials from folks who had experienced some significant life breakthroughs, it became clear to me that the transformation for most was in taking a problem and discerning the

possibility of resolving it by seeing it as an opportunity, recognizing their own culpability, and taking the initiative to address what was usually a longstanding personal difference. This problem orientation is quite different than the appreciative orientation so integral to this book. When it came time to sign guests up for taking a Landmark offering, I told my hosts that I would not be signing up that evening, and that I would need to reflect and consult with some friends and family. A Landmark 'recruiter' came over and joined us and asked if I was signing up and I told her, 'not tonight', and mentioned the nature of the breakthroughs that I was addressing in this book. She thought a moment and said, 'you're right – we need to be stewards of the Earth'. I agreed and said, 'and, we need to move beyond stewardship to the recognition that this loving place that gives and nourishes life is our steward – that our responsibility may run much deeper'. The dissonance for me was the hubris associated with our assumption of stewardship. There was a recognition of ongoing co-creation – one that requires an ethic so that we are in harmony with our planet and the Universe.

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Reflection

We have each had transformational learning moments in which the newness of someone else's teaching or an experience we've had informs us about a misunderstood belief. We may have had to 'listen' to the lesson several times; perhaps discern it in different contexts. One day there was an 'aha'.

What sort of experiences did you have that culminated in revelation for you?

What new paradigm(s) are integral to your thinking?

How have you changed your ways of acceptance and learning from others?