

The Deep U – Presencing

By [Dennis Klocek](#) | November 25, 2012

The crux of the Theory U methodologies is found in the bottom of the U in what is sometimes called the deep U. This is the realm of presencing, the place where old beliefs and shadow elements are revealed as impediments to further progress and are abandoned into a soul space where a person tries to make him or herself open to inspirations of the heart. These inspirations theoretically allow the person or the organization to transcend dysfunction and move on to a dynamic stage of embodying the heart inspirations into action. In theory this is quite in line with esoteric practice. In reality however even Otto Scharmer one of the founders of Theory U realizes that “new solutions can only come from personal awareness”.

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In the book “Presence” by Jaworski, Scharmer, Senge and Flowers, the following passage crystallizes this issue. “The problem in theory U is that forming visions of what needs to be done occur too far up the left side of the U. When this happens people form visions that are disconnected from a shared understanding of the present reality. This amounts to an attempt at forming a change of strategy for fixing problems that they have not yet seen their part in creating. Only when people see their part in how those forces might evolve does vision become powerful. Everything else is vague hope. That is why most visions management teams come up with are superficial. They are usually the result of one or two people’s ideas imposed on the group.”

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The issue here is the failure of presencing to move the individual into a true heart space capable of receiving inspirations that are needed to change a dysfunctional personality pattern. This is because the act of presencing carries within itself a paradox, that being, the act of presencing can only be cognized after the fact and not in the presence of the inspiring idea or being. This gap in the continuity of consciousness is an archetypal reality known as the threshold. Problematic issues surrounding the experience of the threshold have informed the philosophical dialogue about self transformation or organizational transformation since the most ancient times. However intense focus on the problematic issues of the threshold experience often marginalizes the great potentials for using the characteristics of the threshold as a creative tool. The threshold can be used as a rich source of creative insight once the heart is taught how to form living concepts rather than analytical concepts. This shift involves an understanding of the issue of form in the natural world as a symbol of inner states of consciousness.

Exploring the Threshold

This issue can be traced back to the ancient world where it is evidenced in the different approaches to cognition found in Plato and Aristotle. Plato was summarizing the ancient world view that the spiritual world was populated by spiritual beings who made their presence known to human consciousness in the human experience of forming ideas. For Plato an idea was a creative Form. A creative Form was a spiritual being who was acting in a particular or organized way. Today we would call such a being an archetype. The most fundamental attribute of an archetypal Form being was “appearance”. Forms appear to humans and inspire ideas. Both Plato and Aristotle understood that ideas appear from somewhere but their approach to where they appear from is quite different. To illustrate this it is useful to [look at the concept of Form in both Plato and Aristotle](#).

For Plato Form was a process of revelation or appearance of an archetypal being. This idea is contained in his use of the term Eidos. Eidos from which we get our word idea, means that which is seen in Greek. The Sanskrit root has a reference to that which is known. Eidos as a term is also closely associated with the idea of a figure or the appearance of a figure. For Plato Eidos or idea described the activity of supersensible beings who lived in a transcendent realm and appeared to humans in moments of understanding. However, appearance is a tricky word. It can be either a verb "to appear" or an noun such the physical appearance of something. It also has a meaning of something that is a false representation of a true reality, such as it only appears that the horizon is flat. These variations are often cited by Plato's critics as a proof that the transcendent realm where he placed the Forms that create the world is really an illusion. The reasoning is that since this realm can't be experienced directly and has ambiguous meanings it is not a viable basis for a philosophical viewpoint.

For Plato the condition of Eidos was only half of the necessary components of a view of reality. Eidos was the unrevealed or as Otto Scharmer calls it the not- yet –embodied knowledge. Eidos is potential knowledge. We can recognize that the knowledge that guides the phenomena of nature is organized. For Plato this apparent organization was the mark of a consciousness of a high order. The beings who possessed such a consciousness he called Forms. The Forms were unmanifest but created forms that were manifest in the natural world. For Plato Eidos, the unmanifest intelligence of the Forms, was polar to the manifest knowledge that he called phainomenon. Eidos was unmanifest phainomenon and phainomenon was manifest Eidos. Here is where things get a bit tricky because phainomenon, like Eidos is also translated as appearance or that which is seen. But phainomenon refers to the things appearing to be causes that arise from human interaction with the objects that are present in the world around us. This then relates to our present use of the term phenomenon.

Since both Eidos and phainomenon refer to that which is seen might it be possible that there are two different ways of seeing? When we are struggling to understand an idea and we finally arrive at insight we say, "Oh, I see." The vision used to see an inner image and the vision used to see and outer object are linked but are not the same. The distinction between the inner vision of Eidos and the outer vision of phainomenon is one way to parse out the conundrum of Form and form. This issue comes to the fore then in the philosophy of Aristotle who also was concerned with phainomenon and the issue of form.

The difficulty with Plato was that his vision of the Forms as archetypal creators of the cosmos was that they were immutable, fully evolved and universally perfect. The Platonic Forms were particular and never changed. This created a difficulty for his pupil Aristotle who had an inquiring mind and understood that change was the most universal essence of all. For Plato phainomenon was a derivative state. For Aristotle phainomenon was the primary condition for philosophical or scientific inquiry. This impulse is based on an assumption that the revealed phenomena of nature have some hidden truth that must be discovered by the action of the intellect. Aristotle's term for this initial exploration of the phainomenon was hyle. Hyle literally means wood in Greek. It is the source of Aristotle's fundamental philosophical approach known as hylomorphism (the form of wood). In this philosophy hyle is akin to a piece of wood that has potential to become many things. Hyle is a condition where being is unmanifest as a particular object but exists as a general object with great potential. Hyle is the potential from which all forms will arise through causative interactions.

Wood can be a spoon or a house depending upon the causative actions that are performed on it. The evolution of the wood is dependent upon a train of relationships that give it form. Seen this way words are the hyle of sentences. They exist as potential sentences and have meanings of their own but only come into true form or actualize when linked to other phenomena. Words become

sentences and sentences become paragraphs and paragraphs become books. These elements of writing are forms that have the potential to become a particular or actual form. The form that they become out of their hyle state Aristotle called *morphe*.

For Plato Eidos was linked to a supersensible inspiring being and phenomenon was the manifestation of the inspirations of that supersensible being. The polarity is the unmanifest and the manifest. Using the same polarity Aristotle dispensed with immutable supersensible beings and brought the unmanifest into the realm of the intellect by presuming the phenomena of the natural world presented to the senses were created out of a mystery condition. It was the function of the human intellect to seek causes for the forms by relating the forms and causation of one phenomenon to the causation of another phenomenon. The process of Form becoming form has come down to the physical realm in Aristotle and the intellect is used to explore the phenomenal relationships between causes searching for what Aristotle called an “actuality” or essence that represents the state of creative potential rather than assuming a primal being that can’t be experienced or evolved.

The Issue of Presencing

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This difference leads back then to the issue of presencing in the theory U. The initial stage of the U process, the sensing phase, requires the development of a Goethean capacity to see the phenomena of nature as morphological evolutionary processes. This involves seeing the stage of a flowering plant, for instance, as a series of inner pictures starting with the root emerging from a seed and ending with an inner image of a plant bearing seeds. This type of visualization is a morphological training to see form as an ongoing series of unfolding processes instead of a resulting accumulation of separate organs. This is Goethean morphology. The goal of this work in the U process is to develop an appreciation for the subtle changes possible in the production of forms. Goethe felt that the archetype or spiritual template of the plant was active in guiding each step of the process of unfolding of the forms leading up to flowering and seed production. This is an echo of Plato.

In theory U the purpose of these practices is to develop organs of perception in the soul for the unmanifest potentials in situations, events, and people in the pursuit of business. In theory this is a reasonable ideal. One would expect that there would be a transference of the capacity to register subtle changes in the context of wholeness of archetype in nature to that same perception in the realm of the soul life of colleagues or clients. In practice the ability to do Goethan morphology doesn’t often lead the business processes to the first stage of presencing that of letting go. It is one thing to be able to track the changes in a plant and quite another to be able to observe a fixed idea in one’s own inner life.

Intentionality and Motivation

The plant is an *image* of life. In the deepest essence the true being of the human *is* life.

To understand this it is useful to look at a fundamental idea in the philosopher Edmund Husserl. Husserl’s thought was in the tradition of Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas and the phenomenology of Goethe through the work of his teacher Franz Brentano. Husserl understood that the life of a human is of a whole different order than the life of a plant. The plant is an image of life. In the deepest essence the true being of the human is life. All inquiry for Husserl must stem from the recognition of the true nature of the human as a universal essence. Husserl began his career as a philosopher practicing phenomenology as an observation of the sense world. He developed what he

called epoche or bracketing as a way of disciplining his observations of nature. Epoche was in essence a deep awareness of how the mind moves as it engages sense experience. His observations of nature in phenomenology he called local epoche. However, as he developed as a thinker these inner events of observation of how the mind works in perception gradually moved his thinking towards considerations of the nature of the soul. Phenomenology of the sense world had given him insight into the epistemological role of human existence as an agent of transformation of the world. This change spawned what he called universal epoche that was focused on the act of perception itself rather than the sense object. Universal epoche was for Husserl the logical outcome of local epoche and a necessary component in understanding the role of the human being as knower in the cosmic scheme. For Husserl the individual human was the agent that made manifest the unmanifest. This is an echo of Aristotle but is directed towards the issue of the [transcendence of the human as an act of mystery wisdom](#) [PDF].

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Here it is possible to sketch a concern for the letting go and letting come of the presencing stage in theory U. Husserl had a methodology for attaining what he called "intuition". For him intuition was the capacity to experience the immediate beholding of eternal or universal truths. Husserl understood that it was the *intentionality* of the phenomenology that was most important in the work. The bracketing of the world was secondary.

For a deeper insight into intentionality we can turn to Rudolf Steiner who in his Study of Man asserts that the activity of the will in the human I being is the perception of motive. We could say the True Self has the intent to understand the motive force of the will. Taken further we could say that this is the reason for existence as a human. For this reason it is not sufficient to expect that a phenomenological method of studying nature will automatically lead to insights about oneself or others. For that the phenomenology must be developed around the perception of motives and the accompanying limiting feelings for the motives in the human soul. This points to the difficulty of "letting go" in the presencing phase of the theory U process.

Goethe himself cautioned against simply applying known methodologies to solve problems in unknown situations. In his aphorisms he says, "Inherited formulas frequently repeated, lead to convictions. Utterly dulling the organs of perception". This is particularly apt since goal of the phenomenology in the sensing phase is to awaken the organs of perception. To awaken latent organs of perception in the natural world requires observing and observing in local epoche methodology. To awaken latent organs of perception in the soul realm requires that a clear insight into the motives for actions be observed. This is the universal epoche of Husserl. However, this need to be further brought into focus by transforming inner images based on memories into living picture imaginations.

Working with Symbols

It is true that the organ of perception for living picture imaginations is developed through phenomenology of the natural world and a further refinement of this organ is accomplished by mindfulness of the "letting go" phase. But in order to truly let go of memory images that prevent soul evolution it is necessary to develop what Peter Senge calls self mastery. Self mastery requires that the organ of perception be applied to exploring the inner dialogue with the True Self or what Rudolf Steiner calls the Guardian of the Threshold. Rudolf Steiner advises that dialogue with the Guardian is most effectively accomplished by working with symbols of inner states of consciousness across the threshold of sleep. The practice of taking symbolic pictures into sleep is the ultimate "letting go" of memories that prevent inner insights from developing. This practice has its roots in Rosicrucian alchemy. For insights into soul alchemy it is useful to consult with the psychology of Carl Jung.

Jung felt that the key to allowing a person to transform fixed ideas in the soul was to provide an artistic methodology for working with symbols. He suggested to all of his patients that they take up painting with the specific content of the alchemical mandala. An alchemical mandala of the four elements can be considered to be an archetype on the level of Plato's Forms or Eidos. However, in alchemy the symbolic archetypal mandala of the four elements also is manifest in the phenomena of nature in myriad ways so it qualifies as a phenomenon making it also a candidate for Aristotle's hylomorphism. The mandala of the four elements was considered by Jung to be an archetype of the spiritual human being.

In order for humans to come into contact with so potent an archetype Jung felt that it was most important for a person to engage the creative force of the True Self through the activity of aesthetic perception. The transformations possible in aesthetic activity allows a person to feel the inspiring touch of the archetypal beings who stand behind the symbols. These beings manifest in the human consciousness in the process of producing a mandala. This transcendent experience in Jung's view was the true source of the ability of a person to change their way of thinking and overcome fixed ideas.

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In practice the mandala is most easily encountered in a process of symbolic collage. In short symbolic collage using a mandala is a microcosm of presencing.

Working with the Mandala

It begins with letting go of control of the imagery by spending a half hour rummaging through old magazines for any picture that strikes a chord in the imagination. There is to be no associative thought in this process just a journey through images putting some in your shopping cart and letting others drift past unrecognized. Once a collection is formed (we call it a morgue) the next step is to draw a large circle on a sheet of copy paper. At the 6 o'clock position write earth/belief. At 9 write water/process. At 12 write air/reversal. At 3 write fire/insight. In the center write the word issue. This is the playing field of the soul mandala.

The Issue

The next step is to survey the images in the morgue and choose one that seems to symbolize the issue at hand. This choice involves only your own point of view at that moment and will be subject to change in the process. To place an image of an issue in the center of the mandala is a letting go process since it is now living its own life outside of your soul as a symbol that even you may not fully understand. Jung felt that to place the image outside of oneself is the first step in transforming transference and projection into transcendence and insight.

Belief/Earth

Once an issue is symbolized the next step is to find a symbol about a belief you hold regarding this issue. That symbolic picture goes into the earth position and represents a fixedness regarding the issue. This is a sensing process where a phenomenology of soul or universal epoche in the language of Husserl is at work in the selection of the symbol for belief.

Process/Water

The next step is to find a symbol for a process that you feel manifests in the relationship between the belief and the issue. This image is placed in the water position and represents an alchemical turning point where the phenomenology of the mandalic process begins to move the soul towards a true letting go of the fixed beliefs. This is made easier by the fact that the symbolic space is both representative of some personal issue and at the same time it is transcendent due to the ambiguity of the choice of symbols. The morphology of the symbolic process is organized by the archetypal power of the mandala but does not interfere with the free choice of imagery. This

unique power builds a platform from which it is possible to develop a sense of self mastery. That sense is tested by the next phase of the mandala the phase of air or reversal.

Reversal/Air

Choose an image that symbolically represents what you would feel if your belief were reversed about this issue. It is not necessary to have a cognitive cause and effect experience in the selection of this image. Simply allowing the deeper aspects of the True Self to survey the images and then choose one to represent the inevitable reversal of the issue is a catharsis even without cognition. This is akin to the dialogue with the Guardian of the Threshold whose admonition is that everything that we believe is being done to us is, in reality, coming from us. That speech is the great reversal of all beliefs and issues and represents a potent letting go of fixed beliefs.

Insight/Fire

The last aspect is to find a symbol that represents for you any insight or feeling that arose during the mandalic journey.

This however is not the end of the process of self mastery.

Dialogue in dyad

The next step is to trade your mandala with a partner and you receive theirs. This stage is the dyad work so necessary to move deeper into the letting go. The protocol is called devil's advocate. In devil's advocate you get to switch two images on their mandala and they get to switch two images on yours. After the switch reflect on how their change has altered your new belief that the mandala as it stands is a finished product. Write a few sentences on how it feels to have your mandala switched and whether or not it brought an insight.

This stage enhances the letting go process. Now it is time to turn to the letting come. This is done in three stages. The first is to share a biographical episode that is focused on the mandala you just made. The biographical sketch can be of any phase, but the sharing is the important element to move the process away from abstraction and into the soul space of the human being. The short biography sketch is the first stage.

Into Sleep

The second stage is to glue down the images of the mandala and date it. In the evening form images of the symbols that you chose and review them in your imagination in the order that they appeared in your mandala. Do this just before you go to sleep. This is a highly homeopathic letting go of the issue and the beliefs surrounding it and giving the intentionality of your work on the mandala to the realm of the archetypes. This moves from Aristotle back to Plato but engages the archetypes as a human being who has a destiny to be a world creator but needs help from the archetypal world to become truly human. In this way we help the archetypes to evolve and they help us to evolve to our higher destiny. This is a Rosicrucian method of sacred sleeping and the mandala of symbols around the issue is a potent form for crossing the threshold and dialoguing with the Guardian.

In the morning spend a few minutes listening inwardly to your heartbeat. See if a dream recollection can appear in that quiet inwardness. When you engage your partner again in the morning share any fragments of dream that you can remember. This is a great stimulus to letting come. Your partner will often be the source of a new insight about the issue. Make another circle of the mandala of the four elements and start the process again with a new symbol of the modified issue followed by new symbols for the four elements of belief, process, reversal and insight.