

Fields for Transformation

An Introduction to the Workshop Series



March – May 2013

The Tasting the Future team has been working together for three years. Our biggest area of learning has been about the need to shift not only *what* we do but *how* we do it. We have created a [source document](#) describing how we work together. In this workshop series we will share our learning and invite you to contribute your experience into the field.

'Leadership has focused primarily on getting things done...by focusing...on the intellectual and pragmatic aspects of our work, we forget that a movement can only be successful when people have genuine relationships in which they feel valued and empowered'

(Zimmerman et al. (2010) Movement Strategy Centre)

Our three workshops have been designed to explore some of the core elements of what it takes to change the way we work together. Over the years, in addition to our own learning, we have worked closely with others who are looking to build their work from a place of values. What does this mean in practice? Many of us working towards more sustainable and transformed systems, including food, are finding that conscious and explicit commitments to individual transformation are needed in order to create the change we wish to see in the world.

We would like to share some examples of practices and learning that we have discovered along the way that we believe can contribute to this personal and collective transformation and change. We are sure that you will have other examples and practices that you have found helpful and we warmly invite you to bring these examples to the workshops to share. Participants will be invited to join an online space on our Ning to share experiences and reflections before, during and after the workshops.

This summary is written to give a brief description of the workshops as we envisage them now. We'd like to make the caveat that the workshops will change as we learn more about those joining us and our collective needs – part of our practice is to 'design with emergence' which enables responsiveness, reflection and flexibility of approach. We hope this summary, and suggested resources, will provide a framework for the workshops that you find helpful.

The Workshops

Fields for Transformation

Linda and Sarah are experienced practitioners in creating safe space for dialogue and collaboration. They have worked in many cultures and countries to bring people together in processes of collective enquiry for change. Over the years, and through their work in Tasting the Future, they have experienced and documented shifts in how people work together and the relationships that develop as a result of conscious collaboration. Noticing these patterns brought them to explore the shifts in organising patterns and a next evolution from networks to fields. Through an integration of the work of biologist Rupert Sheldrake and others, they began to create a frame for what they observed and experienced, creating possible ways in which we can encourage and accelerate these patterns of effective conscious collaboration.

The workshop will explore the notion of fields and explore our personal experiences and how we might be able to put new ideas in practice. Participants will be asked to implement an element of practice into their work to be able to share reflections on our workshop Ning space

Further reading and viewing:

[Rupert Sheldrake - The Morphogenetic Universe](#) - video

[Sarah Whiteley - Conscious Evolution](#) - website

[Meg Wheatley: Leadership and the New Science](#) – ‘*Leadership and the New Science launched a revolution by demonstrating that ideas drawn from quantum physics, chaos theory, and molecular biology could improve organisational performance. Margaret Wheatley called for free-flowing information, individual empowerment, relationship networks, and organizational change that evolves organically -- ideas that have become commonplace.*

[Out of the Spiritual Closet](#) – ‘*Organisers Transforming the Practice of Social Justice - This report, the first of MSC’s series on Transformative Movement Building, dives into the experiences of individual social justice leaders as they integrate spiritual, creative or otherwise transformative practice into their lives and social justice work. The report introduces Transformative Movement Building as an approach and framework, provides a cultural analysis of where the social justice movement is stuck and how it is being transformed through intentional practice and showcases the stories of leaders who have begun their own transformations.*

[RSA: Transforming Behaviour Change](#) – ‘*The report critically engages with these two developments, and proposes an alternative approach to behaviour change that builds on existing public and professional interest in brains and behaviour. We set out to shift attention away from the threatening idea of ‘science as authority’, justifying moral judgements, medical interventions and policy positions, and focus instead on the more productive notion of ‘science as provocation’, helping people foster the kinds of self-awareness and behaviour change they are seeking to develop.*



Skills for Transformation

The Tasting the Future team have experimented with a number of practices over the years that we felt expressed our values – see our [Source Document](#) for more detail. We have used Circle Practice, World Café, Open Space, Appreciative Inquiry and many other practical tools to support our work. We have found that core to all these techniques, and often the most challenging to practice, is deep listening. This workshop will explore what it means to listen deeply and we will practise this together using complementary practices including some of the techniques listed above and others such as visualisation and creative note-taking.

Niamh, Draeyk, Liane and Alison will lead the workshop, sharing their favourite practices and inviting participants to bring their own experiences into the mix. We will also build on the previous Fields workshop considering what skills are needed to support leaders who are consciously building on field nature and interconnectedness.

Further reading and viewing:

[David Bohm: On Dialogue](#) – *‘Never before has there been a greater need for deeper listening and more open communication to cope with the complex problems facing our organisations, businesses and societies. Renowned scientist David Bohm believed there was a better way for humanity to discover meaning and to achieve harmony. He identified creative dialogue, a sharing of assumptions and understanding, as a means by which the individual, and society as a whole, can learn more about themselves and others, and achieve a renewed sense of purpose’.*

[Art of Hosting website](#) – *provides a summary of techniques such as World Café and Open Space, further resources and a framework that pulls together these techniques under the umbrella of hosting.*



Mindfulness for Transformation

Through Rachel’s many years’ experience in the third sector, from journalist to campaigner, permaculture practitioner to researcher, she has gained insight into many areas of the third sector, what works and where we are stuck. Her most recent work has centred on building individual and group capacity to change towards living more sustainable lifestyles through mindfulness.

In this workshop, we will explore how a personal practice of mindfulness can contribute to our own sustainability as well as the sustainability we want to see in the food system. We will explore the research behind mindfulness and practice some techniques during the day, followed by conversation and reflection on how we can use this approach in our lives.

Further reading and viewing:

[Mindfulness: Finding Peace in a Frantic World](#) – *‘The book is based on Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT). MBCT revolves around a straightforward form of mindfulness meditation which takes just a few minutes a day for the full benefits to be revealed. MBCT has been clinically proven to be at least as effective as drugs for depression and it is recommended by the UK’s National Institute of Clinical Excellence - in other words, it works. More importantly it also works for people who are not depressed but who are struggling to keep up with the constant demands of the modern world. Mindfulness focuses on promoting joy and peace rather than banishing unhappiness. It’s precisely focused to help ordinary people boost their happiness and confidence levels whilst also reducing anxiety, stress and irritability’.*

[Dr Jon Kabat-Zinn](#) – *‘He is the author of numerous scientific papers on the clinical applications of mindfulness in medicine and health care, and of a number of books for the lay public. His major research interests have focused on mind/body interactions for healing, clinical applications of mindfulness meditation training...It has contributed to a growing movement of mindfulness into mainstream institutions such as medicine, and psychology, health care and hospitals, schools, corporations, the legal profession, prisons, and professional sports. He has trained groups of CEOs, judges, members of the clergy, and Olympic athletes (the 1984 Olympic Men’s Rowing Team) and congressional staff in mindfulness. The Stress Reduction Clinic has served as the model for mindfulness-based clinical intervention programs at over 200 medical centres and clinics nation-wide and abroad’.*

Meet the team



[Charlotte Millar](#)



[Sarah Whiteley](#)



[Simone Poutniks](#)



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