

# Cultivating Capacity II

## First Growth



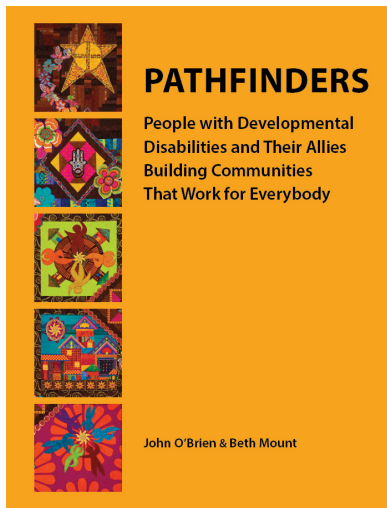
INCLUSION

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These books explore the purpose and the process of change that the practices in this guide serve.



*Pathfinders: People with Developmental Disabilities & Their Allies Building Communities that Work Better for Everybody.*  
[www.inclusion.com](http://www.inclusion.com)



*Creating Blue Space: Fostering Innovative Support Practices for People with Developmental Disabilities.*  
[www.inclusion.com](http://www.inclusion.com)

The content of this guide is adapted from materials created by The Presencing Institute. Adaptations apply the practices to organizations seeking to improve their capacity to offer person-centered support to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. Links to the original instructions for these practices are included.

To better understand Theory U start at [www.presencing.com](http://www.presencing.com). There is a short introduction in the context of social invention with people with developmental disabilities at <http://goo.gl/Zrsdd8>

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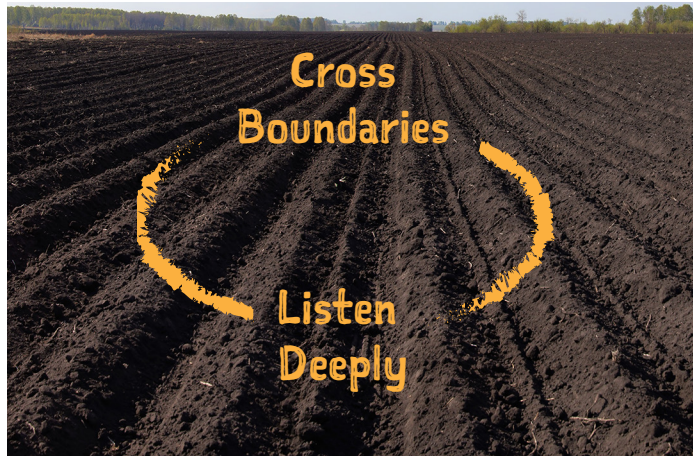
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# A healthy social field nourishes new growth

**Social Field:** The structure of relationships that shapes awareness and attention and so the pathway along which new capacities emerge.





## Sharing our observations

Considering all that you have sensed in the past few weeks and today, gather with three or four others and practice your best quality of listening to each other's reflections on these questions. Note key themes, images and ideas and how they connect.

- Where can we see the future now? The most interesting things we observed.
- What do we want to see less of? What do we need to let go of?
- What do we want to see more of? What do we want to create?

## Reflections

Take two minutes at the end of the conversation to write down what you want to take away.

## Allowing inner knowing to emerge



Listening and observing with the deepening intelligence of an open mind, an open heart, and an open will allows us to understand our situation and its possibilities from multiple points of view. As we attend to the way the voice of judgment, the voice of cynicism, and the voice of fear show up in our thinking and affect our action we become aware of untested assumptions and limits in the current stories of community and disability that we are living inside and we catch glimpses of new possibilities. By opening time to attend what has been stirring in us, we allow more of what we have been learning to come into focus.

## Dialogue walk

Walk side-by-side with a partner. Divide the available time in half so that partners have equal time to practice listening. Silences are as worthy of holding attention as speech is. Share answers to these questions.

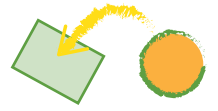


- Share two or three experiences that have brought you to where you are in your work. (Start with an experience in childhood or adolescence if you can recall one.)
- Talk about one or two “guardian angels” —your helpers and mentors on your work journey so far. What have you taken from each of them?
- Where do you feel the future in your work right now?

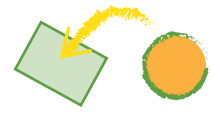
## Reflections

Take two minutes at the end of the walk to write down what you want to take away from your dialogue.

## Journaling



- Look at yourself from your friends' point of view. What would they say are the gifts and capacities in you that they appreciate most?
- What are your most vital sources of energy? What do you love?
- Imagine you could fast forward to your last day of work with people with developmental disabilities. Looking back on your whole journey with people with developmental disabilities, what legacy are you glad to have left? What do you want to be remembered for by those who continue the journey?
- Thinking about your work over the past few weeks, what core questions have come alive for you?
- Thinking about your work over the past few weeks, what new or renewed possibilities have you noticed? What wants to be born with your help? What future seems most worth working to create?
- What would you have to let go of in order to move into this future?
- In your current situation, what provides the seeds for the future you want to create? What is already there that you can build on?



### Why a capital W in work?

Behind all the interactions and tasks that make up our small “w” work is that which gives meaning, our highest purpose. The capital W signifies expression of that highest purpose.

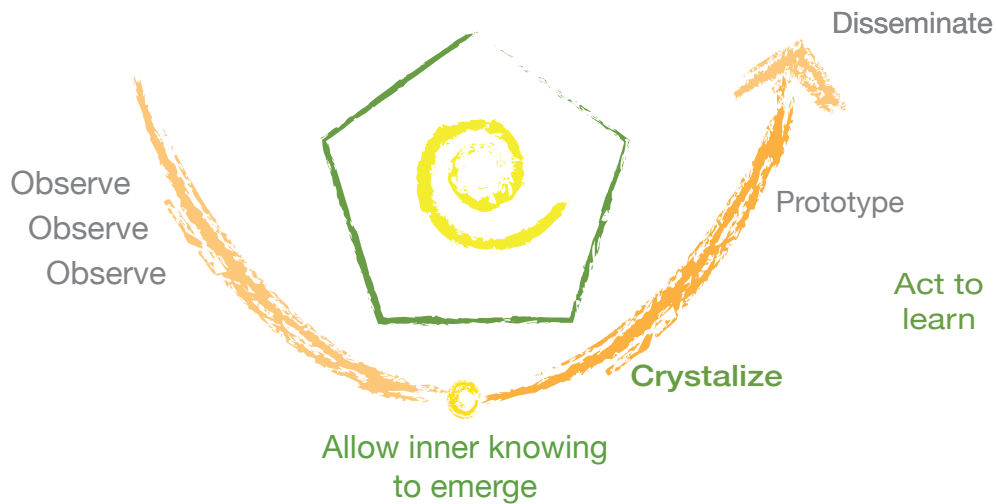


# What is my Work, what wants to be born with my help?

Give yourself solo time. Find a quiet place and let go of distractions for a few minutes –messages, conversations, daydream, work tasks. Center yourself and attend to what has come to you over the past few weeks and today as you have sensed the possibilities in your work. Make a quiet space in yourself to let your current response to this question emerge. It may not come at once. Just stay with the question. Your calling may come as feeling that will lead to words and actions as you make space for it. You may not fully understand what comes at first; it will unfold further as you take action over the coming weeks and months. Just respect and stay with whatever comes to you—whether in feeling, image or words— and note whatever emerges here.

Stay with it.

## Act to learn: Crystallizing



Crystallizing employs the intelligence of hands, heart, and head to generate a representation of your vision for the people and families you support as they relate to their community and your work. The image gives a form to the potential you are discovering in your community, in your organization, in the people and families who rely on you, and in your own desire to develop. It may come to you in response to one or more of these questions:

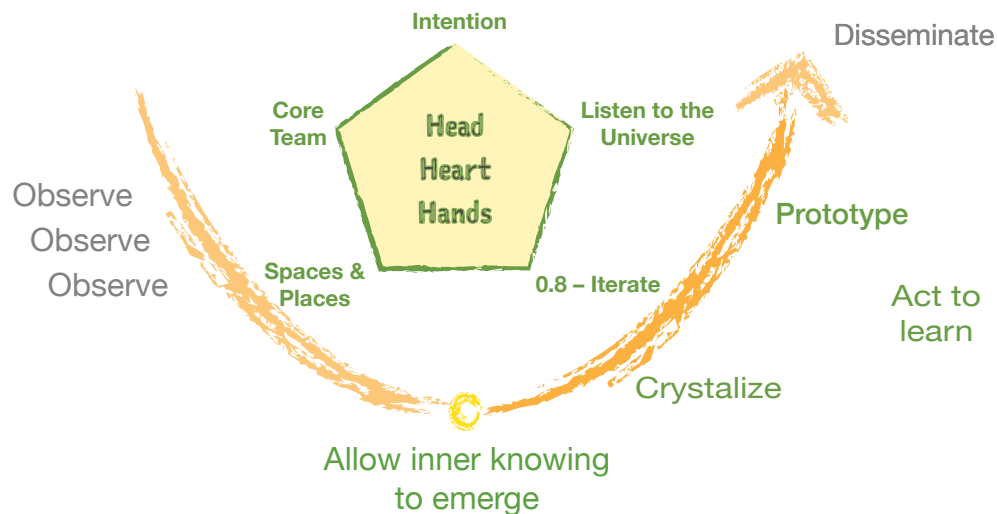
- What wants to be born in my Work right now?
- What do you want to create?
- What difference do you want to make?
- What questions do you want to explore?

Often your heart or your hands will find a way to crystallize your vision before your head does.

## Reflections

Take two minutes at the end of the exercise to write down what you want to take away.

## Act to learn: Prototyping



One picture of change involves making a clear description of our exact destination, analyzing and predicting the best route, and working out solutions to the problems we'll encounter before we leave home. But many good outcomes involve uncertainties that can only be explored by cycles of learning in action: taking the next smart step as soon as possible, with the resources and people we already have, noticing where that takes us, building on what works and letting go of what does not, and bringing in more people as we go. The more cycles we do, the more we learn. Instead of working our way through one big U, we move through many little Us. Each U holds opportunities to further clarify our intention, involve more people, increase the space for our Work, and add to our knowledge and skill in creating what we want. The way to make this kind of change is to act from intention and take the next step into the future you want to create. Because the results are uncertain and our prototypes are imperfect the willingness to take a real step forward takes confidence in our ability to correct errors and be resilient to failures.



Prototyping answers five questions that return with every cycle. Remember that looking for complete and certain answers gets us stuck. All that's needed are good enough answers to get moving.

- **Intention:** What do I want to help to be born?
- **Core Team:** Who can help me?
- **Spaces & Places:** How can we claim the time and space necessary for the future to show up?
- **0.8-Iterate:** What first, incomplete (0.8), step can we take to get the next learning cycle started and generate feedback that will lead to improvements? How might we respond to the voice of judgment, the voice of cynicism and the voice of fear?
- **Listen to the Universe:** What practices will help us stay open to learning from our community, from the people and families we support, from our own internal struggles and breakthroughs?

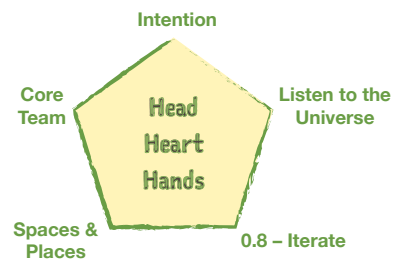


**What future do I want to  
create?**

**Who can help me?**

**What will sustain open  
mind, open heart, open  
will??**

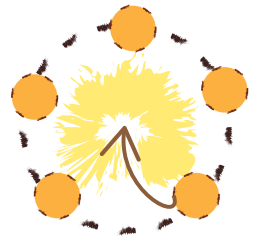
**Where & when will the  
work toward this future  
happen ?**



**What is the next smart  
step into this future?**

## Exploring challenges: Coaching Circle

A Coaching Circle is a team of **3 to 5 equals** who meet regularly and take turns listening deeply to one member at a time as that member explores a current leadership challenge or question in order to discover fresh ways to understand and innovative ways to meet the challenge. This exploration provides the whole circle with the opportunity to understand their work better. Trust grows as members continue to offer mutual support over multiple meetings.



*See a challenge  
with fresh eyes*

### Be mindful

- The purpose is to listen deeply, attending to, sharing and building on the images, metaphors, feelings and gestures that the challenge story evokes. Suspend the desire to download quick fixes, pet theories or sympathy. Access curiosity, compassion and openness to what wants to emerge from the process.
- Closely follow the steps. They guide the circle through the U: a period of listening; a moment of stillness and reflection; a period of enrichment of the challenge story with the emergence of new perspectives and new possibilities for action. Stillness is essential, take the full three minutes.
- Create a distraction free circle that allows **an hour and 15 minutes of focused attention**. Writing/drawing materials can help capture or sketch insights and images.
- It's easy to get bogged down in *might-be-nice-to-know* details of the situation. The process works best when the circle attends to and builds from what is presented as the essence of the challenge.



### Roles

**One circle member presents a specific challenge** that they are currently facing, a challenge in which they play a key role. The challenge can be outlined in 15 minutes and the presenter wants new perspectives.

The other circle members serve as **coaches**, listening deeply, attending to and sharing what presentation of the challenge evokes.

One coach takes responsibility for managing the time.

Based on Case Clinic. Instructions at <https://www.presencing.com/tools/case-clinic>

Watch a guide to Coaching Circles at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AwjKROGi6H4>

## Coaching Circle Steps

1	2 min	<b>Select challenge presenter and timekeeper</b>
2	15 min	<b>Intention statement by challenge presenter</b> Take a moment to reflect on your sense of calling. Then present your challenge, answering these questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Current situation:</b> What key challenge or question are you up against?</li> <li>• <b>Stakeholders.</b> How might others view this situation?</li> <li>• <b>Intention:</b> What future do you want to create?</li> <li>• <b>Threshold.</b> What do you need to let go of and what do you need to learn?</li> <li>• <b>Help:</b> Where do you want help or new ideas?</li> </ul> Coaches listen deeply. They may ask clarifying questions but not give advice or make observations.
3	3 min	<b>Stillness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to your heart. Connect to what you have heard with your heart.</li> <li>• Listen to what resonates. What images, metaphors, feelings or gestures* come up for you and capture the core of all that you have sensed in the presentation of the challenge?</li> </ul>
4	10 min	<b>Mirroring and embodying</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each coach shares the images, metaphors, feelings and gestures that came up in the stillness or while listening to the presentation of the challenge. (What's shared need not be complete or even make sense to the person sharing.)</li> </ul>
5	20 min	<b>Generative dialogue</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The challenge presenter reflects aloud: <i>Hearing these responses, what touched me? What resonated with me? What questions and reflections come up for me now?</i></li> <li>• All reflect on the mirroring and embodiment and the challenge presenter's reflections. Move into a flow of dialogue that surfaces new perspectives on and new possibilities for the challenge. Stay in service of the challenge and the presenter's journey without pressure to fix or resolve the challenge.</li> </ul>
6	8 min	<b>Closing remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By coaches</li> <li>• By the challenge presenter: <i>How do I now see my situation and the way forward?</i></li> <li>• Thanks and appreciations, finishing with the challenge presenter.</li> </ul>
7	2 min	<b>Individual journaling to capture key insights and learning</b>

\*Gestures are body positions, movements and facial expressions that arise in response to what we sense. Sharing gestures without explanation or commentary is a powerful form of mirroring.



## Coaching team

Use the circles to record the names and contact details for the three or four people you choose to be your Coaching Team. To make the most of the whole group, join with people from different agencies.

Plan for an hour and fifteen minute once a month. It's best if you can agree on a regular time (First Wednesday of the month from 8:00 to 9:15 Am.) Decide how you will meet (in person, Skype, Google Hangout, Conference Call etc).

