

Invited Article

# Streams of Origin for Social Presencing Theater and Its Contribution to Social Transformation

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## **Abstract**

Social Presencing Theater is an art-based methodology that supports social and institutional change processes. This paper considers some of the influences that have shaped Social Presencing Theater, offers a glimpse at how the practices reflect the core framework, and a few ways that this work contributes to awareness-based systems change. As the future becomes more uncertain, both socio-economically and environmentally, being well grounded in personal and social embodied presence and knowing is key to collective sense-making and skillful action. Over these past twenty years, we have found that introducing Social Presencing Theater practices of stillness and movement into leadership, facilitation, coaching, and teaching increases trust in sense experience knowing, fosters connections, and brings the creative process into everyday work and personal life. The practices, embedded in presencing work, support the natural

synchronization of inner knowing and aspiration with outer systemic transformation. This paper contributes to the research on how art practices can support teams, organizations, classrooms, and communities to affect quicker and deeper shared understanding and to engage in more significant and beneficial change work. It is an invitation for others to join that conversation.

## Keywords

embodiment, presence, meditation, performance, dance, performance art, improvisation, social

## Introduction

In this paper I outline the view, practice, and result of a body of work called Social Presencing Theater (SPT), a set of social arts practices for supporting awareness-based systems change. SPT is one of the core methodologies in the systems transformation work called *presencing*<sup>1</sup>, and the system of framing used here—view, practice, and result—I draw from Buddhist studies. This logic is very applicable for any process of learning and transformation. *View* is a foundational framework, *practice* is experience that enables one to question, clarify, and deepen understanding of the view, and *result* is the full embodiment of the view and practice in everyday life.

Maybe this could be likened to a tree: the roots hold the view and the wisdom or philosophy. The tree trunk holds the practices and practitioners. The branches are applications of the practices that yield results or fruits. Prior to meeting Otto Scharmer and contributing to the founding of the Presencing Institute, my work was largely as a dancer, dance teacher, and choreographer.<sup>2</sup> Using the frame of view, practice, and result, I will describe the origins of Social Presencing Theater and the influence of my experience as a dancer and a meditation practitioner on its creation and evolution.

Social Presencing Theater is a series of movement-based practices that support individual embodied presence and heighten the capacity of a team or organization to see and sense itself as a living social system. Awareness of somatic experience heightens what we might call “heart-intelligence,” the natural capacity of humans to connect and care for others. Attending to non-verbal body postures, movements, and spatial relationships is a form of communication that often goes unnoticed in our highly verbal, concept-oriented society. Social Presencing Theater rests on the understanding that shifting attention to the non-verbal dimension can loosen limiting concepts, foster

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<sup>1</sup> See Scharmer, C. O., & Kaufer, K. (2025). *Presencing: 7 Practices for transforming self, society, and business*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. C. Otto Scharmer is a Senior Lecturer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), and founding chair of the Presencing Institute, [www.presencing.org](http://www.presencing.org).

relationships, open access to intuition, and make visible current blind spots, wisdom, and seeds for innovation and creativity in a system.

The name “Social Presencing Theater” defines the work. Social indicates that most of the practices engage more than one person, inviting reflection on shared embodied experience. *Presencing*, as defined by Otto Scharmer, is a blending of the words “presence” and “sensing.” It refers to the ability to sense and bring into the present one’s highest future potential as an individual and as a group (Scharmer, 2016, p. 161). The original meaning of theater, from the Greek *theatron* is a *place of seeing*. The practice of Social Presencing Theater enables us to see and feel our potential to create good teams, organizations, and communities. Social Presencing Theater creates the conditions for bringing a greater awareness to our individual and shared experience.

Awareness is both openness of mind and the mind’s innate ability to know. It is a natural human resource. Awareness-based systems change affords a framework for exploring the journey of transformation, without bypassing unfathomable suffering. It posits that by attending deeply to our current reality, we can become aware of the emergence of creative possibilities. Attending deeply requires the body—as a perceiving, sensing organ—to open to the possibility that we can see, hear, and feel without filtering our perceptions through judgments, opinions, assumptions, and past learning. What we sense through our embodied perceptions may be subtle or vivid, but it is trustworthy experience. When sense perception experience is free of the limitations of mental models, our world is fresh and resonant—full of beauty, heartbreak, and possibility. Can we be fresh, tender, and full of possibility for each other? Can this open perception be the ground for creating a good human society in harmony with all beings and the Earth herself?

This paper explores some of the roots of the work and offers ways that Social Presencing Theater brings awareness, social knowing, and action-confidence into systems change. My path to this work rests on the generosity of teachers and dancers who have inspired, on the joy of co-creating with those who bring their own experience and share the journey, and the aspiration that it be of benefit now and to those who are yet to appear.

## My Path to This Work

I meet people who say that when they first read or saw a talk about presencing, it was profoundly resonant with something they already knew. This was true for me as well. The ideas and practices rekindled a faith that I personally, and that we collectively, could contribute to creating a better world, and that awareness—as open, unbiased knowing—was the key to sane and compassionate change. The nature of reality is moment-to-moment change. When we approach experience with open awareness, it allows us to bring non-aggression and non-manipulation into transformation work. Hearing about practices based on the change theory, Theory U, and the concept of presencing, connected me with teachings I first

heard in the 1970's on "creating enlightened society" from the Tibetan meditation teacher and social visionary, Chogyam Trungpa.

Ever since I first heard those teachings, I have been provoked and inspired by this topic. What captured my interest was not that there might have once been such a society in Central Asia or even that there might be such a society in the far-off future. I was interested in the notion that the enlightened society might be present now, but that we do not notice it. Might it be present but hidden from the usual ways that we perceive and experience? Was there any truth to this, and if so, could we collectively cultivate the capacity to see it and feel it? This was a deeply resonant idea and highly provocative.

Without a doubt, there are examples of good communities and institutions in the past and today. However, the words "enlightened society" seem completely incongruent and out of touch with current social reality. We hear, "my workplace is toxic," or "fear and uncertainty are paralyzing our team." Children are the victims of a massive systems breakdown in education. This unstable world of geopolitical aggression, wealth inequality, degradation of the natural world, racial injustice, displacement of people, youth mental health issues, etc., seems to be irrefutable evidence that enlightened society is a fantasy—a dreamer's delusion. The feelings of pressure, distrust, and overwhelm arise daily. What do the words "enlightened society" even mean?

One aspect of the word "enlightened" could mean shining light, like the sun, onto something to see more clearly, making something more visible, bringing it more fully into our attention. Along with the natural illumination of sunlight comes warmth. An enlightened being is one who is wakeful, clear seeing, and radiates compassionate warmth. That being naturally sees goodness in others and in the phenomenal world. The question becomes how might we, ordinary beings, cultivate trust in our clear seeing and care for this world? Can we illuminate the basic healthiness and wisdom of the people and groups we meet every day—people who, like us, aspire to create good families, good classrooms, organizations, and communities. How do we best accompany others who teach, lead, facilitate, parent, organize, or coach as we co-create a world that we want for our children and grandchildren? How do we, ancestors of the emerging future, engage today?

Social Presencing Theater has grown out of a longing to shine light—to see, feel, and create healthy social systems based on embodied presence and awareness. As individuals, we have first-person knowing or awareness of our inner experience. We have a somatic experience of the sensations of our body, and we can be aware of our feelings and thoughts. This self-knowing enables us to connect with both ourselves and our world. It supports wise choices and engagement in beneficial actions. The practices of Social Presencing Theater make visible the inner self-knowing of groups of people, social "beings" that also have both corporeality and an intangible array of feelings and thoughts.

## The Birth of Social Presencing Theater

In 2001, I joined a Creative Process Team at the Shambhala Institute for Authentic Leadership (later named ALIA, Authentic Leadership in Action) in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The founders, headed by Michael Chender, were pioneers in offering week-long gatherings that brought together organizational change leaders, spirituality, and the contemplative arts (Chender 2015). Change leaders—Peter Senge (Center for Systems Awareness and author of *The Fifth Discipline*), Margaret Wheatley (Warriors for the Human Spirit), Adam Kahane (Reos Partners), Bill Torbert (Action Inquiry), Juanita Brown (World Café), Toke Mueller (Art of Hosting), Otto Scharmer (Presencing Institute and author of *Theory U*) and others offered learning modules. Each morning, the participants met for meditation and a talk on its application to leadership and the creation of an enlightened society. The Institute's conviction that the creative arts were key to systems change invited every participant to engage in an art practice— theater, movement, or brush calligraphy.

Otto Scharmer began offering his work at the Institute in 2003. I was a participant in his module, offering an embodiment practice. Otto saw some potential in my work of which I was unaware. He asked me to join him and Beth Jandernoa in what is now the Presencing Foundation Program (Presencing Foundation Program, n.d.). When I began working with Otto, I offered practices called The Art of Making a True Move. They were designed as mindfulness-awareness practices to bring artfulness into everyday life. The practices were useful in that they could bring ideas from Theory U (such as suspending, letting go/letting come, attending to the whole) into experience.

A description of Social Presencing Theater as an event with a short performance followed by a generative dialogue appears in the 2007 edition of *Theory U*. Although we began by creating these performance events, Social Presencing Theater has now primarily developed into practices supporting personal and social transformation and institutional interventions. Most Social Presencing Theater practices invite groups to co-create embodied social change processes. Non-verbal activity creates a fresh ground for self and collective reflection, for a sense of deep connection, for intuitive knowing, and the cultivation of social field skills to support and enrich everyday life and work.<sup>3</sup> Today there are Social Presencing Theater teachers offering courses world-wide and year-long training programs in Europe, the US, and Latin America.

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<sup>3</sup> Most of these practices are described in detail in Hayashi (2021). The corresponding videos are open source. <https://www.u-school.org/offerings/spt-self-paced>.

## Freedom in Forms

I have great respect for forms as containers for experience. Dance forms can be like poetry forms—the sonnet or the *haiku*. There are containers, a set of restrictions, that invite us to deepen, to break habits, to access our innate creativity. Ballet, meditation, and *bugaku* (Japanese Court Dance) are relatively strict forms, each created centuries ago in three different geographies and cultures. I was interested in how these forms enabled me to experience freedom from the restrictions of my definitions, past experiences, wounds, stories, and all that I think I know. Repeating the practices within the structure of the form, i.e. following the instructions without changing the form, enabled the experience of freedom. I found this paradoxical. How do forms enable the experience of openness and freshness?

These dance and meditation forms were boundaries that invited mindful attention and open relaxation. If I held my attention too tightly, enjoyment and spaciousness disappeared. If attention was held too loosely, precision disappeared. When balanced, there was no space or time to get captured into habitual thoughts and emotions. The constantly shifting somatic experiences and outer phenomena (other dancers, witnesses, environments) emerged without obstruction, creating a sense of play. Because the form required both focused attention and open relaxation, there was no room for the weight of habitual responses or conditioned ways of seeing and engaging.

This experience led to my interest in creating forms that invited anybody, not just dancers or meditators, into an embodied sense of openness and freedom. This sense of freedom manifests as a sense of unconditional belonging and connection. There is no need to try to make connections. When open awareness is present, connection is always present. Great appreciation is present. Social Presencing Theater is a series of movement forms created to invite fresh and powerful non-conceptual gestures to arise. They train us in the freedom of not-knowing as an intelligence vital to societal change work. It is a practice of relaxing into expansive and inclusive awareness and trusting that there is no need to try to “fix” this particular moment of life. Resting with moment-to-moment unfolding provides perspective, wisdom, and strength to engage in the work of systems change.

Later in this article, I will describe some of the practices and how they create embodied expressions of systems that bring attention to the quality of relationships and to social, felt knowing. The group can poignantly feel its own vulnerabilities and strengths and can let deeper sources of wisdom and creativity guide the transformation process (see Scharmer & Pomeroy, 2024). Individual and collective embodied presence is the ground out of which confidence arises as a recognition of the fundamental wisdom and strength in ourselves and each other. Although we experience struggle and suffering, our individual body-mind system and social systems long for health and for connection to the core of our humanness. Layers of personal and collective harms, beliefs, habits, and fear cover over our innate trust and confidence. However, now more than ever, we

need the courage to come out of our comfort zones, to bring loving attention to our “stuck” places, and to engage in the learning and healing necessary to co-create a good world.

Social Presencing Theater invites us to look clearly at our blind spots and to make visible the good world that is already here. This is not just how we see the world, but also how we feel this world. The root of the word aesthetic is from Ancient Greek *aisthētikós*, which means “perceptible, sensitive, pertaining to sensory perception.” The body is a perceiving, sensing organ. The practices of Social Presencing Theater invite embodied knowing and confidence in sense-knowing. Sense experience does not have to be filtered or defined by what we already think we know. For a moment, what we see, hear, and feel can be free of conceptual frameworks. It can be fresh, insightful, and full of beauty. We can be fresh, insightful, and full of beauty for each other. The world needs that from us.

Many people have contributed to, and continue to engage in, the emergence of Social Presencing Theater, bringing diverse training, lineages, and inquiries to the practice. My journey into the world of systems change is supported by the dance forms that live in my bones, in the possibility of creating enlightened society.

## View: Sacredness of the Moment

It is possible to go beyond personal interpretation, to let vastness into our hearts through the medium of perception. We always have a choice: we can limit our perception so that we close off vastness, or we can allow vastness to touch us. When we draw down the power and depth of vastness into a single perception, then we are discovering and invoking magic...the discovery of innate and primordial wisdom in the world as it is.

—Chögyam Trungpa, *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*

The view, or basic principles, of Social Presencing Theater were born from both the dharma art teachings of Chögyam Trungpa (see Trungpa, 1996) and from Japanese Court Dance, *bugaku*. The basic view is that there is vast space of awareness and possibility in every moment. Trungpa called this Nowness “the magic of the present moment” (Trungpa, 1978 p. 96). We do not have to operate out of habit and conditioning. Social Presencing Theater does not resemble the formal style of *bugaku*; however, the view or purpose—connecting to the open moment—is the invitation of our current work. The view connects to the word, presencing, and is like an open sky, a blank canvas, an empty stage, full of potential.

In ancient Sino-Japanese culture, the “highest aspiration” was represented as the Heaven principle. This Heaven principle is expressed in Japanese Shinto as *kami*, sacred spirits. According to my teacher, Suenobu Togi, *Bugaku*, the ancient Japanese ceremonial dance, accompanied by the music, called *gagaku*,

was created to bring *kami* down to Earth. *Bugaku* expressed the innate harmony between the *kami*, humans, and the land (Ono, 1962).

Many years ago, I performed a solo concert of contemporary dance which Trungpa Rinpoche attended. He said that, when he was at Oxford University, he heard a UNESCO recording of *gagaku*, the “elegant music” of the Japanese Court. He remarked at the unusual sound and that he thought there was an accompanying dance form. In 1977, I began studying *bugaku*, the accompanying dance, with Suenobu Togi, who was teaching at University of California in Los Angeles. I continued as his student until he passed away in 2009. Our practice groups performed at festivals, museums, and schools for over twenty years. Today, a small group of his Western students on three continents meet weekly on the unlikely and inadequate space of Zoom to continue to practice together.

This ceremonial dance was created to bring the vast space of spirit (Heaven) down to Earth. The music and dance were the medium. Removed from its cultural context, centuries after its popularity, performed by our amateur practitioner group—this ceremonial dance and music nonetheless has the power to bring a sense of sacredness to us and to our very earth-bound audiences. It was, and continues today to be, performed at the Japanese Imperial Palace to join Heaven (a traditional Asian principle) and Earth. It was in ancient times and is today the role of leadership to bring vision or highest aspiration into the challenging earthly role of caring for the well-being of people and the land on which they live.

In *bugaku*, the form never changes. It cannot broaden out into something else. The experience of the dance deepens into the bones. It has no other place to go. Despite our mistakes, forgetfulness, self-absorption, and distractions, the synchronized music and dance emerged moment by moment, creating a sense of space in which ordinary sacredness can land. The body is moving; the music continues. The experience is one of openness and stillness. Openness is not a blank void. It is full of emerging movement and expression. Stillness lives in the movement, timelessness in time. The ancient lives in the present. The present is a sense of freedom in ordinary sacredness.

Bringing openness and ordinary sacredness into the present lived moment is the view of Social Presencing Theater. We invite a gap of mind space that gives us access to the vast space of the Heaven principle. As we stay with that sense of openness, something emerges—an unexpected gesture of movement, a surprising insight, a heartfelt calling. It is ordinary sacredness because it is completely accessible—not a big deal. It is a moment of immense appreciation and connection. Inviting the view of ordinary sacredness enables us to trust in the boundless inherent health of our body-mind system and the social body-mind system.

Most of us think that creativity is only about producing something new, inventing, innovating. But *bugaku*, an art form which has barely changed since the eighth century, invites us into another aspect of creativity. As we attend and relax into the form, we notice the moment to moment arising of experience—each

moment is new. A gesture, performed a thousand times over many years, is not the same this time. I am not the same. My body, mind, the dancers, the environment are unique to this moment.

I have practiced these dances thousands of times. I have engaged in Social Presencing Theater practices thousands of times. But each time I learn new things about the forms, about myself, about others, about creativity. Perhaps there is no visible change, but there is a deepening of knowing and connection. Change is happening every moment. In some sense we do not create change. Change is the nature of reality. As we become aware of the moment to moment unfolding of our life, we sense ourselves as an interconnected part of ever-changing systems. We forget the habit of thinking of ourselves as separate entities trying to connect. We have a sense of the fragility of this moment, impermanence, and innate connection to the whole.

## Practice: The Art of Making a True Move

The practices can only be done by doing them.

—Francisco Varela, *Interview with C.O. Scharmer:  
Three Gestures of Becoming Aware*

If the view of open awareness is a blank canvas or an empty stage, then practice invites us to put our marks, colors, lines, and shapes on the canvas or to create a diverse array of social expressions with our gestures, movements, and spatial patterns on a stage. Practice is the method for bringing the view of open spaciousness, Nowness, into activity. The practice of Social Presencing Theater grew out of decades of ensemble movement improvisation, influenced in the 1970's by New York postmodern dancers. It was and continues to be an inquiry into “the art of making a true move.” The true move is a genuine gesture that is not contrived or habitual. Genuine expressions arise from trust in Nowness, being in the now. Dance improvisation continues to be my practice for bringing the view of Nowness into a collective creative process.

Practice begins with the body—our body and the Earth's body. We always start there. We feel the connection of our body, placed on and held by the Mother Earth's body. She holds us close. We always have a place on Her body, and we can rest there. But we forget. So we invite our conceptual mind to step back so that our somatic feeling-knowing can come forward in our field of attention. We notice when thoughts and expectations pull us away, and we let our attention rest on our body connected to the good Earth's body. When our mind's attention rests on the body, we feel grounded. We remember that our body is the home where we live. Returning to the body and connecting to the Earth's body is the foundation practice. It brings a natural sense of being, even an unconditional sense of well-being.

When our body and mind are synchronized, awareness naturally extends out. We are naturally curious, interested. We see others around us. We can see groups of people as *social bodies*. Besides seeing them, we feel them. We sense the quality of relationships of the social bodies of which we are a part. This social knowing arises naturally from a grounded body, aware of perceptions and sensations. We stay open to the feeling-knowing, without immediately interpreting through our habitual interpretations. Like our body, the social body can also feel grounded or disembodied—connected or disconnected. Relaxing our sensing antennae out, we can feel the quality of relationships which we call the *social field* (Scharmer, 2018, p. 14).

Practices increase trust in embodied presence and in the sense of connection and potential in the social field. However, there is another field of awareness, often ignored but always available to us, that is vital to the creativity process. When we pause, we can sense the open space of not knowing, of non-confirmation. We are aware of our own unlimited, possibly bewildered, space of mind. Not knowing, which might seem like a negative experience, is actually the ground for what we call the true move.

There is so much unpredictability in the world today. We hope our day will unfold smoothly. We can be distressed by reading the news, changes in plans, words that we do not want to hear. When facing unexpected challenges at work, we often fall back on familiar patterns, habits, and assumptions. We can go around and around in our minds, trying to figure out the right way to proceed. But maybe uncertainty is an invitation. Can we become comfortable with the fact that things are changing—falling apart, shifting? The forms in Social Presencing Theater provide a safe container in which to make friends with the uncertainty of not knowing what comes next.

We feel vulnerable in moments of not knowing. However, Social Presencing Theater encourages us to celebrate the awkwardness of not knowing. Yay for awkwardness! Allowing fresh gestures to emerge from not-knowing is the practice of genuineness—the heart of our work. We discover that movements and words arising from open, nonjudgmental space are genuine expressions that create healthy social transformation. When there is stability in the body and trust in the social space, gestures arise spontaneously from openness. This is true creativity that applies to everyday work and family life. Simple gestures and words hold the power and beauty necessary to cultivate healthy and creative teams, organizations and communities. For me and many others, art practices are a bridge between contemplation and everyday work, family, and societal demands. These practices celebrate the intelligence of the body and the aesthetics of being a social human. As we said earlier, the root meaning of the word “aesthetic” is *feeling*. Gestures arising from a trust in embodied feeling-knowing are “true moves.”

### **Field Dance**

The Field Dance is an investigation of the relationship between a presenter (teacher, facilitator, leader), someone standing in front of the room, and those sitting in the room attending to that person. It questions the conventional assumption that the person in the front must offer information, entertainment, or inspiration to a passive, judgmental audience. It uses this “performance” mode to explore the co-creation process of presenter and viewers and the potential for social transformation in that context.

Each person is invited to enter a “stage,” pause in Nowness, then offer a spontaneous gesture to an “audience.” The gesture arises from the body, the shared social field, and from the open space of not knowing. Then there is another moment of stillness to receive back the non-verbal felt sense of being seen. We may try to plan. We may be so self-conscious we can hardly gesture at all. We may try to please, get a reaction, or do what we think is expected. We may make our gesture and flee off the stage without receiving a response from the viewers—a one-way conversation. All of this is human—appreciated and welcomed.

However, as we continue to practice, we gain trust that our spontaneous gestures, coming from nothing, without self-referencing or manipulation, communicate overwhelming power and beauty. We practice being seen and seeing with the heart. We practice vulnerability and courage. The Field Dance highlights the value of stillness and accessing the larger social field as ground for expression and confidence. The audience practices holding space with loving attention. There is never any “feedback,” only a non-judgmental reflection on the process. Ironically, the theater, often seen as artificial or contrived, has been a safe practice space for many of us to cultivate the bravery necessary to be genuine.

### **The Village**

The Village is one of the core Social Presencing Theater practices for cultivating social field awareness and making visible the social dynamics of groups. It simplifies movement choices to support the collective co-creative process. Village participants attend to mindfulness of body, the connection to others in the social body, the felt quality of relationships, and the open space of not knowing what will emerge. The practice inquires into the conditions enabling or hindering the co-creation of coherent and healthy social contexts.

The Village, as an ensemble improvisation form, has early beginnings. I began improvising with a small group of student-colleagues in Boston around 1970. Like many dancers at that time, I was interested in ordinary “pedestrian movement” as dance—blurring the line between art and everyday life. Our group met several times a week for several years to practice together. In our early days the studio practice included dancing, ordinary activities, everyday objects, music, sharing personal sufferings and delights. Anything that happened in the studio was an expression of the boundarylessness between dance and life. It was our way of making sense of who we were and of the world we lived in. We had a high tolerance for chaos.

Hearing dharma art teachings on non-aggression and panoramic awareness brought mindfulness-awareness into the process of spontaneous dance-making. The Village emerged as a way to attend to the whole and better understand our choices—what to do, how to contribute, where to move. These were not deliberate, thought-out choices, but were “almost-choices,” arising from attending to the present moment of experience. We wanted to make improvised work that was like jazz, in which the quality of the process and the product were inseparable. The unique gestures of each individual were seen and honored without losing a sense of the inclusive well-being and unfolding of the whole. Village practice brought attention and relaxed awareness into the process of spontaneous co-creation.

We discovered that *how we paid attention* was key to allowing each person to shine, enabling the ensemble as a whole to unfold with coherence, clarity, and beauty for dancers and for audiences. Occasionally, during these early years, we experienced a dance emerging from a space in which we were operating as a single “being.” We recognized it but had no words to describe the experience. Each of us, in our uniqueness, belonged and were visible. And yet the “dance” was its own being, not simply the sum of its parts. I found written in my notes, “You cannot go back to something you remember from the past, but from then on you have confidence that it is possible to operate from a collective unencumbered unfolding.”

All of us make non-verbal, largely unconscious, movement choices continuously everyday—where to stand in a room, how far or close to others, when to move and when to stay still, whether to join, to move to where power is, to be on the periphery. These everyday physical choices are forms of communication that often go unnoticed yet are sensed and contribute to a non-verbal knowing held in the social field. Capacities of noticing and engaging that are cultivated in the Village inform and enrich our personal and professional life. The Village is a foundation practice for cultivating the social field awareness necessary when addressing complex challenges and transformation processes of organizations or society.

### 4D Mapping

4D Mapping uses the capacities of the Village to see and sense into a particular social system or eco-system by attending to the relationships of stakeholders in that system. Participants embody individual or institutional stakeholders, including the Earth, those marginalized from the system, and the highest aspiration of the system. They create a current reality sculpture. By attending to embodied-knowing and space awareness, they move to a second sculpture. This sets the ground for a generative dialogue, revealing insights, blind spots, empathy, and seeds of possibility in the system.

4D Mapping in person, as well as the Virtual 4D Space, are powerful practices for presencing the emerging future. As a reminder, we earlier defined the word presencing as the ability to sense and bring into the present one's highest future potential as an individual and as a group. The 4D Mapping practice clarifies the stakeholders in a system and creates a map that clearly reveals both restrictions and potential leverage points that can enable that system to move skillfully, compassionately, and powerfully toward its highest aspiration.

4D Mapping enables us to see the movements, both conscious and nonconscious, that we make in the process of social co-creation. Where we go and what we do arises from seeing the choices others make, feeling our own body, sensing the relational space, and opening to what is emerging from the present moment. Our “almost choices” are more like callings than decisions. These actions communicate and build a field of relationships. From the process of collective “almost choices” we can deepen capacities that contribute to the creation of a generative social field—capacities in how we attend, how we create spatial coherence, how we enrich the quality of relationships, and how we shape time.

In non-verbal experience, as in verbal conversation, confusion and disconnection can ensue when we project assumptions and inaccurate interpretations. Often, we are living in our own individual, team, or sector bubble, unaware of what others are offering, zeroing in on what attracts us, making choices that inadvertently exclude others, always seeking comfort, wanting control, being dissatisfied—an endless array of very human habitual patterns that can be obstacles to creating healthy teams and organizations. 4D Mapping reveals our habitual patterns which can be painful and saddening. Feeling these painful moments in the collective, without blame or judgment, is a starting point. We cannot jump to creating a generative field without feeling the earthiness, rough edges, and stuck places revealed in practice. Willingness to be with and feel our current situation, often reveals that under the confusion lies wisdom and possibility just waiting to be attended to and called forth.

### Stuck

Stuck is a practice that draws our attention to interdependence—how outer systemic forces and mental models mold and shape us and how much our presence influences others. It moves our stuck situations from being problems to being starting places for learning, healing, and creative transformation. Participants build social sculptures to embody “stuck” situations and attend as these social sculptures move into a second sculpture that can reveal a hidden direction, insight, or empowerment.

The Stuck practice invites leaders to activate their body intelligence. In one case, leaders of a small non-profit organization said, “We would like to have more young people come to our programs, but we are not attracting them.” That is a current reality statement. Youth are not attracted today, coupled with an aspiration that youth will be attracted in the future. The team had thought about it, convened meetings to talk about it, did some research—all useful, but they were not moving forward. They decided to invite body-knowing into this conversation—a fresh perspective.

Together they created a physical sculpture that embodied the felt sense of the current situation. We call this Sculpture 1. They visualized the systemic forces pulling, pushing, or blocking in their current situation, and embodied those forces as a sculpture. This is not acting or pretending, not psycho-drama. If the body is the situation, does it feel weighed down, stretched apart, pulled in opposite directions? They engaged the physical body to sense the multiple interdependent systemic forces—both outer societal forces and inner mental models—shaping the current situation, preventing it from transforming into its aspiration.

They leaned into the discomfort of Sculpture 1. They stayed with it. Then, without thinking about a goal, they let their bodies guide them to a second sculpture. They had no idea where they were going. They trusted their embodied experience as they moved from their first posture to a second still shape, Sculpture 2. From there, without planning or thinking, each one spoke a word or short phrase to give voice to their embodied sculpture. Finally, they reflected together on their experience. Sculpture 2 is not a solution to a problem, but the process can reveal an insight, direction, or empower a next step. The “stuck” situation, as familiar and habitual as it seems, is often not sustainable. The system wants to move to a more open, aligned, creative place—its own true move.

We have now joined the view of Social Presencing Theater—awareness of open space of possibility—with practices that give birth to genuine expression. We practice with others to bring the view of not knowing/open space into our everyday life. We practice to increase our trust that embodied knowing can bring benefit to the day-to-day challenges in teams, classrooms, organizations, communities. Practices are repeated over and over to gain competency,

relaxation, and confidence. The place of practice (even if it is your office or living room) is the studio. The studio is a place to make, practice, gather, repeat, deepen, fail, refine, doubt, stumble, be surprised. It is a place for training in genuineness—the place for discovering the true move. By practicing we gain confidence to skillfully apply these embodied methods in places that are not familiar with this way of learning. Grounding in the view and practice is the only way to gain the skill and confidence necessary to share this work with organizations and communities that could benefit from this awareness-based approach to transformation.

## Result: Spaces for Social Transformation

Art takes nothing from the world: it is a gift and an exchange. It leaves the world nourished. Poems, novels, plays, with their great deep minds of story, awaken the Heart of Compassion. And so they confound the economic markets, rattle the empires, and open us up to the actually existing human and non-human world.

Performance is art in motion; in the moment; both enactment and embodiment. This is exactly what nature herself is.

—Gary Snyder, *Writers and the War Against Nature*

We touched on the view of Social Presencing Theater as the open space of Nowness. The *practice* is the movement forms in which we cultivate genuineness—the true move—through embodiment and awareness. *Result* is the capacity to fully manifest the view and practice in our personal and work life. We have found that joining the view of openness with embodied practice has enabled us to create spaces that host moment-to-moment transformation in our families, teams, organizations, and communities. These spaces are “theaters,” in that resonance is created by seeing and being seen. The “theater” can be any place where those “doing” and those “witnessing” co-create an event or experience, after which they are invited to reflect together. The result is collective seeing and sensing out of which arise fresh insights, clarity of intention, deep sense of connection, and confidence to step forward—the components of social transformation.

The marks on the canvas, the gestures on the stage, are seen by viewers, by the community. The theater has long been a place where communities gather to collectively celebrate, delight, shift perspective, mourn, and deepen a sense of what it is to be human with other humans in community. Together, performers and audience co-create a shared experience that has the potential to open and transform. Social Presencing Theater invites us to be both “doers,” those offering movements and gestures, and witnesses, those offering attention. The theater is the place of resonance between those “on a stage” and those who attend. Our theater could be a classroom, office space, conference room, or community space.

They are gathering places in which seeing and sensing ourselves can give rise to co-creation and social transformation.

The theater is a space for social transformation—a place to share stories, to entertain, to uplift, to heal, to protest, and to gain new perspectives. It is a space of generosity. Performers give what they have learned and practiced. Audiences give their attention. In this space of collective resonance between performers and viewers arise beauty, humor, wonder, celebration, thoughtfulness, provocation. In my own life, whether I was on a stage or in the audience, I was part of a community that shared an experience as we journeyed together from beginning to end of the event. Our human-heartedness had been touched, both individually and collectively.

Social Presencing Theater developed at the Presencing Institute in parallel with and is in service of awareness-based systems transformation. The practices are offered to teams, organizations, schools, and communities that express a need for fresh and powerful ways to embody a saner future. Today many Social Presencing Theater practitioners are creating spaces for social transformation based on this exchange between “players” who enact, and those who hold space and witness, as they co-create a social experience that can deepen and expand a sense of collective care and agency.

I hear many stories of the benefits or results from engaging in Social Presencing Theater. The practices have helped many cultivate embodied-knowing. Some leaders say they can trust the space of not knowing, that they are learning to sense the social field as a ground for intention and action, to be more present under pressure. Others say they are more aware of their habitual patterns in interactions and more willing to shift perspectives and behaviors. In this issue, the In Dialogue article details a conversation with four change leaders who share insights and potential from their 4D Mapping practice. Recently I heard the story of a woman whose Stuck practice revealed a direction that she felt directly led to her promotion to General Manager of a global corporation. These are stories of individual or team shifts in perception and engagement. However, the work of these individuals and teams weaves a larger fabric of social transformation—positive change on the planet.

## Transformation

Transformation is a big word that implies a major change in form, nature or function. We probably have all experienced mini social transformations that occur when a group of strangers share a retreat, workshop, or a camping trip. We gradually open up, soften, become more honest. We feel seen, connected. Sitting quietly on the porch, walking in nature, conversing, and learning together can transform us from a collection of individual body-minds to a social body and a social field of relationships. We are not the same at the end as we were at the beginning. We hold an intention that this quality of exchange can occur in our work environments and community engagements to address the social and environmental challenges that face us all.

Today many people know that personal reflection and cultivation are prerequisites for impactful work in outer systems change. However, there may be hesitation to engage in embodied movement practices in professional or educational settings. There is vulnerability in being seen. People ask, “I know it can be of benefit, but how do I apply this in my organization of disembodied people or with my skeptical client.” We could come up with a list of suggestions; however, that might be missing the point. Certainly, holding the view of open possibility, and practicing regularly with others in a Social Presencing Theater practice group can result in skill and confidence. Then we listen deeply to the challenges and aspirations of people who we have the privilege to support. We trust ourselves and the practices. The result can be quite surprising in professional and community contexts where thinking and talking is so much more familiar.

There are many reasons for wanting to offer to others—to pass on what one has learned from a teacher, to perform something one has made for an audience, to share what has been meaningful to us. On reflection, I think that my motivation for performing dances in theaters was to invite guests into potential spaces of aesthetic-transformation. This is still true today. We have seen that Social Presencing Theater has enabled leaders, educators, and changemakers to create these spaces of aesthetic-transformation. I would like to point out three such spaces—the empty spaces of stillness, the space of beholding innate connection, and the space that welcomes the richness of diversity. These spaces invite the emergence of deep recognition of the innate wisdom, care, and courage in the social field.

### ***The Capacity to Attend to Empty Spaces of Stillness***

In the 1980’s and 90’s I made performance work with visual artists and dancers, largely driven by an interest in the aesthetic principles of traditional Japanese performance arts and the films of Yasujiro Ozu. I was interested in applying the aesthetic principles of *ma* (an open gap or interval in time or in space) and *jo ha kyu* (a shape of time) to the process of contemporary dance-making for the theater. I was interested in the beauty of ordinariness, in ceremonies, in empty spaces, in bringing together things that did not obviously fit together, and in improvisation as a generator for choreography and as a performance form.

In many of my choreographed dances there were times when very little was happening. Two men share a coffee from a thermos on an otherwise empty stage. Several people build structures of bamboo poles and rocks. They were not heightened special moments, but ordinary activities with spaces of stillness. By pausing, the “doers” invited the “viewers” to share a moment of resonance, to be touched and enjoy the beauty of simple gestures, illuminated on a stage.

One result from the practice of Social Presencing Theater is a tolerance for, trust in, or even appetite for gaps of “not much happening.” This may not seem to some as a legitimate result; however, I have observed that these moments of

stillness provide sanity in this time of polarity between hyper-urgency and paralysis. These gaps are powerful spaces to open to the natural resonance that is always there but frequently missed.

Duets is a Social Presencing Theater practice that deliberately includes gaps of non-action. We explore the principle of *ma*, and the power of stillness in everyday conversations. The Duet is a non-verbal conversation in which the first person offers a movement and holds their ending posture. Instead of the partner immediately responding, there is a gap—an empty space of non-movement. There is space for deeper resonance. The partner's gesture arises spontaneously out of a shared openness—free from habitual or conventional reacting or responding. Stillness boycotts habitual flow, enabling the true move to arise.

Recently a coach attending a workshop shared that she found that pausing in the practice created discomfort and that forcing herself to stop did not allow flow. She said that if she had to stop, then she did not know what to do next. The *ma* interrupts the habitual flow of ideas and movement, making a space for something fresh and unknown to enter. It is a practice of letting go of what we think we know and can control and inviting a surprise. I think this coach speaks for many of us. We live in a time when the cultural norm is to keep moving, keep producing, keep focusing, and to become an expert. Doing nothing, even for a few seconds, can be unwelcomed. It can cause anxiety, irritation, and boredom. Bringing this gap of silence into today's organizational culture can feel dissonant, even threatening. Sometimes that open gap brings a moment of panic. For a fraction of a moment, we lose our conventional reference point of "me."

However, I am certain that these gaps of stillness are key to social transformation. We have seen and heard from many that deepening the trust in spaces of stillness is one result from engaging in Social Presencing Theater. We can leave still spaces before acting and silent spaces before speaking. We can open to wonder, listening to nature and to others for what we do not already know. These gaps enable a heightened visibility between doer and viewer, a shared resonance between speaker and listener. Those spaces devoid of facts and figures enable us, collectively, to listen for what has not happened yet. It is a moment of "not knowing." However, this not knowing opens a space of deeper knowing, a wisdom space of heightened awareness. We can sense the presence of ordinary sacredness in these gaps. Gestures or words arise from the big space, not confined by all our reference points. This is true creativity and innovation. Social Presencing Theater practice trains us to include stillness and silent spaces of not knowing at home and in work settings, enabling freshness, something unexpected, to enter and surprise us.

The pause of non-doing and not knowing can be awkward or relaxing. No pressure to keep moving, a rest. However, it is a moment in which ordinary sacredness can appear. In the Duet practice we allow a movement to end, to fade away. Out of that open space a partner's gesture arises that is not "thought up," not "keeping the ball in the air." The gesture arises from open stillness. The result of this non-verbal two-person practice is the courage to bring these

moments of stillness into our work, allowing gaps in conversation, bringing moments of grounded stillness into meetings and into coaching, pausing to stop and look out the window between activities. I am certain that these pauses, embodied spaces of attention, are needed for genuine communication and creativity. One result of Social Presencing Theater is that individuals and groups have gained the capacity to do nothing—to leave gaps of simplicity and presence in the contexts in which they live and work.

### ***The Capacity to Behold Spaces of Belonging***

Performance is of key importance because this phenomenal world and all life is of itself “not a book, but a performance.

—Gary Snyder, *Writers and the War Against Nature*

Earlier I said that the root of the word theater is literally “place for viewing,” from theasthai “to behold.” The stage is a place of heightened visibility for enacting, presenting, performing, showing. Viewers see, hear, and receive the doing, enacting, presenting. They offer their attention. These two, the performers and the witnesses together, create the theater. Several Social Presencing Theater practices challenge what we “download” from past experiences onto this setting, so we can investigate how genuine co-creation can arise.

Recently I worked with a group of high school students in California. In small groups of four, students created sequences of movement, and then each group showed what they had made to the others in the class. I asked those who were watching, “What is your role as an audience.” We had talked earlier about “holding space for others.” A young person quickly replied, “to judge.” Some students giggled. Some agreed, but some disagreed, opening a reflective conversation in the class.

Being seen is the basis of feeling valued by others and leads to a sense of belonging and connection. Yet many of us feel that being seen and seeing is adversarial. We want to be acknowledged and yet being seen evokes anxiety that we will be judged. Why do we as witnesses feel that we need to become critics and judges? Where did we learn that being intelligent means that we can quickly find flaws in other people? The scenario in which the person standing in front of us is obligated to teach, entertain, or inspire us, as we sit passively in judgment, does not establish fertile soil for co-creativity, healing, or learning. It is not a generative social field.

Fortunately, those attending can change this paradigm by practicing beholding. Beholding is not a quick peek—looking that bounces off the surface. Beholding is slowing down, attending, allowing resonance and felt-knowing to arise. Beholding is seeing with the whole body, with an open heart. It enables a sense of deep connection and communication. Even if we do not like what we see, we can stay with the feeling called “not liking,” without immediately shutting

down, jumping into criticism. Not-liking need not be mean-spirited. It can be kind and curious. Beholding is awareness that holds the space for emergence, for what will appear. It is not a transaction between a seller and a buyer. A beholder is not asking, “is this worth my time and money?” The beholder is willing to be moved; to appreciate.

In our everyday life and work, there are many opportunities to perform and to behold. It is any designated space that invites a performer to do and be seen and a viewer to behold—to see and to feel. Many people think quite negatively about the word *perform* because it connotes faking, showing off, or manipulating. But that is not how I am using the word. We may not identify as trained actors or dancers, but I am positing that every day we are all performers and enactors, as well as beholders.

Anyone who designs and engages in meetings, projects, birthday parties—events that have a beginning, middle, and end—is a performing artist. Anyone who stands in front of people to facilitate, teach, tell a story, lead, inspire, offer a toast, influence, or entertain is on a stage, no matter where the location. Whenever we deeply listen, hold space, or see, we behold. Awareness that lives in the space between performer and beholders creates an atmosphere of trust that can support social co-creativity. A second result of Social Presencing Theater is that it creates spaces for beholding, for making humanness visible and felt. One ancient meaning of beholding was to see the sacred, the fundamental purity and brilliance.

### ***The Capacity to Build Spaces of Richness***

As a choreographer I was interested in an aesthetic in which several incongruent activities were going on in the space at the same time—moving sticks or rocks while more recognizable dance movement was also happening. In my years of dance-making, high school students and adults, dancers of diverse ethnicities and abilities, visual artists, musicians, and community members co-created a social reality together. The stage became a place where diverse elements not only lived together but complemented each other. The space made visible the unique beauty held in the ancient Japanese and the Western contemporary, the ordinary and the formal, the natural and the designed. The smallest gesture expressed vast space. Diverse elements found their place of integrity and beauty.

Over the years of offering workshops in Social Presencing Theater, we facilitators have noticed that people often say they feel connected when they make eye contact, do movements that are the same as others, when they are physically close to others in or near the center of the space. This is not surprising. What does surprise us is how frequently people express a feeling of disconnection when they cannot make eye contact, do movements that are different from others, and are at a distance from others. This interested us in terms of creating spaces for diversity.

Several years ago, social designer-researcher Ricardo Dutra and I created a set of Aesthetic Language Cards to explore what we called “social aesthetic patterns” in the Village practice.<sup>4</sup> The cards were designed to create a pattern language for making visible the deeper structures of social fields. They increased our awareness of three levels of experience—what we were seeing, what we were sensing or feeling, and the quality of our awareness. We discovered that by using the cards to reflect on our experience, we could broaden the sense of connection from dependence on sameness, closeness, and eye contact, to a sense of connection based on open awareness of the whole. This allowed for greater inventiveness in movements and spatial patterns, as well as the freedom to experiment without disconnecting from the others.

The practice of extending our “awareness antennae” made visible and honored the diversity in our social systems without privileging sameness, closeness, or eye contact. We cultivated a collective intention to attend to the well-being of the whole Village. Soft eyes and peripheral vision brought knowing into the side and back body. We noticed what people did in our side space, their movement and spatial choices. Communication and coherence were established as people not only included or imitated but also contrasted and changed what others had offered. Choice making arose from awareness of the whole space—picking up on the diverse array of gestures, directions, groupings—all arising spontaneously in the space.

It is a cliché to say that social richness is created by a community of diverse ethnicities, identities, ages, beliefs, geographies, socioeconomics, abilities, and privilege. We say that, and yet one challenge in the world today is intolerance and an inability to listen to, or even to be with, people “not like us.” The topic of belonging and othering are prominent in our social discourse. The aesthetic concept of *contrast* suggests that different, even opposing, elements (colors, shapes, movements) can more vividly bring out the unique qualities of each element and expand our awareness to see a space that holds both. Using aesthetic principles when reflecting on shared experience broadens the conversation from psychological-social or political language and concepts. This shift in language to an aesthetic frame provides a spaciousness that holds difference and allows us to move into difficult conversations with more bravery and empathy.

Recently a team of nine Social Presencing Theater practitioners met to design a space to explore polarization—differences that solidify into fixation and push forward a particular view without capacity to even hear, much less consider others. We acknowledged that polarization was not just “out there,” but lived in our team and in each of us. We used the Social Presencing Theater practices to create small “moments.” I had learned to use Moment Work as a way of devising theater from Greg Pierotti who had been a creator with the Tectonic Theater

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<sup>4</sup> See <https://www.u-school.org/spt> for more information.

Project. Although we did not apply this method with the vigor of this innovative theater company, the method has supported our performance work since we first began making small Social Presencing Theater performances. The embodiment practices provoked stories of hurt, anger, and cynicism. They also opened a space to feel under those to a sense of broken heartedness. We listened for the soft tenderness under the surface. We shared the result of our process in a short performance, followed by a hosted conversation with the audience. The social field included our individual bodies, our ensemble body, and the audience body—all engaged in a journey to learn and heal.

In a series of practice gatherings of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color), we noticed that tenderness, shared knowing, and natural creativity lie beneath our protective shells. I have heard people say, “it’s not real life, it’s theater.” There is something useful here. We can think of theater as a lab where we can try things out. We have seen that Social Presencing Theater can offer forms that hold very diverse experiences. When people enact something together and then reflect together, the form establishes a safe space for sharing emotions. It is not a theoretical or idea-driven conversation. We have embodied, enacted, and felt something together. It is brave work. Dialogue arises from shared experience rather than from ideologies. Brave dialogue opens compassion.

Enacting and beholding our genuineness are ordinary human capacities, and yet they take courage. They move us out of the speed, comfort-driven, results-oriented aspects of life. It takes courage to feel. It takes courage to soften, get off our “high ground” and extend warmth and care particularly to those we do not like, trust, or agree with. It takes courage to let those in the world who suffer the most into our hearts. But we can practice and gain the capacity to be fully human. One result of Social Presencing Theater is that it has become a practice field for deepening our courage and care. Any social space—at home, at work, or community gatherings—has the potential of being a sacred space in which a glimpse of a brave caring society can unfold.

## Conclusion

The goal is to reconnect to the nowness of reality, so that you can go forward without destroying simplicity, without destroying your connection to this earth.

—Chogyam Trungpa, *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*

This article offered a brief look at the view, practice, and result of Social Presencing Theater in awareness-based systems transformation. We began by considering a longing to connect with our genuine selves, with one another, and with the good Earth. We suggested that Social Presencing Theater fosters connection by staying present, lightening the weight of our conceptual and habitual frameworks, shifting our attention to the sensing body, and giving us

the courage to open our heart-knowing and engage in the moment-to-moment process of transformation into a caring, compassionate future. The key is welcoming not knowing, celebrating awkwardness, cultivating unconditional trust, and being brave. The practice cultivates relaxation-based attunement with the environment and is a vital support to awareness-based systems change.

We establish the view of ordinary sacredness when offering Social Presencing Theater in organizations, classrooms, teams, or client contexts. We take the attitude that this team or organization is a being that has wisdom and caring at its heart. We examine with kindness our individual, historical, and collective blind spots and prejudices. We gently support our organizations in acknowledging blockages and failures. However, we do not lose sight of the larger field, or that hidden in the stuck situation is basic healthiness, sanity and care of the collective. It is bigger than the collective. The system has a longing to transform, and the longing itself is the basic wellness present now in the system, unseen and unfelt. Ordinary sacredness lives in every moment. That is the basic approach that we bring to awareness-based systems transformation.

The word *systems* often suggests an image of large, institutional social systems, such as public education or the United Nations. Thinking of the magnitude of challenges—the falling apart of institutions and countries, extreme weather, displacement of children and families—can feel quite overwhelming, requiring us to work directly with our fear and sense of helplessness. One definition for the word *system* is “interconnecting network.” I suppose we could say that there is nothing but systems—the body-mind system, the imaginary individual-all living beings’ system, and the all living beings-Mother Earth system. But do we feel the truth of systems, of the interconnecting network?

Likewise, we could say that there is nothing but change. We and everything around us is constantly changing. Every day we experience things coming together, being born, and things falling apart and dying. Awareness knows the truth of both interconnection and of impermanence and change. Perhaps awareness has no boundaries and simply illuminates. We say that presencing is awareness that attends so deeply to the present moment that it can sense an emerging future. Once, many years ago, I heard Otto, speaking about transformation, say, “Sometimes the only thing we can know is which direction to face and where to put our next step.”

Awareness-based implies being present now. Social Presencing Theater is the practice of staying in the present, knowing which direction to face, and where to put our next step. The body holds the past; however, it lives in the present. My stomach feels this way now. My feet on the floor feel this way now. My mind knows that it is not yesterday’s stomach or tomorrow’s feet. It is Now. What I see is Now. What I hear is Now. Social Presencing Theater is training us how to fully show up for life Now—in our body, in our social bodies, on our planet body Earth.

Our presence affects and moves others; their presence moves us. This movement is change. But maybe the change is not innovation in the conventional sense, not coming up with solutions to problems. Maybe the change is fuller

resonance—facing the direction of our own wisdom, and the step is motivated by our longing to fully care for this world and each other. We enter organizations not as experts or saviors, selling Social Presencing Theater as a transformation tool. We enter knowing that whatever happens is a co-created experience that relies on the tremendous goodwill, generosity, and bravery of everyone in the room (or the zoom). Maybe awareness of being present together, seeing and being seen, in Now, is the ground out of which transformation emerges—the ground for creating enlightened society.

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