

## Excerpt from *The Lotus: A Personal Practice Guide for Authentic Leadership towards Sustainability*

By Christopher Baan, Phil Long and Dana Pearlman

### From complexity to collaboration

The growing global complex sustainability challenge that society is facing today calls for facilitators and leaders that are adept at engaging groups in a collaborative manner to see the larger picture beyond individual perspectives, and to support complex planning and decision-making.

These collaborative engagement processes include people learning from each other, with each other, and is a cornerstone in organisational learning theory. It relates to the notion of 'team learning' and the process of unearthing a group's 'collective intelligence', the idea that in collective learning or collaboration, the intelligence of a group is greater than that of any individual. Through these group engagements, complex problems are seen holistically through a wider stakeholder perspective.

The sustainability challenge is complex; we cannot foresee how social, environmental and economic modifications will affect the system. Therefore, the wider stakeholder perspective obtained in a system, the more holistically a system can be perceived. In order to engage groups, facilitators who are adaptive and create an environment conducive for collaboration will be more effective dealing with complexity and in helping move society toward sustainability. Facilitators cultivating their personal leadership

capacities will increase their depth at engaging group processes with a more holistic understanding of self, others and society. Therefore, as a facilitator or leader, cultivating your leadership capacity that helps make sense of the world in a deeper and more holistic way, is paramount.

#### *Useful resources:*

*Cynefin Framework/Complexity theory/Systems thinking*

### Cultivating your Authentic Self

In order to address the complex sustainability challenge facing society today, leaders must cultivate their own authenticity and presence. We understand authenticity as being true, open and honest with who you are. The more adaptable and developed a leader becomes, the greater they are able to steer through complex, participatory planning processes. Through their personal development, facilitators and leaders are more able to utilise hindsight, hold multiple worldviews and perspectives, and sit with current reality while simultaneously aiming toward a desired future. The adaptability achieved by facilitators and leaders honing these capacities lends itself to enhancing collaborative group processes and outcomes in Strategic Sustainable Development. This is a continuous path towards using more and more of your authentic self in facilitation processes. This path helps facilitators and leaders improve the quality of relationships in a team while engaging people cognitively, mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Facilitators and leaders bringing their authentic selves into the facilita-

tion process are more likely to guide a team towards successful, lasting and sustainable results that have ownership among the stakeholders. Authentic leaders and facilitators that hold the 'container' for collaborative processes more personally, are better able to engage people in multi-dimensional ways, resulting in more embodied and empowered outcomes. The developed sense of awareness inherent in personal leadership capacities can be critically valuable in enabling facilitators and leaders to know when and what to do during a group process by 'sensing' what is happening with the group in the present moment. In this practice guide we present 9 personal capacities that leaders find essential in their work to facilitate complex and transformational change towards sustainability. These personal capacities by their very nature cannot be learnt only on a cognitive level; they must be embodied.

Our research has shown that one important path to the embodiment of these capacities is through personal and collective practice. The implication of this is clear; as one expert put it, "no real transformation can take place without personal and collective practice". The simplest dictionary definition of practice is "to do repeatedly to acquire or polish a skill" (Szpakowski 2010). We distinguish here between personal (individual) and collective practices. An example of a collective practice is dialogue or Aikido, something you do in a group of people where interaction is key. In addition to the personal capacities identified in our research we found conditions for success for developing your capacities through practice:

*The success of an intervention depends on the interior condition of the intervener.*

*- William O'Brien*

## The Lotus: A Personal Practice Guide for Authentic Leadership towards Sustainability

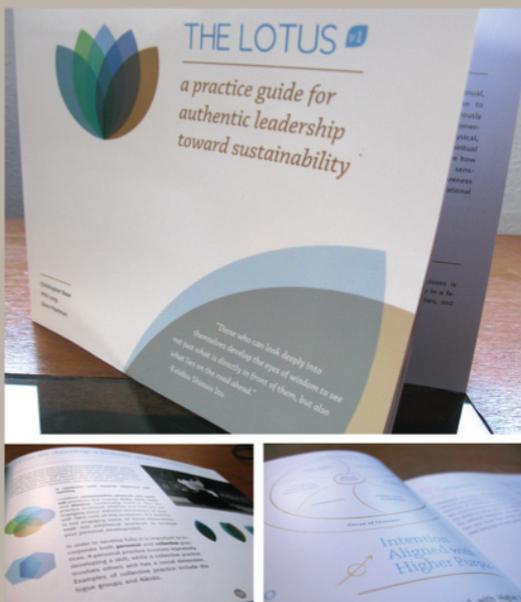
By Christopher Baan, Phil Long and Dana Pearlman

With the ever-increasing complexity and speed of change in society and in the world today, how can we tap into the wisdom, clarity, and commitment needed as sustainability practitioners, to engage people in participatory ways, to facilitate the transformation towards sustainability in our organisation or community? A guidebook was written by three 2011 graduates of this Swedish Sustainability Leadership Master's programme, that attempts to answer this question. Relevant to leaders, facilitators and change agents working on the intersection of leadership development, process facilitation, and sustainability, the guidebook documents personal leadership capacities that authentic leaders find essential in their work when facilitating complex, transformational change in organisations and communities. Furthermore, it suggests practices (ranging from contemplative and spiritual to physical, engaging both head, heart and hands) that help in developing your leadership capacities.

The guidebook, which is freely available to download or to order as hardcopy, has been informed through interviews with practitioners in the *Art of Hosting Strategic Conversations*, and in the ALIA institute (Authentic Leadership in Action), among others. From a community initiative in Halifax (Canada) to strategy development for an energy company in Bolivia - practitioners around the world are already applying the models and ideas presented in this guidebook and showing its real-life value.

You are welcome to download, read and share the practice guide. Feedback and suggestions for continuous improvement are welcome.

[www.thelotus.info](http://www.thelotus.info)



### Conditions of success for developing your personal leadership capacities

- A combination of personal and collective practice is a pathway to the development of your leadership capacities;
- A combination of contemplative, physical and spiritual practice helps you align body, mind, spirit and shadow, in order to maximise personal development;
- The integration of practices both in your personal and professional life helps you take the learning from the practice back into the facilitation process.

### Conditions of success for choosing a practice

- The practice must have a mirroring quality, to help the participants observe themselves and enhance self-awareness;
- The practice has to provide 'a container you can't manipulate' with structures that are adhered to;
- The quality of your attention in the practice is more important than the type of practice performed;
- The practice must be something you are willing to do repetitively and consistently.

The continuous mastery of personal capacities not only improves your leadership performance; it also helps you get in touch with your own authenticity. When you are more in touch with your authentic self, your actions are easier to embed in your life and thus lead to stronger follow-through in a facilitated engagement process. The literature on leadership development highlights the importance of self-mastery in leaders and through "increased self-awareness, self-regulation and positive modelling, authentic leaders foster the development of authenticity in follow-

ers" (Avolio et al. 2005). Authenticity is about "owning one's personal experiences, be they thoughts, emotions, needs, wants, preferences, or beliefs, processes captured by the injunction to 'know oneself' and further implies that one acts in accord with the true self, expressing oneself in ways that are consistent with inner thoughts and feelings" (Harter 2002, 382; in Avolio et al. 2005). Leaders modeling awareness and authenticity invite participants to do likewise, and if one is engaged on an authentic level, engagement processes are likely to result in more desirable outcomes.

Authentic leadership development offers facilitators and leaders a foundation from which to engage groups beyond the cognitive level. It includes the emotional, physical and spiritual dimensions to increase congruence between outcomes created collaboratively with participants' authentic selves, resulting in stronger and more successful outcomes. Facilitators and leaders bringing their authentic selves into an engagement process benefit outcomes. However, it is not enough in order to successfully address the sustainability challenge. One must have the ability to plan in a strategic manner within the confines of the Earth's carrying capacity. The sustainability principles introduced previously define such boundary conditions. Combining an authentic and holistic leadership approach along with knowledge and skills in Strategic Sustainable Development, we contend, will benefit collaborative engagement processes and outcomes that help move organisations and society toward sustainability.

### Personal Leadership Capacities and Practices

The following section describes the personal capacities authentic lead-

ers find essential in their work and some of the various practices that help them develop these capacities. They are accompanied by principles as well as self-reflection questions and reflection questions to use during a facilitation process. Bare in mind that a more holistic approach to practice is most beneficial and many of the practices are useful for developing multiple capacities. It is recommended to do practices that regularly engage the body, mind, spirit and heart, which may mean using multiple practices to cover all bases.

### Being Present

- Being Present means being fully aware and awake in the present moment – physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. This includes connecting to others, the environment around you and current reality.

### Suspension and Letting Go

- Suspension and Letting Go is the ability to actively experience and observe a thought, assumption, judgment, habitual pattern, emotion or sensation like fear, confusion, conflict or desire, and then refraining from immediately reacting or responding to the situation.

### Intention Aligned with Higher Purpose

- Intention Aligned with Higher Purpose is the alignment of one's authentic nature with one's internal resonance with manifested actions in the world. This alignment trickles down to all facets of life including one's personal, professional and spiritual dimensions. "Where your deepest personal passion and the world's greatest needs align, there is opportunity" (Peter Senge).

### Compassion

Compassion is having unconditional acceptance and kindness toward all

the dimensions of oneself and others, regardless of circumstance. Compassion involves the ability to reflect upon oneself and others without judgment, but with recognition and trust that others are doing the best they can in any given situation

### Whole System Awareness

Whole System Awareness is the capacity to quickly switch between different perspectives, scales and worldviews to see the big picture, interconnections within the system, and being able to scale down to small details. Whole System Awareness is not just cognitive – you 'sense' the system. It is the understanding that everything is interconnected within a system.

### Whole Self-Awareness

Whole Self-Awareness is the continual, lifelong process of paying attention to knowing one's self; it involves consciously and intentionally observing various dimensions of the self (including the physical, mental, shadow, emotional and spiritual realms). It is the capacity to observe how one is thinking, relating, feeling, sensing, and judging. Whole Self-Awareness includes perceptions beyond the rational mind, such as intuition.

### Personal Power

Personal Power is the ability to use energy and drive to manifest wise actions in the world for the greater good, while being aware of one's influences on a situation.

### Sense of Humor

A Sense of Humor, or 'light-heartedness', is the universal experience of simultaneous amusement, laughter and joy culminating from an experience, thought or sensation.

### Dealing with Dualities and Paradoxes

Dealing with Dualities and Paradoxes

is the capacity to sit with ambiguity in a facilitation session, manage polarities, and hold multiple perspectives.

### Being Present

**What is it?** Being Present means being fully aware and awake in the present moment – physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. This includes connecting to others, the environment around you and current reality.

**Principles:** Show up, choose to be present. Pay attention to what has heart and meaning. (*adapted from 'Four-Fold Way: Principles To Guide A Learning Community' www.equalvoice.com*)

### Self-reflection questions

- Sit still for a moment in silence. What do you notice happening around you? When you observe yourself in the environment or space you are in, what are you sensing, hearing, smelling, feeling and noticing? How is your body, mind, spirit and heart in this moment?

### Reflection questions during facilitation

- What questions about the system you're operating in help you understand their current reality more fully? For example, how does the social system function (do people share viewpoints, listen to one another, have solidarity or use critical thinking?).
- What does the group need right now in order to proceed with the agenda? You could ask questions about the organisational structure, and any other part of the system you are working with.
- How are you feeling right now with this system or group - mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and physically? What do you need to acknowledge, and then put aside

for later, or focus on right now to be present with this group and help them become present?

### Practices to develop your capacity to Be Present

**Mindfulness meditation practice.** This is useful for discerning the reality of things rather than believing in false impressions or misinterpreting information. By sitting in mindfulness meditation, this practice helps you train your mind to be calm and stable. An inexperienced practitioner may find the practice overwhelming at first. If this is the case, use concentration meditations (see Whole Self-Awareness) before beginning Mindfulness meditation. For a guided mindfulness meditation by John Kabatt-Zinn go to: <http://bit.ly/BZYU> and for a description of mindfulness, go to <http://bit.ly/swZo2>.

**Breath exercises.** When you wake up first thing in the morning lie flat on your back and use a deep breath to scan the body. Find any existing tension in the body and breathe deeply into that area for 8 rounds of breath. If no tension exists, breathe through the chakras starting with the crown to the third eye to the throat to the heart to the solar plexus to the lower abdomen and to the root chakra on the inhale and on the exhale reverse the attention on the chakras beginning with the root chakra. Bring this breath work with you out in the world during the work-day,

in your car, when listening to others. Try using the breath throughout the day to connect to the present moment.

### Suspension and Letting Go

**What is it?** Suspension and Letting Go is the ability to actively experience and observe a thought, assumption, judgment, habitual pattern, emotion or sensation like fear, confusion, conflict or desire, and then refraining from immediately reacting or responding to the situation.

**Principles:** Notice your judgments, assumptions and habitual patterns of being in the world coming up with yourself or other people. Either share them or park them and explore them later.

### Self-reflection questions

- Notice when you are judging yourself or others. What is your judgment? What is the source of this judgment? What do the judgments tell you about your values? If you did not have this judgment what else is possible?
- If you stop and listen deeply to yourself or others, what is being said beyond your comprehension? If you let go of habitual beliefs and assumptions, what is happening?
- Do you remember ever assuming something and letting it go to see what would happen? What were your assumptions? Were your assumptions wrong? What did you learn?

### Reflection questions during facilitation

- What are you holding onto from the past that is hindering your ability to work with this group right now to be effective? What do you have to let go of in order to meet this group's highest potential?
- What is possible if you give space for others to voice their ideas and opinions?
- If you let go of judgments or assumptions, what is possible that you cannot see yet?

### Practices to develop your capacity to Suspend and Let Go

**Meditation** is very useful for developing the capacity to Suspend and Let Go. Vipassana meditation helps you witness consciousness; it is a practice of observing your emotional and mental states. Vipassana trains you to have a thought, and let it go or experience an emotion and witness it move through you. During this meditation, you aim to be detached to thoughts and sensations while observing them. For an explanation on Vipassana Meditation visit <http://bit.ly/kFuQjt>

**Bohmian Dialogue** is a structured technique that helps you witness judgments, assumptions, cultural beliefs and personal values objectively within the context of a group. Dialogue provides a mirror to individual and collective consciousness. The Greek word for dialogue originally means 'meaning flowing through', as opposed to discussion meaning 'breaking things apart'. It is a conversation with a centre, not with sides (Isaacs 1999). A group of people form a circle with no agenda, just a dialogue revolving around thinking collectively. The group gathers with the intention to observe what is being said in a non-judgmental way. Bohmian Dialogue Principles include:

*Our true home is in the present moment  
To live in the present moment is a miracle.  
The miracle is not to walk on water.  
The miracle is to walk on the green Earth  
... to appreciate the peace and beauty available now  
... in our bodies and our spirits.  
Once we learn to touch this peace,  
we will be healed and transformed.  
It is not a matter of faith; it is a matter of practice.*

*- Thich Nhat Hanh*

*Intention is not a powerful force, it is the only force.*

- W. Brian Arthur

- The group agrees that no group-level decisions will be made in the conversation.
- Each individual agrees to suspend judgment in the conversation.
- As these individuals “suspend judgment” they also simultaneously are as honest and transparent as possible.
- The conversation builds upon each individual’s ideas in the conversation, and individuals do not argue, counter or break apart what is being said.

#### **Suspension & Letting Go: Resources for further exploring, practice, and reading**

- Bohm, D. 1996. *On Dialogue*. New York: Routledge.
- Isaacs, William. 1999. *Dialogue and the Art Of Thinking Together*. New York: Crown Business.

#### **Intention Aligned with Higher Purpose**

**What is it?** Intention Aligned with Higher Purpose is the alignment of one’s authentic nature with one’s internal resonance with manifested actions in the world. This alignment trickles down to all facets of life including one’s personal, professional and spiritual dimensions. “Where your deepest personal passion and the world’s greatest needs align, there is opportunity” (Peter Senge). Articulating one’s higher purpose helps one embrace the unknown with profound trust.

**Principles:** Seek out what moves you at your core with how you can assist others and the world.

#### **Self-reflection questions**

Reflect upon these questions as though they are a ‘tuning fork’ for your purpose in life:

- When you imagine your highest self in the future, accomplishing your goals, what do you see? What are you accomplishing personally and professionally?
- How would you like people to remember you? What did you accomplish in your life that is worth remembering? What kinds of relationships did you have with other people?
- What do you care about most in the world? What is/are your greatest passion(s)? How does this align with the world’s greatest needs?
- What moves you at your core? What is your calling?
- Why are you here on Earth *at this time*? If you look at the biography of your life what always comes back for alignment, and calls you to act for something beyond your own self gain?

#### **Reflection questions during facilitation**

- If you look at the history of this community or organisation what always comes back for alignment or is at the core of these people coming together?
- What calls this group to act beyond their own individual selfinterest?
- What is this group’s core purpose and greatest passion?

#### **Practices for developing Intention Aligned with Higher Purpose**

Andrew Cohen’s Five Tenets of Psychology Liberation (<http://bit.ly/kGi1Oe>). This can be used as a tool for affirmations during concentration meditations. Take one tenet and repeat it to yourself as an affirmation during a meditation practice.

- Clarity of Intention: is foundational to spiritual life. Liberation

is achieved by refraining from self-deception and seeking freedom.

- The Law of Volitionality: rather than assuming you are an unconscious victim, you know exactly what you are doing.
- Face Everything and Avoid Nothing: an ultimate form of spiritual practice asking, “how awake are you to what is motivating you to make the choices that you make? Because only if you’re paying close attention are you going to be able to bring the light of awareness into the darkest corners of your own psyche.”
- The Truth of Impersonality: All we do as humans is an impersonal affair. The “illusion of uniqueness the narcissistic selfsense that is ego, is created moment by moment through the compulsive and mechanical personalisation of almost every thought, feeling and experience we have.”
- For the Sake of the Whole: “The pursuit of enlightenment is for the transformation of the whole world, the enlightenment of the whole universe. It’s ultimately for the evolution of consciousness itself.

#### **Intention Aligned with Higher Purpose: Resources for further exploring, practice, and reading**

- U-journaling: use these guided journaling questions based upon Theory U to articulate your higher purpose: <http://bit.ly/iOHFaa>.
- Lynne McTaggart. 2007. *The Intention Experiment: Using Your Thoughts to Change Your Life and the World*. Free Press.
- Joseph Campbell. 2008. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces (The Collected Works of Joseph Campbell)*. New World Library.

## Compassion

**What is it?** Compassion is having unconditional acceptance and kindness toward all the dimensions of oneself and others, regardless of circumstance. Compassion involves the ability to reflect upon oneself and others without judgment, but with recognition and trust that others are doing the best they can in any given situation.

**Principles:** Have compassion and kindness, for yourself and for others in even the most challenging circumstances. Share in another person's humanity.

### Self-reflection questions

- When you are sad or emotional, what do you do? Are you judging yourself or allowing feelings to move through you?
- Are you okay asking others for help?
- When someone else is sad, how do you respond? When you hear of a stranger suffering, how do you feel?
- Describe a time you felt pain or joy when listening to another's story. Describe a time you enjoyed helping others; when you accepted or felt compassion for others different from yourself or doing things you thought were 'wrong'.

### Reflection questions during facilitation

- What worldviews and perspectives exist in this group? How can you understand other people's viewpoints and enable them to see others' viewpoints, as well? How can you hold all these viewpoints simultaneously as a facilitator?
- What are others feeling that you need to try to understand? Are you ignoring or overlooking feelings within the system? What feelings are not being talked about?

- What is the level of compassion in this group you are working with? How could you help increase the level of compassion within this group?

## Practices for developing Compassion

**Tonglen.** Lojong mind training consists of various practices you may find easily online. Tonglen is a concentration meditation practice on compassion. The practitioner breathes in another person or animal's suffering on the in-breath, and on the out-breath sends them relief. You can focus on an individual or a group of people, animals or environmental suffering. On the in-breath imagine taking away suffering (breathe in as much as you can), and on the out-breathe (breathe out as wide as you can) imagine sending relief, comfort and happiness to the people or animals you are focusing on.

**Loving-kindness meditation.** There are many visualisations, reflections, and guided meditations for developing loving kindness. The traditional pattern is to move outward from oneself, to a good friend, to a neutral person to a difficult person or enemy and then gradually to the entire universe. A typical mantra would begin:

*'May I be safe and protected. May I be peaceful and happy. May I be healthy and strong. May I have ease of well being (and accept all the conditions of the world)' - then replace "I" with a good friend... then a neutral person... then a difficult person or enemy... then the entire universe with the same mantra above. For an audio-guided loving-kindness meditation, go to <http://bit.ly/lkQqgl>.*

## Compassion: Resources for further exploring, practice, and reading

- Communicating Sustainability to people with Different Worldviews (research by Barrett Brown). <http://bit.ly/frxasL> and <http://bit.ly/k0cnB>. (Also see practices under Whole System Awareness).
- Trungpa Rinpoche: Genuine Heart of Sadness (pdf). <http://bit.ly/mc2t16>.
- Chade-Meng Tan: Everyday compassion at Google. <http://bit.ly/hsrGDz>.
- Charter of Compassion: [www.charterforcompassion.org](http://www.charterforcompassion.org).

## Whole System Awareness

**What is it?** Whole System Awareness is the capacity to quickly switch between different perspectives, scales and worldviews to see the big picture, interconnections within the system, and being able to scale down to small details. Whole System Awareness is not just cognitive – you 'sense' the system. It is the understanding that everything is interconnected.

**Principles:** Sense the system, don't try to understand it. Pay attention to patterns. Invite essential stakeholder input to gain a wider perspective. Harvest collective intelligence surfacing from the group.

### Self-reflection questions

- What can you see, sense, feel, and intuit, about the system in which you are living and working?
- How far have you set the system boundaries? What are the system boundaries in which you are living and working? Are they determined by family, friends, neighbourhood, tribe, city, region, country, language, the world, all of humanity,

*Your work is to discover your work and then with all your heart to give yourself to it.*

*- The Buddha*

all sentient beings, or the whole universe?

- How big are your spheres of control, influence, and concern respectively?
- To what extent do you see yourself as part of a larger whole, as dependent upon a larger, interconnected system?

### Reflection questions during facilitation

- What stakeholders could you talk to within the system to get a wider perspective of the system or for stronger collaboration and ownership among stakeholders?
- What patterns exist within the system that you can recognise?
- What is not being talked about within the system?
- What questions need to be asked to help those within the system sense and see the system more completely?
- What experience does the system need to sense, in order to see itself? (See co-sensing, Theory U).

## Practices for developing Whole System Awareness

**Body Whole System-Awareness.** Notice yourself being aware of your own body as a whole system: all of your organs, your digestive system, and circulatory system are interconnected. Your body cannot function optimally if the one part of the system is not operating optimally. Now connect this concept to everything else (relationships, your home, the environment etc.). Ask yourself reflective questions: what is not whole in my physical body, my relationships, my workplace? If I work to improve that area, how will it affect the whole system?

**A thought exercise.** “What happens to one breath of air?” by astronomer Harlow Shapley: (<http://bit.ly/j9ve8N>) demonstrating the gas argon in the air we all breathe is the same breath of argon used by Jesus Christ, Joan of Arc

and Mahatma Gandhi, for example. We literally all breathe the same air, and it cycles through us from all past generations to all future generations. This demonstrates the interconnections existing between everyone, as well as the laws of thermodynamics stating that matter within our biosphere does not disappear and all matter spreads.

### Whole System Awareness: Resources for further exploring, practice, and reading

- Booth Sweeney, L. & D. Meadows. 2008. *The Systems Thinking Playbook*.
- Capra, F. 1997. *The Web of Life. A New Scientific Understanding of Living Systems*.
- Meadows, D. 2008. *Thinking in Systems: A Primer*.
- Senge, P. 1990. *The Fifth Discipline. The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization*.
- Scharmer, O. Theory U, material on co-sensing: <http://bit.ly/o60g41>.
- Wheatley, Margaret, J. 2006. *Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World*.

## Whole Self-Awareness

**What is it?** Whole Self-Awareness is the continual, lifelong process of paying attention to knowing one's self; it involves consciously and intentionally observing various dimensions of the self (including the physical, mental, shadow, emotional and spiritual realms). It is the capacity to observe how one is thinking, relating, feeling, sensing, and judging. Whole Self-Awareness includes perceptions beyond the rational mind, such as intuition.

**Principles:** Pay attention to all the dimensions of yourself (physical, emotional, spiritual, shadow and mental dimensions). Your body is not a transporter for your head, you are a whole system.

### Self-reflection questions

- How would others describe you?

What do you tell yourself about yourself?

- Think of someone you admire, what do you admire about them? What does this tell you about your values? What can you learn about yourself from this admiration?
- Think of someone that irritates you, why do they irritate you? What does this tell you about your values? What can you learn about yourself from this irritation?
- When something is physically challenging to you, how do you respond?
- Are you aware of how you are feeling throughout the day?
- What emotions are acceptable, what emotions are not acceptable?
- How do you feel physically, emotional, spiritually, energetically and mentally right now?

### Reflection questions during facilitation

- What reactions are you having with this group that need to be explored or shared now or later?
- What do you perceive to be occurring within this group beyond your cognition?
- How can you invite the group to be engaged beyond cognition? How are you inviting the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of this group to participate?
- Is your whole self (body, mind, spirit, emotion, and shadow) in alignment? Is your head agreeing to do something and another dimension of yourself not in agreement?

## Practices for developing your Whole Self-Awareness

**Concentration meditation practice.** These practices focus your thoughts on a particular object (such as the chakra system or visualising white light moving through the body) to shut out the outside world and prevent the mind from wandering. For

example, focus upon the inhale and the exhale breath. On the inhale breath your posture elevates and on the exhale breath your posture settles. Repeat for a few minutes and extend this time with practice. This helps calm the parasympathetic nervous system to help you relax. Once calm from the concentration breathing, an awareness meditation practice like Mindfulness (See Being Present Practices) helps you see the nature of your mind. With compassion move toward embracing all of yourself and seeing the patterns of thinking including judging, planning, yearning and fearing that show up. This enables you to begin to discern between unconscious material surfacing in your thoughts from the past and accurately receiving information in the present moment.

**'Core Qualities' practice** (by Frank Heckman). Tell a story to a peer or mentor about a time when you were doing something challenging in which you persevered by stepping up and being courageous. Have the other person listen to your story and take note of the qualities you displayed in that situation to feedback to you. These qualities are your core qualities of personal strength you embody in your life. Repeat with another story. This practice also helps you become aware of your Personal Power.

**Giving and receiving feedback.** Intentionally ask others (peers, co-workers, mentors, family members) for feedback on your behaviour to see areas for your growth in order to increase the quality of your work, relationships and self-understanding. Being open to feedback and listening is key. Start this process with someone you trust most. Notice if and when you feel defensive, refrain from responding, and explore how receiving feedback impacts you. Use specific examples and reflect back to the person what you think you heard them say for accuracy and clarity. Use an actual experience.

Ask the person giving feedback to focus upon:

- What behaviours they observed you doing?
- What was the outcome of the situation and how did it impact them?
- What feelings did they feel?
- Now ask yourself, what future opportunities for new actions are available to you now given the feedback? And remember to have compassion with yourself.

**A physical practice such as yoga, Thai Chi, martial arts** to integrate a holistic approach and address more dimensions of yourself.

**Shadow work.** Facilitators work with all kinds of people and situations and are bound to be irritated or triggered sometimes. If you focus your energy on the 'outer' trigger, you are missing the

gem in the lesson from self-reflection; by being angry at the person triggering you, you are really just shooting the messenger. When in process, try to notice when an irritant or trigger or dislike arises and write it down, suspend it temporarily and return to it for exploration when appropriate. Describe the event, how you felt, what reaction you normally would have had if you had not suspended your reaction, and how that situation may represent a repressed part of yourself from long ago. Seeing irritations as shadows that need to be explored helps you gain acceptance, compassion and awareness of yourself and others, it teaches you to suspend when an irritation occurs.

#### **Whole Self-Awareness: Resources for further exploring, practice, and reading**

- The Johari Window: mapping personality awareness: <http://kevan.org/johari>.
- Goleman, Daniel. 1996. Emotional Intelligence.
- Goleman, Daniel; Richard E Boyatzis; Anne McKee. 2004. Primal Leadership: Learning to Lead with Emotional Intelligence.
- Self assessment tools such as Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Enneagram Test, Temperament Assessments, Emotional Intelligence Tests, Action-Logic Assessment, or Spiral Dynamics Value Meme. ■



#### **Christopher Baan, Mobius Consultant**

Having graduated from the Master's in Strategic Leadership towards Sustainability at BTH in Sweden, Christopher works for several organisations in the field of systems innovation, accelerating the transition towards sustainable energy, and creating the conditions for authentic leadership development. At the foundation 'Nederland Krijgt Nieuwe Energie' ('New Energy for The Netherlands') he supports and facilitates multi-stakeholder processes to accelerate the transition towards sustainable energy in the Netherlands, engaging a broad spectrum of industry associations, NGOs and citizens. At the ALIA Institute, he co-ordinates networking and outreach for the annual ALIA Europe Leadership Intensives. He co-authored *The Lotus – a practice guide for authentic leadership towards sustainability*.