

Leader- and personal transformation in a Digital Setting

IntoTheNew white paper by Karin Hamrin & Niklas Lindhardt

1. ABSTRACT

The purpose of this white paper is to share our experiences from a learning experiment: how to run holistic personal and leader development programs in a purely virtual setting, with people not previously acquainted with each other.

Challenge: The pace of change, informational flow and complexity is ever increasing in our society. The need for a stronger foundation in self and self-knowledge can strongly counterbalance the societal demands, ensuring stronger personal and external leadership, in line with core values.

We wanted to examine how impactful an 8-week, deep, integrative process could be on attendees capabilities of leading self and others, integration of learnings about self and effect on life quality.

Scope: This whitepaper is based on 5 completed programs run over the course of 2 years. Each program holding 15 attendees, in an 8-week process in totally 18 hours facilitated process.

Learnings: Qualitative measures show positive effects that reached beyond the hopes for the program. Deeper self-knowledge, an increase in leadership of self and others and general increase of life quality are reported. The experiment has become permanent with several programs started on a yearly basis for both Swedish and international audience.

With this paper is it our aim to share these transformative developmental practices to contribute to global consciousness development, increase self-knowledge self-love and love toward others and planet and open up for co-creation of a better tomorrow.

2. OUR CONTRIBUTION

2.1. What we aimed to give

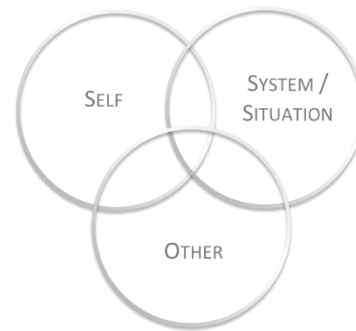
A framing condition was to design the format within a purely digital setting. It enables attendance for persons with busy agendas, removes travel issues and cuts out the limitations of geographic location. Key question was if deep, transformative meetings still could be achieved.

We wanted to give our attendees a broad introduction and understanding of several research fields, each combined with integrative practices for everyone to be able to apply the parts relevant to them. The format also aims to build a foundation for continuous growth and development. *

We wanted for our attendees to see, sense and make sense of a larger range of perspectives in the interconnection between Self, Other (e.g. peers, team) and System (e.g. organization). Thus enabling co-awareness of how to shape a system in which both organization and people can grow in sustainable balance. **

We wanted to create a safe space for attendees to meet both self and others in deep connection and mutual exploration, opening up for integration of knowledge and expansion of awareness.*

Below, our intended contributions are detailed in the perspectives of Self, Other and System.



The SOS model and framework forms a base to sense and navigate the interconnectedness of self, other and system in the complex, ever changing environment as today’s organizations.

S. DENHAM-VAUGHAN & M-A. CHIDIAC

SELF

We wanted our attendees to increase their understanding, experience and integration of the interior self, their different action-logics, inner “figures”, psycho-emotional patterns and triggers, and how they play out in the exterior self – in the day-to-day leadership of self and others. *

We wanted for our attendees to experience and embrace a larger part of themselves, in love and compassion, leading to an increased life experience and increase in wellbeing. *

We wanted to give our attendees knowledge, tools, and courage to continue to work on integrating the self, to expand consciousness and leadership abilities. *

OTHER

We wanted for our attendees to meet others more authentically in the daily interactions, opening up to see, sense and make sense of the interior selves of their peers. Unlocking more of the inherent potential of their peers. **

SYSTEM

We wanted for our attendees to see, sense and make sense of more of the emergent Self – Other – System dynamic. **

We wanted for our attendees to get a taste of identifying how the culture and structure of any system can be enabling or disabling, when triggering early, counterproductive ‘figures’ and ‘fears’ in people. **

2.2. How we did it

* = Results validated with all attendees.

** = Results validated in the majority of attendees.

We designed a program of 6 facilitated 3hr sessions run over the duration of 8 weeks. It was designed with a holistic approach combining research from a range of scientific fields, including: vertical development, relational organizational gestalt psychology, sustainable social change and neuroscience.

Prior to each session attendees were introduced to theories and models using pre-recorded video clips. Reflective practices were included to enable the individual integrative learning processes.

The sessions were designed to enable co-exploration and experience of the research used, by applying a frame of “Intention - Action - Reflection – Learning”. Experience shows that

integrative learning occurs upon reflection on experiences and previous actions in settings designed with cutting edge research and facilitation methods.

Each session was carefully facilitated, by two experienced facilitators, in an oscillation between self, other and system using visualizations and practices, self-reflection, group dialogue, pair and triad dialogue practices and mirroring.

Each practice in pairs or triads were scripted and time boxed, as a liberating structure to assist the attendees in focusing attention on the important parts, enabling a direct exploration of core issues.

As facilitators, we put a lot of value in holding the right space. A safe and loving space of authenticity, mutuality, curiosity, and vulnerability was intentionally created.

After each session, attendees got a new chapter of a personal “guide book”, containing theory and practices to further deepen the exploration and integration.

2.3. Results in brief

Feedback and testimonials are systematically collected after each session and each completed program, compiled and analyzed.

In addition to the results indirectly presented in section 2.1, the results from this data are presented in brief below. This qualitative data shows that our attendees:

- experience greater joy and satisfaction in life.
- have reached a deeper understanding and integration of the self-knowledge.
- experience a more authentic encounter with others.
- have gained a better understanding of, and relating with and between the Self, the Other and the System.
- experience a better understanding of, and a more effective intervention with any system they are a part of.

Overall it is shown that by providing a safe and loving space, a well-designed process and carefully facilitated oscillations between theory, practice, dialogue, and reflection, it is possible to accomplish consciousness development in a purely digital setting.

2.4. What we learned

Meeting in deep contact over a digital platform is possible in relatively short time when holding the right space. Within a matter of hours into the first session, people opened up for deep contact and exploration of Self.

A digital format is in some aspects more effective than live formats. Scripted, facilitated practices in break out rooms enable pairs and triads to get to the point directly. It is astonishing how much can be explored in just a matter of minutes when an efficient format is applied.

Adopting an integrative, holistic approach where people get to meet themselves in acceptance and compassion (in contrast to trying or striving to develop, expand and grow), opens up for in depth learning and healing. This healing enables an expansion of consciousness that would be impeded by a strive for development.

Intentionally holding a space of love, authenticity, mutuality, curiosity and vulnerability is key for a transformative process.

Within the right space are people very open to share and support each other to grow.

2.5. ...and what we would like to explore further

We are curious on, and will explore, how we may oscillate between digital and live sessions to further deepen the journey for attendees.

We will also explore how creating coaching triads, meeting for mutual exploration between the facilitated sessions, could deepen the journey and connection and how that will affect the continued development after the program.

We would also like to explore how this program can be held within one organization, bringing in more of system's change to develop individual and organization in synchrony and harmony.

About us:

We, Karin and Niklas, hold a range of global certifications in developmental coaching, vertical leader development, the relational organization, sustainable change of social systems, vertical organizational development, self-organizing structures and so on... But this is not the primary reason why we are so successful in what we do.

Many others use this research to compete. A fit right in our Achiever paradigm. "The more developed the better", "Later is greater", "We need to develop", "We must..." And so on. The problem with this approach is that it actually seems to inhibit the very growth and development aimed for. Striving for consciousness expansion is a great hinder for the same. We learn to say the right things, but on the inside, nothing really changes. It is hurtful. And we have seen it closely.

We have found another way. A holistic way. Totally free from competition. Free from better or worse. We use this research to meet ourselves. To meet every part of ourselves with an open heart. With compassion. With love. And when we do, we start to integrate ourselves. And when we do, our consciousness open up for expansion. We grow from the inside out. Bill Torbert once said something like this in a dialogue we had on this: "Trying to expand your consciousness without integrating your earlier stages properly is like trying to climb a staircase while nailed to the floor. It hurts. And it is impossible."

So, in all our work, we work holistically. And people attending our programs and workshops are actually moved. Touched. By meeting themselves. Thru others. For we are all beautiful. And deep inside, we know it!

Get in contact:

We want to spread what we by experience and validation know work within the field of personal and leader development for the emerging future.

Get in touch if you sense that our paths may cross, or if you are curious of what we can help you with.

www.intotheneu.se

karin@intotheneu.se

niklas@intotheneu.se