



**BERNADETTE WESLEY**

Organizational Consulting • Leadership Coaching

## Building New World Capacities: Generative Dialogue Part 2

In [Generative Dialogue Part 1](#), I shared [Otto Scharmer's](#) suggestions for shifting through various “fields” of engagement with others. Below are additional ways to shift the field and move toward generative dialogue.

### Creating the Culture

In order to “call forth” the emergent wisdom of generative dialogue, a culture of trust and safety must be fostered. I also advise that the group agree upon generative ways of engaging in dialogue.

Here are some suggestions drawn from my experience with [The Ways of Council](#):

#### 1) Speak from the heart

- Speak your personal story using “I” statements
- Refrain from giving lectures or philosophical discourse
- Share feelings and be transparent about your inner process
- Hold an intention to speak what will serve you, the group and the highest good

#### 2) Listen from the heart

- Focus on the speakers words, giving as much eye contact as possible (even online)
- Pay as little attention as you can to what you are going to say in response (make a note if needed)
- Listen as a “witness” - seeking understanding and accepting others as they are
- Stay present by focusing on your body and your breath (when we give others our attention, it helps them arrive at their truth more easily)
- Attentive listening calls forth the deeper intelligence of the group - listen for patterns or themes

#### 3) Succinctness

- Be lean of expression - this helps the group tend to what is most important
- When deep listening is being practiced, trust you are being heard and recognize that your truth need not be reinforced by repetition
- Being succinct allows time for all to share

#### 4) Spontaneity

- Surprise yourself by not planning what or how you will speak
- The heart does not plan
- Spontaneity encourages playfulness, realness, and the “voice” of the moment

### Asking Questions and Sharing Stories

*“When a group starts having meaning-making conversations together, they’re surprised at the feeling of connection that it creates.” (David Hutchens)*

Asking questions opens up the “gateway” to generative dialogue. While holding the above intentions (and explicitly agreeing to them), invite the person/people you are in dialogue with to answer a question.

Here are some example questions from [The Chaordic Stepping Stones](#) (Chris Corrigan by way of [Laureen Golden](#)):

- What makes us tremble, and what do we fear about new ways of working together?
- Who would we be without our stories of old ways of working?
- What will it take for us to fully enter into working in new and unfamiliar ways?
- What is our own learning edge in working together?
- What capacity and learning do we need to build to sustain this work?
- What commitments are we willing to make to contribute to the success of our endeavour?

Another gateway is to invite participants to share a story. Stories “warm up the field” and open up the right brain. This shift increases connection and allows inspiration to begin to flow and collective wisdom to emerge.

Here are some example story prompts with an organizational focus:

- Take us to a moment when you (or the team) were doing the work in a way that made you feel proud / alive / energized (or in a way that delivered exciting results)
- Take us to a moment when you felt excited about what you/your program could achieve in our community
- Take us to a moment when everything seemed opposed to what you wanted to do, yet you found a way to overcome the obstacles
- What’s your fire for the organization?
- What makes you wake up every morning?
- Share a story about how you found your way in the organization (reveals a lot about the culture)
- Share a story about your first day in the organization (also revealing about the culture)
- Share a story about something that energized you a lot last week
- Share a story about something that worked well this/last week (personal and professional)
- Share something about an area that you would like to have more responsibility in the organization / less responsibility in the organization

To learn more:

[Building New World Capacities: Generative Dialogue Part 1](#)

[Building New World Capacities: How to Create Generative Systems](#)

[Building New World Capacities: Generative Listening](#)

To receive implementation support:

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