

Innovation: A Generative Model

“Innovation is the adoption of new practice in a community.” P. 6, The Innovator’s Way

“Achieving a change of practice in a community means that many people have to go along with it, changing their individual practices together and integrating the new practice into ones that already existed.” P. 20

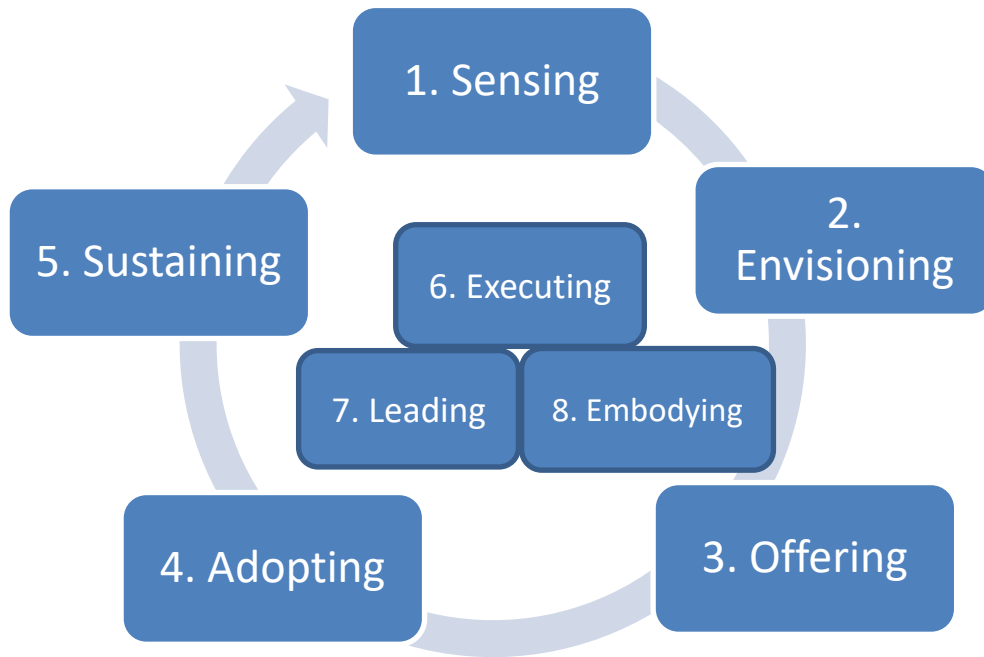
Innovation vs. Invention

- “Innovation succeeds when an idea is put into practice.... There is no innovation until a community of people adopts a new practice.” P. 6
- “Invention is the creation of new ideas, artefacts, processes or methods. Inventions become innovations only when they are adopted into practice.” P. 6

Disruptive vs. Sustaining Innovations

- **Sustaining** innovations – modify equipment, rules or strategies in order to enable more efficient, productive or satisfying results while leaving the purpose of ‘the game’ untouched.
- **Disruptive** innovations – are about a new game with new rules and a new purpose to take care of some deeper concern with a new approach. Disruptive innovations are large-scale changes and often provoke resistance from those who do not want to change. P. 17

Eight Practices of Innovation



<Figure 2.1 from The Innovator's Way – 8 practices of Innovation>

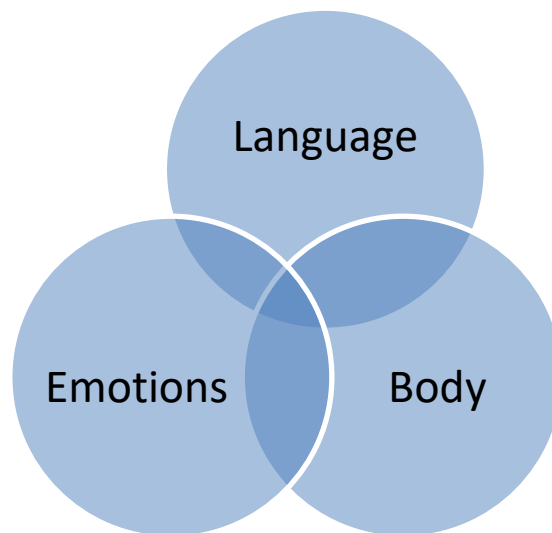
1. Sensing: Bring forth the new possibility that would bring value to the community.
 2. Envisioning: Building a compelling story of how the world would be better if the possibility were made real.
 3. Offering: presenting a proposed practice to the (leaders of the) community, who commit to considering it.
 4. Adopting: Community members commit to trying out the new practice for the first time.
 5. Sustaining: Community members commit to staying with the practice for its useful life.
 6. Executing: Carrying out action plans that produce and sustain adoption.
 7. Leading: Proactively working to produce the outcomes of the previous six practices, and overcoming the struggles encountered along the way.
 8. Embodying: Achieving a level of skill at each practice that makes it automatic, habitual, and effective even in chaotic situations.
- <Box 1.3 from The Innovator's Way>

Features of the eight practices:

1. "They are fundamentally conversations. Each practice is manifested as a conversation that the innovator engages with and moves towards completion.
2. They are universal. Every innovator, and every innovative organisation, engages in all of the practices in some way.
3. They are essential. If any practice fails to produce its outcome, the entire process of innovation will fail.
4. They are embodied. They manifest in bodily habits that require not thought or reflection to perform. Thought is directed to strategic issues, not to the performance of the practices." P. 27.

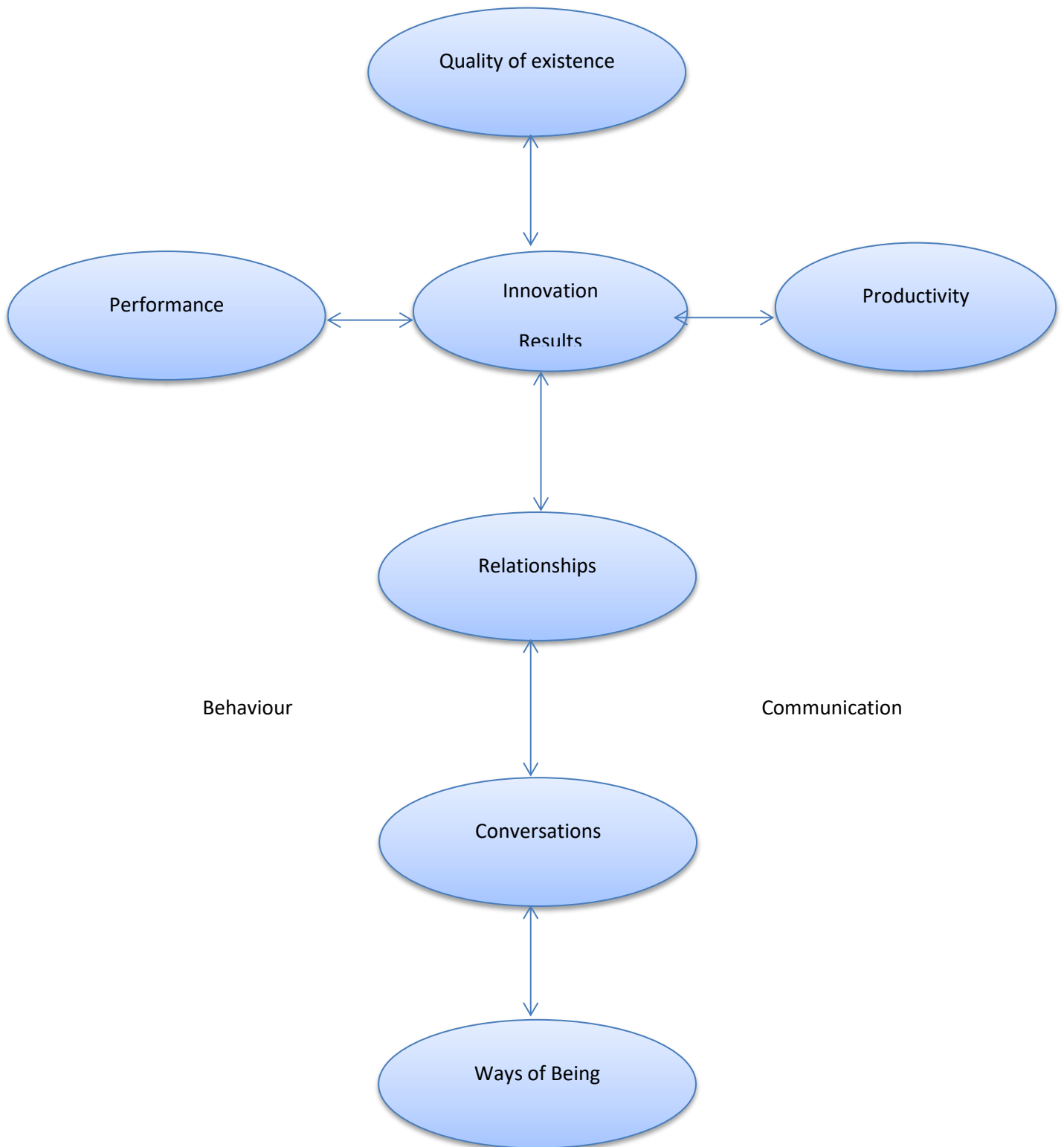
An Ontological Approach to Innovation

- The ***Innovation In Action Workshop*** is an introduction to an ontological approach to living, working, learning and innovation.
- An ontological approach to living, working learning and innovation is based on ***a new understanding of human beings and human interaction.***
- This new understanding is built around the notion of ***way of being***. Ontology is the study of being, and an ontological approach to innovation is based on working with our ways of being and the ways of being of those we aspire to involve in innovation.
- Way of being is seen as a dynamic interplay between three spheres of human existence – ***language, emotions and body.***



- To be human is to live simultaneously in these three domains of existence. How we are in each domain shapes how the world is for us; ie., what constitutes our *reality*.
- Our reality is how we observe the world. We act on what we observe. Our way of being underpins not only how we observe, but also what *actions we see as possible* for building a meaningful and fulfilling life (individually and collectively).
- The successful innovator is an observer who can sense disharmonies, articulate them and take action to resolve them.
- How well does our way of being position us to take *effective action* in order to live a meaningful and fulfilling life and generate effective innovation? This is the application of Ontology to the process of human innovation – Innovation in Action.

Innovation and Ways of Being



What Are We Dealing With In Our Lives These Days?

“Essentially the old certainties are passing. There is a feeling:

- That community and nation-building are not cooperative efforts;
- That goals are not shared;
- That there is no guiding light;
- That modern life is leading to a greater sense of isolation
- That, for all their promise, our technologies are often asocial
- That modern economies spin wealth to the peripheries and away from the middle;
- That employment is insecure
- That structural change leaves uncompensated losers in its wake that the absence of widely shared and binding social and national values leaves people feeling disconnected and searching for some greater meaning in their lives.”

Paul Keating, former Australian Prime Minister, in an address to “The Age Vision 21” seminar, July 14, 1999.

“...[W]hen we experience changes in our lives which amount to a redefinition of who we are or how we are going to live, those changes will almost always provoke some degree of anxiety, even where the change may be sought and welcomed...”

“For individuals then, there is no mystery about the primary source of stress and anxiety: it is the result of having to adapt to changes in our lives which are so significant that we are required to re-think who we are.

“Since the early 1970’s, there is hardly an institution or convention of Australian life which has not been subject to either serious challenge or radical change. The social, cultural, political and economic landmarks which we have traditionally used as reference points for defining the Australian way of life have either vanished, been eroded or shifted. ...

“The common cry now being heard around Australia is, ‘Why does everything have to change so fast?’ The common complaint is that individual Australians are increasingly feeling victimised by the rate and character of the changes which are having such an enormous emotional, cultural and financial impact on their lives.

“The Australian way of life is now being challenged and redefined to such an extent that growing numbers of Australians feel as if their personal identities are under threat as well. ‘Who are we?’ soon leads to ‘Who am I?’”

Hugh Mackay, *Reinventing Australia: The Mind and Mood of Australia in the 90s*.

Becoming A New Observer

- “A human being is part of the whole called by us, ‘universe’, a part limited in time and space. He [She] experiences himself [herself], his [her] thoughts and feelings, as something separated from the rest. ... *This illusion is a kind of prison for us*, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole nature of its beauty.” Albert Einstein.
- The traditional interpretation of what it means to be human, and the nature of human interaction, is insufficient to deal with the problems we face today.
- In a world of accelerating and relentless change, old ways of being and observing are no longer sufficient. Different historical circumstances require us to develop different ways of observing. There is an imperative to *continually reinvent ourselves as observers*.
- Much of our existence is co-existence. The quality of our existence is inextricably bound up with the quality of our relationships. Meaning, fulfilment and successful innovation in life is closely bound up with *the quality of our relationships* and what we are able to accomplish together – in our families, our workplaces, in our communities, between communities and between nations.
- We are faced with the requirement to *design new ways of living together and of re-generating meaning in our lives*. This is the heart of innovation – finding new ways to generate meaning for ourselves and for others. New meaning is produced by shifts in ways of being and observing, opening up new paths for constructive action.
- To engage in *the continual reinvention of how we are observing* means accepting the imperative for ongoing self-transformation. Philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer wrote: “Insight is more than the knowledge of this or that situation. *It always involves an escape from something that has held us captive.*” Without knowing it, our way of being can imprison us, limiting what we see as possible in learning and change.
- *Ontological learning* – observing how our way of being shapes our perceptions – is an avenue for becoming a different and *more powerful observer*.
- Being a different and more powerful observer enables to be a different and more powerful *innovator*.

Observation in Innovation

“Innovators must be observers who can sense disharmonies, articulate them, and take action to resolve them”. P. 78

“The eight practices build one’s capacity to be a innovation observe and actor. To be that observer, the skilled innovator continually observes for these seven things:” p. 78.

- The **cares** and **concerns** of people.
- The **practices** people have for taking care of those concerns
- The **value** and level of **satisfaction** people place in their practices, current and future
- The **breakdowns** and **struggles** people are experiencing
- The **disharmonies** revealed by the breakdowns and struggles
- **New practices** that, if adopted, would resolve the breakdowns and bring harmony
- **Resistance** from people who see a net loss of value in the change” p. 78’

“Observing is a fundamental skill for innovation” p. 78

“...’observing the observer’ is a foundational skill for all innovators” p. 78

“...’action follows attention.’ The innovator exploits this principle by getting the adopting community to focus members’ attention in a new way, whereupon the new practice follows naturally. “ p. 78

“Innovation is a learning process and the innovator is a teacher.” P. 78

p. 80 4 quadrants / 4 types of observers internal/external individual/group.

p. 84 “...the innovation observer constantly looks for concerns, breakdowns, struggles, practices, value, resistance and opportunities. This observer operates at two levels simultaneously:

* **Social** What is going on in the potential adopter’s world where I can help?

* **Individual** How can my response from within one of the eight practices help?”

Second Order Learning

- *“The range of what we think and do is limited by what we fail to notice. And because we fail to notice that we fail to notice there is little we can do to change until we notice how failing to notice shapes our thoughts and deeds.” - R.D. Laing*
- The only world we know is the world we observe. How we observe does not mean that this is the way the world is; it only means that this is the way it is for us.
- *We can only take action in the world we observe. We cannot change what we don’t notice. Hence the importance of noticing how we notice – or observing the structure and process of how we observe.*
- Problems, possibilities and solutions are a function of how we are observing.
- Our way of being underpins how we observe. *Second order learning* is about observing and shifting our way of being so that more productive paths of action become possible.
<diagram of second order learning>
- *Language* – we observe through our distinctions, our assessments and our narratives
Emotions – predispose us to observe and act in different ways
Body – our way of being and observing is embodied.
- Ontological innovators work in the territories of both first order learning and second order learning.

Some Enemies of Learning

Generic obstacles:

- Cognitive blindness – we do not know that we do not know.
- Not having questions about our questions.

Linguistic obstacles:

- We cannot (or are unwilling to) admit that we do not know.
- We cannot recognise or admit that someone else may know.
- We do not give others permission or the authority to teach us.
- We confuse knowing with having an opinion (eg. Flying a plane)
- We confuse knowing with having the truth – “I’m right”.
- Self-doubt and lack of confidence – we cannot learn, given our negative self-judgements about ourself as a learner.
- Trapped in the judgements of others (“I have to get it right and be perfect”).
- Always comparing ourselves with others – making negative judgements of ourself and/or others.
- Jumping to conclusions – we judge or assess everything instantly and are not open to different possibilities (often making negative judgements of ourself and/or others).
- Addicted to answers – go to courses for tips, recommendations and instant solutions, not to look at self as a learner or source of learning.

Physiological obstacles:

- Forgetting/ignoring the role of the body in learning – always attempting to learn with our head.
- Not taking care of our health and energy – finding that we are constantly too tired to learn.

Emotional obstacles:

- Too busy to learn – caught up in “busyness” and allocating no time to learning.
- Mood of significance – “I am an important person with status and know everything”.
- Arrogance – we cannot unlearn what we already know; too much at stake in existing knowledge, we are attached to it, and close off other learning possibilities.
- Knowing the ‘right’ way we should be taught – not open to possibilities.
- Caught in a mood of heaviness and importance: being excessively serious and not experiencing lightness and playfulness in learning and not being able to laugh at ourselves.
- Trivialising learning – inappropriate humour.
- Lack of patience – want it now!
- Mood of resignation – learning will make no difference (have given up already).
- Contaminated by the need for certainty – have to be clear all the time and get it right.
- Need for control – not willing to fully engage in the experience and then reflect.
- Anxiety – constantly fearing that we will not be good enough.
- Being caught in a mood of confusion, and not wonder.
- Being driven by novelty – we scratch the surface and don’t go beyond the first level of curiosity; unwilling to persist when understanding is not readily apparent.
- Not taking time to reflect and apply new learning.

A New Understanding of Language - I

“Conversation is needed to sustain integration among the diverse, differentiated parts of the organisation. Conversations tend to bind people together.”

W. Bergquist, *The Post-Modern Organisation*

“Organisations are linguistic structures built out of words and maintained by conversations. Even problems that aren’t strictly communicational – failures of mechanical systems for example – can be explored in terms of things said and not said, questions asked and not asked, conversations never begun or left uncompleted, alternate explanations not discussed.”

Walter Truett Anderson

- Language is the basis of human communication. Two key questions can be asked about language and communication:
 - Why do we communicate with each other?
 - How effectively do we use language in our communication?
- Typically, our response to the first question might be that we communicate “To get results” or “To get things done”. Whilst important, a consequence of focussing only on outcomes may be that we do not observe what is imperative for producing desired results. A ‘results only focus’ may limit how we use *the power of language* to build better lives together – in our homes, schools, workplaces, communities, nations and globally.
- In the latter part of the 20th century *a different interpretation of language* emerged, one that was contrary to the two thousand year old traditional understanding of language inherited from Ancient Greece. According to this different interpretation, language not only serves the purpose of describing the world. Language is more than a passive and descriptive instrument of our minds, enabling us to report about our observations of the world, as it had been assumed for centuries.
- Perhaps more importantly, language also functions to *create the world* and generate the realities in which people live and work together. The essence of this recently developed interpretation is that *language is action*, and that much of what we regard as the world for us, both individually and collectively, is shaped by how we use language.
- Through language we participate in the creation of ourselves and the world worlds. *We are our actions (which include speaking and listening)* and we also create who we are, and our identity in the world, through our actions.
- Through language we participate in and enable innovation.

Moods and Emotions I

- “Traditional corporations have ignored human emotion. They have tried to pretend it didn’t exist or, worse, tried to suppress it. The renewed focus on humanity in organisations requires an understanding of human emotions. To energise employees is to harness emotion. Bad emotions have a bad effect on profit; good emotions are a fuel that drives productivity, quality, and customer satisfaction.” James Martin, *Cybercorp*
- Moods and emotions can be regarded as predispositions *for action*. We always act from some emotional state. Some moods and emotions predispose, or incline, us more towards certain actions and not others.
- *Emotions* are a shift in our predisposition for action in response to an event.
- *Moods* are the predispositions for action we recurrently find ourselves in.
- Recurring emotional responses can become moods and, in a sense, “invisible”.

Some Basic Moods of Life			
	Facticity	Possibility	Uncertainty
Oppose			
Accept			

- *Facticity*: What we assess as unchangeable.
- *Possibility*: What we assess as changeable.
- *Uncertainty*: What we cannot confidently predict will occur.

A New Understanding of Language – II

- Language is a social phenomenon, occurring between people. It serves three vital purposes that are at the core of human existence, and that are central to change and improvement:
 1. Develops a shared understanding.
 2. Facilitates social integration.
 3. Enables the coordination of action.

Shared understanding

Social integration

Coordination of action

Results/outcomes

- By generating shared understanding, and by producing social integration and generating the coordination of action, language is a process of making things happen.
Language brings a world into being.
- Language is the primary means by which humans generate meaning, and ***it is meaning that is at the heart of perception and reality***. This occurs in both speaking and listening. It has been shown how listening is a linguistic phenomenon, and is an active process of generating meaning.
- Moods and emotions, and the body, cannot be separated from how speaking and listening occur.

“The language we use frequently limits our power to think in new and better ways. The challenge will be to know when it is time to move on and what words to use to help us think and behave in ways that enhance the lives of our people and the performance and relevance of our organisations.”
- Professor Roger Collins

- Language is ***the fundamental human technology***. It underpins all other technology. How we use language – how we speak and how we listen – impacts on the quality of our thinking, what we are able to get done, how well we get it done, and the generation of new ideas.

Structure of Some Basic Moods of Life

Mood	Underlying Judgements	Behavioural Predispositions	Bodily Expressions
Resentment (Opposing Facticity)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have been treated unjustly/unfairly. I did not deserve this. Someone is going to pay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To get even or hit back. Punishment and revenge. Sometimes SELF-punishment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tense neck, jaw, shoulders, arms. Ready to strike out/ hit back.
Acceptance/Peace (Accepting Facticity)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That's how it is. These are the boundaries that currently define action. I will look for action I can take within these boundaries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexible Open to a range of ways of looking at things. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open. Lack of tension. Flexible.
Resignation (Opposing Possibilities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why bother? What's the point? Nothing will make a difference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do nothing. Disengage. Divert and distract initiatives. Dismissive of ideas of others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slumped, rounded shoulders. Eyes downcast. Closed chest.
Ambition (Accepting Possibilities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This can be done – it is possible. Things can be different. I will have a part in change occurring. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To take action. To bring about a different future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upright posture. Open chest. Forward momentum.
Anxiety (Opposing Uncertainty)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The world is threatening. I could be damaged. I do not have the capacity to deal with the worst. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect self from the worst. Avoid and withdraw. Strike first before being harmed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Withdrawing into the body. Diminishing height. Subtly concaved chest. Shallow breathing.
Wonder/Curiosity (Accepting Uncertainty)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I'm not sure what is going to happen. It will be interesting to find out. The world is a fascinating place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experimenting. Inquiring. Exploring. Trial and error. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open posture. Wide-eyed. Chest open. Sense of self disappears.

Listening I

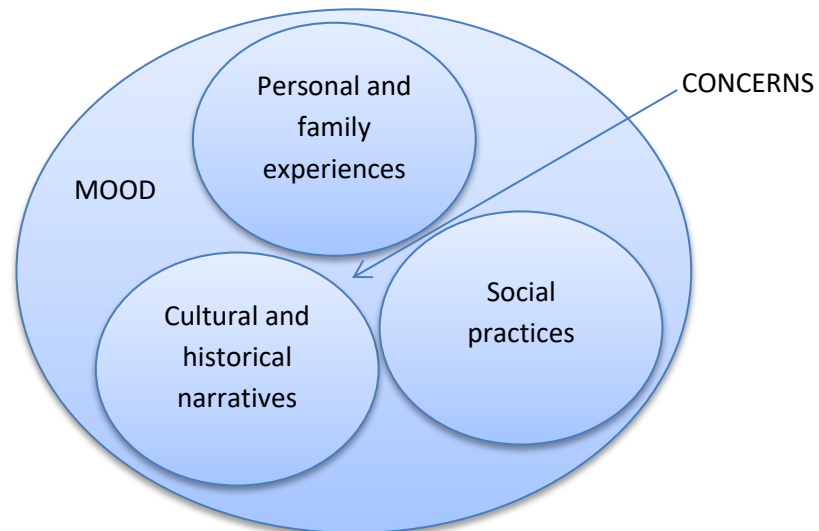
- We speak to be listened to. Speaking does not ensure being listened to (i.e. being understood)
- Listening is a linguistic phenomenon. Listening is not passive – it is **an active process** which occurs in language.
- Listening consists of the **'silent' and often invisible, internal conversations** we continually have with ourselves.
- Listening is not just an auditory phenomenon. From an ontological perspective, listening is a generic term for the thoughts and images and feeling we have within us.
- As an active process, listening **continually involves interpreting** (making sense) of the world – especially what others are saying and doing.

LISTENING = HEARING + INTERPRETATION

- Humans are **walking sets of interpretations**. Our interpretations are triggered by events and circumstances. Our listening is **automatic, always and already**.
- Listening is about **meaning**. It is a 'meaning making' activity, by which we impose our meaning onto the world.
- Listening is **the crucial factor in communication**. When we speak, we speak from our own listening. We also speak to the listening of others.
- Our listening reveals how we are observing – the interpretations we are 'living in'.
- A key component of second order learning is **listening to our listening**. This is an indispensable competence for effective innovation.

Listening II

- Listening is **pre-understanding**. Our pre-understanding comes from our social/cultural and personal history.
- Our life experiences and the stories and narratives we have grown up in shape what we hold to be important. What we determine to be most important, or matters the most, defines our **concerns**.



- Humans are walking **bundles of concerns**. Our concerns are at the heart of our interpretations. Our concerns shape how we observe circumstances. The world 'shows up for us' according to our concerns, which shape the meaning we make of people and circumstances.
- Speaking and listening are **'concernful activities'**. We secure and expand our existence by taking care of our concerns.
- A key component of effective communication and innovation is 'speaking to the listening of others'. If we want to be influential, it is important that what we say, how we say it and when we say it, addresses the concerns of others; ie, seek to integrate their perspective. Emotionally embracing the notion of the **legitimate other** is a core part of this process.

Core Concerns of Living

There are things in our lives that are intensely important and matter deeply to us.

The extent to which we assess our core concerns to be involved in situations will influence our responses to what is happening in our respective worlds.

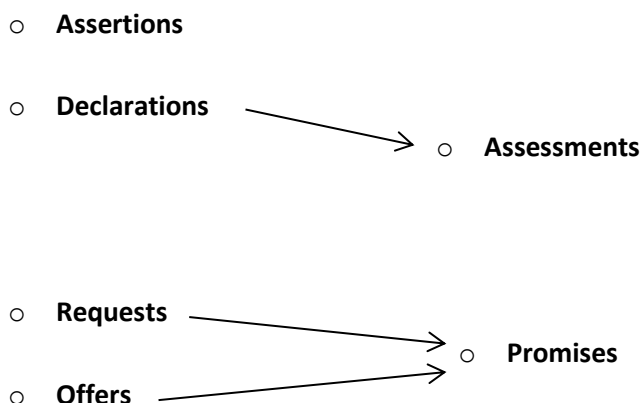
Core human concerns include:

- ☼ Physical safety
- ☼ Health and physical wellbeing
- ☼ Emotional safety and security
- ☼ Feeling respected and legitimised
- ☼ Having a sense of belonging and connection with others
- ☼ Feeling valued and appreciated
- ☼ Assessing we can make a valuable contribution in certain areas of life
- ☼ Being cared for and loved
- ☼ Having others to love and care for

Adapted from Emotional Learning and Ontological Coaching

Basic Linguistic Acts I

- Speaking and listening are active processes of generating meaning. Meaning is generated not only through words, but also through ***silent and invisible actions*** that occur within spoken words. These silent and invisible actions have the power to produce visible and tangible results in our everyday dealings with each other.
- These silent and invisible actions are referred to as ***basic linguistic acts***. As central ingredients of language as technology they are a basic set of ***linguistic tools***.
- We can think of these tools as ***fundamental tools for human possibility***.
- These tools come with the package of being human – we cannot not use them. In other words, in everyday living we are largely not aware of how we are using them. In all probability, we miss their potential for building better worlds together. Awareness of their applications can play a vital role in designing better ways of living and working together.
- The notion of basic linguistic acts comes from the work of a number of key philosophers. Building on the work of several philosophers, John Searle claimed that we use language to perform a number of key ‘speech acts’. These are:
 - To tell people how things are
 - To try to get people to do things
 - To commit ourselves to doing things
 - To express our feelings and attitudes
 - To bring about changes in the world through our utterances
- One key action Searle omitted was ‘to put ourselves forward to do things for others’.
- The resulting set of basic linguistic acts is:



Basic Linguistic Acts II

Describing the world

Assertions

- An observer reports what he or she has observed.
- Assertions can be true or false according to the accepted evidence that can be provided.
- Assertions can be relevant or irrelevant according to the concerns we hold

“World first, and then the words”

Declarations

- An observer generates a new context by speaking
- Declarations can be valid or invalid, depending on the authority granted to the speaker (by self or others)

“Words first and then the world”

Assessments

- A particular type of declaration, in the form of a judgement.
- Assessments can be grounded (substantiated) or ungrounded (unsubstantiated).

Organising action

Requests

- Asking others for the cooperation (support, assistance, help) to take some action that will enable us to take care of a concern (or concerns).

Offers

- Putting ourselves forward as competent to take care of another’s (other’s) concerns.

Promises

- The action of making a promise (or commitment) occurs with the acceptance of a request or offer.

Request + declaration of acceptance = promise

Offer + declaration of acceptance = promise

Assessments and Grounding Assessments

- An assessment is a judgement or opinion we have about human phenomena (e.g. persons, events, circumstances, organisations) and non-human phenomena (e.g. animals, landscapes, plants).
- When we make an assessment we use our **past** experiences in the **present** to guide ourselves into the **future**. Our assessments are stepping stones towards the future.
- For example:
 - He or she has done X consistently in the past
 - He or she is honest
 - I expect honest behaviour from him/her in the future.
- As a kind of declaration assessments can be valid or invalid, **according to the authority we grant to the person making them**.
- Assessments can also be grounded or ungrounded, according to the actions in the past we find to support them or back them up.
- We are “**assessment machines**” and are constantly making assessments – it is constitutive of being human. But how well do our assessments serve us and enhance our relationships?

Steps for grounding assessments

1. For the sake of what (future action) am I making this assessment?
 2. In which domain (of action) am I assessing?
 3. What standards (of acceptable action) am I assessing from?
 4. What true assertions about past actions can I make to support the assessment?
 5. What true assertions about past actions can I make to oppose the assessment?
- To ground an assessment, **clear and substantiative** responses are required for the first four steps. Beware of using assessments to ground assessments (points 4 & 5).

Trust

Trust is glue that holds relationships together

Trust is the emotional lubricant of innovation

- Trust is an assessment about how well another or others are likely to take care of our concerns. It can involve all or some of the following assessments.
 1. An assessment of **Sincerity**:

People are assessed to be *genuine* in what they say; ie, there is a consistency between what they say publicly and what they are saying privately (thinking).
 2. An assessment of **Competence**:

An assessment that people have the skills and abilities to carry out what they say they will do.
 3. An assessment of **Reliability**:

An assessment that there is a consistent match between what people say they will do and what they produce, especially in relation to time and standards. (This overlaps closely with an assessment of competence.)
 4. An assessment of **Involvement**:

An assessment that others are attuned to our concerns – that they are attentive and accepting of what is important for us. Even though we may not judge them as being insincere, we may have an assessment that they are not ‘fully there’ with what is important for us, and unlikely to give matters the priority we require.

Elements of Request and Offers

1. Listener
 2. Speaker
 3. Something missing (a breakdown)
 4. Future action
 5. Conditions of satisfaction
 6. Shared background of obviousness (shared meaning)
 7. Time frame
 8. Emotion / Mood
 9. Trust
 10. Mode
 11. Context
 12. The body
- Generic structure of a request:

“I request that you do W for me according to X standard(s) for Y reasons by time Z.”
 - Making effective requests (and offers) is more than a technique, it is a Way of Being.
 - The **offer is the key step** that connects the articulation of an innovation’s possibility (sensing & envisioning) with a listener’s commitment to its adoption. (p. 185 TIW)

Promises

- A promise is a *commitment* to take specific action that occurs between two or more people. How we make and manage commitments is at the heart of our social fabric in daily living. Commitments are the heartbeat of innovation.

Request + Acceptance = Promise

Possible responses to requests

There are 4 (+1!) possible responses to requests:

1. Acceptance = “Yes”
2. Decline = “No”
3. Counter offer / negotiation = *“I can’t get it done now. I can do it by tomorrow or see if John can get on to it now. Which one is acceptable to you?”*
4. Commit to commit later = *“I’m not exactly sure what I’ve got happening next week. I’ll phone you by the end of the day to let you know if I will be there or not.”*
5. (+1!) Slippery promises = *“I should be able to get around to that sometime.”*
Vague responses which sound like ‘yes’ but which are not definite commitments.

Offer + Acceptance = Promise

Possible responses to offers

- The same responses apply to offers as for requests.
- In offers, the primary responsibility in the commitment rests with the person who has made the offer.
- Making effective offers, and effectively responding to offers, is not a set of techniques. ***It is a way of being in which the body plays a vital role.***

Assessments, Offers, Trust and Innovation

“Think of yourself standing before a group to make your offer of innovation. You will want your audience to accept five key assessments, concluding that:

- The new practice brings great benefits to the group;
- Each member of the group gets a personal benefit;
- The benefits are enough to warrants cost of time, energy and resources to achieve them;
- The action plan is achievable; and
- You have the expertise and can be trusted to help them accomplish it.” P. 90

Assessments of value, trust and satisfaction permeate the innovation process. P. 106

“Innovators must be observers of how their prospective adopters are assess their situations and proposed innovations.” P. 106

Breakdowns

- We go about our daily living largely oblivious to how we are doing things; they have become so familiar that they are **transparent**.
- A breakdown is a **breaking down of our transparency** so that what was present and in the background becomes prominent and to the foreground of our attention. A breakdown can be seen as an interruption to the normal and anticipated flow of life we find ourselves in.
- Breakdowns are a normal part of living – they are constitutive of our existence.
- A breakdown is always in the eyes (and listening) of an observer – the breakdown does not live “out there” – i.e. does not exist independently of an observer.
- A breakdown is an **assessment by an observer** that something has not happened, or is not happening, or likely to happen, the way they think it should, and that they, and possibly others, will be worse off because of this.
- A **negative** breakdown is an assessment that a concern is not being taken care of. A **positive** breakdown is when a concern has unexpectedly been taken care of.
- Quite often we have three assessments associated with a breakdown:
 1. That there is a breakdown.
 2. An assessment about the breakdown.
 3. An assessment of our capacity to deal with the breakdown.
- **Emotions** are an integral part of the observation of a breakdown and, as predispositions for action, influence our capacity to deal with the breakdown.
- **Learning is a breakdown** – an interruption to, and breaking down of, our normal flow of making sense of the world. We often have an emotional investment in our existing knowledge and ways of knowing that we find difficult to put aside.
- We each have the capacity and the authority to declare a breakdown; doing so can be a powerful catalyst for productive action. **Generating breakdowns** can be an important avenue to learning and constructively creating the future.
- Breakdowns can become **breakthroughs**. “The biggest breakdowns in life have the potential to offer the greatest learning.”
- Innovation can be both a process of creating and dealing with breakdowns. Clarity about the nature of a breakdown is indispensable to the practice of effective innovation.