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# **Using Embodied Knowledge to Unlock Innovation, Creativity, and Intelligence in Businesses**

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## **Abstract**

Embodied knowledge is a third intelligence (after IQ and EI) that has peaked the interest of progressive, forward-thinking business leaders, conferences and academics and appears in discussions within such fields as psychology, sociology, dance and leadership. This paper will explore some aspects of embodied knowledge for its capacity to unlock innovation, creativity and intelligence for businesses through movement-based exercises (dance) and embodiment practices (Social Presencing Theater). Based in the personal practice of embodiment consultant Daniel Ludevig, this paper will share his theoretical and practical approach to surfacing embodied knowledge in the business world as well as its application to unlocking organizational potential and business success.

**Keywords:** Dance, movement, embodiment, Theory U, leadership, Social Presencing Theater

## **Using Embodied Knowledge to Unlock Innovation, Creativity, and Intelligence in Businesses**

Even before the first official intelligence quotient (IQ) test was invented in 1905, people used evaluation of cognitive abilities through behavioral comparison and observation as a way to assess success potential of others (Wechsler, 1939). Alfred Binet's intelligence test, subsequently developed into the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales, allowed comparison of intelligence levels among mass quantities of people, making intelligence tests a popular method for evaluating potential job achievement, income and general success in life. 90 years later a second spectrum of intelligence entered the interest of the mainstream population. Following a decade of research on the topic, Daniel Goleman's 1995 best-selling book on emotional intelligence (EI) brought attention to another method for predicting job success, especially in the domain of leadership skills (Goleman, 1995). People realized that having an awareness of one's own and other's feelings and emotions and knowing how to manage behavior and relationships accordingly were attributes that correlated with positive job performance and career development (Goleman, 1998).

In fact, studies show that EQ outperforms IQ in its ability to predict job success by correlating with higher performance and income (Goleman, 1995). Despite continuous criticism that EI is not actually a form of intelligence (Eysenck, 2000), the multitude of training and leadership development programs centered around EI capacity-building act as testament to the significance that organizations place on emotional awareness. While both intelligence scales can provide indications for job performance and life success, there is an additional intelligence beginning to receive some of its own limelight. Embodied knowledge is a third intelligence that has peaked the interest of progressive, forward-thinking business leaders, conferences and academics and appears in discussions within such fields as psychology (Schubert and Koole, 2009), sociology (Schilling, 1999), dance (Bresler, 2004) and leadership (Ladkin and Taylor, 2010). This paper will reference my own practical work to explore some aspects of embodied knowledge for its capacity to unlock innovation, creativity and intelligence for businesses through movement-based exercises (dance) and embodiment practices (Social Presencing Theater).

### **Movement-based exercises (dance)**

Since 2009 I have been exploring the potential of embodied knowledge to positively impact corporate leaders and employees through my facilitation company, MOVE Leadership (Ludevig, 2015a). In its current capacity MOVE facilitates culture explorations and transformations for organizations and systems using, alongside more well-known approaches, a cutting-edge embodiment and creativity approach to support transformational change around culture, leadership, communication and innovation. The origins of this work first began in using movement-based exercises such as dance for communication and leadership learning. Through my own background as a professional Latin and Swing dancer, I learned of the importance of topics like connection, trust and rhythm while trying out and testing a variety of models of lead and follow with my dance partners. I was amazed at how much could be communicated and understood between two people in only a 2-minute dance, whether with my long-lasting professional partners or on the social dance floor with someone new.

After obtaining degrees in psychology and economics I began to develop a sense of how the metaphor and experience of dance could inform topics like leadership, conflict, team dynamics, values, team collaboration, change management and presence in organizational culture, and was impressed to see a field of supportive research and literature (Seifter,

2012; Matzdorf and Sen, this issue; Powell and Gifford, this issue). I organized these topics into their more general relational divisions through the RESPECT<sup>®</sup> model, which identified Rhythm, Experience, Style, Purpose, Expectations, Connection and Trust as vital areas of exploration for any team or business looking to take its performance to the next level. Both my own experience and others' research demonstrated that these topics could be more deeply understood and experienced through movement-based exercises (Ludevig, 2015b; Matzdorf and Sen, this issue; Powell and Gifford, this issue). The RESPECT<sup>®</sup> model builds on the supportive research of other academics who have cited topics like rhythm, space and gaze as critical factors in leadership that can be learned from aesthetic mediums like dance (Ropo and Sauer, 2008). The exercises allow everyone to experience both leader and follower roles so that all participants are left with an embodied sense of the influence that the RESPECT<sup>®</sup> elements have in their team's dynamics and their own personal success in leading (Powell and Gifford, this issue) (Figure 1). Specifically, through following they better understand their unconscious reactions and preferences to various leadership styles and can begin to empathize with how their own leadership style is experienced by others. Thus, they learn how to participate more actively in the binary. My "Dancing with Management" in-house or public workshops highlight all of these themes and most importantly bring attention to an alternative perspective on leadership called "followership".



**Figure 1. Participants during the BMW/Guggenheim Lab embodying their various communication styles and exploring non-verbally topics such as trust, respect, purpose and values**

Interestingly, for me as a practitioner and for the business clients with whom I work, the decent amount of literature and research available on followership is still hugely overshadowed by the much more popular and mainstream area of leadership development (Baker, 2007; Hujala et al., this issue). In fact, many English dictionaries still do not even contain the word in their listings (Cambridge, 2015). After some initial skepticism or resistance, for my clients the "Dancing with Management" workshops are an eye-opening, high-energy and fun experience that encourages them to re-think their own leadership models. They engage in activities like leading their partners across a room (Figure 2), using a style that is similar to leadership styles with which they identify or often witness in their company and then are invited to explore how this impacts their partners and what it makes them feel. Simultaneously, followers are also encouraged to explore various possibilities of

actively leading from the follower role. Through this it becomes clear to them that they can also empower, enhance, support and influence their leaders from this position.



**Figure 2. Participants of a MOVE: “Dancing with Management” workshop exploring leadership and followership communication through movement**

The viral youtube clip/TED Talk on “The First Follower” makes a clear case for teaching leaders how to develop followership abilities in themselves and others; without them our leaders may very well be standing alone. In his talk, Derek Sivers says, “Being a first follower is an under-appreciated form of leadership ... because it transforms a lone nut into a leader” (Sivers, 2010). In the same vein, I use basic movement-based exercises such as the lead-follow method, along with others like body sculptures, group rhythm tests and movement improvisation to allow leaders to experience various work-related scenarios through the body. Often this gives rise to a variety of self-learning observations and realizations (Powell and Gifford, this issue). By first speaking about their experiences as leaders and followers during the movement exercises, managers and employees then feel safer and more open to talking about their company culture, organizational experiences, struggles and hopes (Ropo and Sauer, 2008). Emphasis is placed on honoring and exploring each individual’s experience, which allows for increased engagement and honesty from the participants. After each movement exercise there is lots of time given for facilitated verbal debrief, sharing and exploration.

While for some the “ah-ha” moments take place during the movement exercises themselves, for others it is during the debrief that the connection is made between the felt knowledge that emerges through their bodies and the direct application to their daily work, projects, interactions and goals (Powell and Gifford, this issue). Often the movement exercises are a gateway to then explore certain topics, like how to establish connection with others or what is the rhythm of a particular organization, in greater depth. Once these topics are felt in the body, the otherwise abstract theoretical conversation regarding how

they apply to an organization becomes tangible and lively. Facilitating these experiences has acted as a cornerstone for my understanding of the deep impact that these movement-based activities can have in developing my clients' embodied and practical knowledge, and as a result enhances their learning around communication and leadership.

### **Client examples using movement-based exercises**

As a continuation of this work, I have over the years included and partnered with a variety of embodiment methodologies in my facilitations, from martial arts, acting and dance to music, painting, and sculpture making. There is extensive research indicating that, for example, a majority of Fortune 500 companies are actually already using various art forms to help them reach their organizational development objectives (Seifter, 2012). Through referring and reflecting on participants' own embodied experiences, these methods have allowed my clients to learn about and *feel* often hard to grasp and relatively intangible topics that are nonetheless critical to their performance (Figure 3). One session co-facilitated with Hendrik Backerra Consulting (HBC) at a multi-national energy company used lead/follow movement exercises to create a common language among 150 participants stemming from three separate nationalities where a common verbal language did not exist. Partner and group movement exercises were used to explore existing communication styles and trust-issues within the company culture and how to adapt to large-scale change as a result of a merger. In an environment dominated by mistrust and fear around the merger and possible related layoffs, this movement-based activity allowed participants to temporarily leave their concerns aside and try something new (Hujala et al., this issue). Despite the preceding tensions, several minutes into the workshops the participants could be seen entering curiously into a space where becoming "comfortable with the uncomfortable" was encouraged. In this space laughter and fun made way for deep sharing and exchange around the real issues that were worrying them. In this example, movement acted both as the glue that brought the team together and the lubricant that eased them into openly having a difficult conversation with each other and their leaders. It allowed intelligence and honesty to surface on the topics that mattered most. Specifically, it facilitated a creative exploration regarding how the company leadership culture could shift in order to support everyone affected by the organizational transition.



**Figure 3. Large group facilitation of a multi-national organization exploring topics like cultural values, trust, self-management and engagement through small-group embodied experiences, movement, creativity and dynamic interaction and dialogue**

In another HBC/MOVE co-facilitated case, a critical European banking institution brought together its top leadership team of about 30 people to explore strategy and its 5-year plan. However, during the 2-day offsite it became clear that major gaps of information-sharing existed between the top 5 managers and the rest of the leadership team. This caused feelings of insecurity and vulnerability in the larger leadership team and left the small management team isolated and exposed to criticism around their lack of transparency and authenticity. In this case we used the movement metaphor of lead/follow to expose how certain typical leadership qualities of the upper management team were causing conflict with other qualities common to the larger leadership team. Despite initial resistance, the interactive session proved to be the turning point in bringing the entire team together. The movement exercises surfaced a realization that there were certain traits that were valued by all members of this group, which could be brought to the forefront of the team's culture and way of interaction. In this case, the aspect of humor — a trait highly valued by the group when they met socially outside of work — turned out to be the missing link that many members longed for during office hours and which could help them manage the incredible burden of pressure that they all carried. It was through the movement-exercises that this group was able to be honest, receptive and open to rebuilding the trust and good intentions that were evident when the team had first formed several years back. Furthermore, the experience unlocked an innovative and creative understanding of the role that humor could play in their daily work lives and the responsibility they could all have in fostering this development. By applying the outcomes from the movement experiences to concrete working environment-related decisions, the subsequent participation, sharing and openness noticeably improved throughout the rest of the off-site. The energized team was now ready to move forward into the strategy portion of the off-site with an open-mind and an eagerness to listen and respect one another. Having understood the importance of arts-

based exploration the team eagerly utilized a 3-d sculpture-building approach to explore and visualize various scenarios that could impact the banking institution over the next 5 years. The insight on strategic possibilities obtained from the visual dimension of these sculptures were so meaningful to the leadership team that they decided to use photos of the sculptures to support their presentation of strategic options back to the rest of the company.

Over the past 3 years we have continued working with this same top leadership team every 6 months through two-day off-sites using movement and creative-based approaches to address some of their most difficult challenges. The progress they have made towards a more unified, aligned and connected leadership team was noted by all of the participants at our most recent session with them this month, with many still making reference to the movement and creativity-based work we did with them at our first meeting.

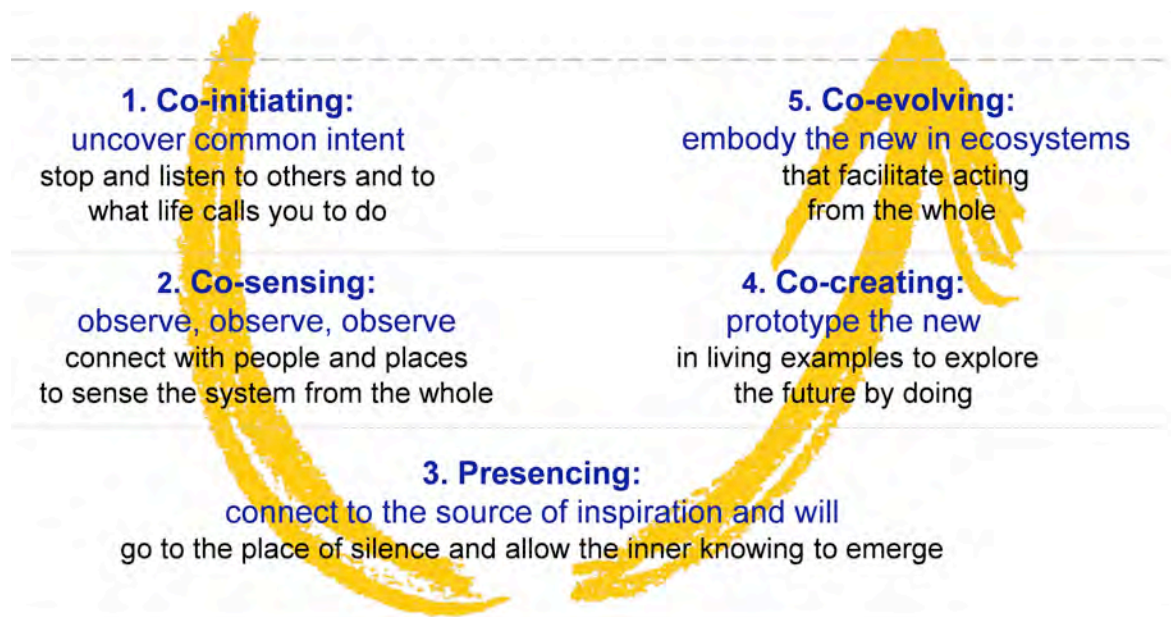
These are just a few of many cases in which the power of encouraging clients to “get out of their heads” and “into their bodies” allows them to experience deep truths about their communication and leadership styles. When facilitated with care and depth, this in turn unlocks insights and results that have significant positive impact on the way in which they are able to move forward with doing and running their business.

### **Embodiment practices (Social Presencing Theater)**

In addition to the aforementioned movement-based exercises, since 2013 I have also begun exploring a set of embodiment practices used as a technology for innovation, creativity and an alternative source of intelligence. At the core of this exploration has been Otto Scharmer’s social and systemic change framework, Theory U, and the accompanying art form called Social Presencing Theater, co-created by Arawana Hayashi, Scharmer and other members from the Presencing Institute. In order to better understand the embodiment practices put forth by Social Presencing Theater, it is first necessary to understand the theory on which they are based.

Theory U offers a process and structure for leading, learning, innovating and sustainably supporting social systems and organizations undergoing transformational change. This journey, known as the U-Journey, is a deep-dive through five overarching phases called “co-initiating”, “co-sensing”, “presencing”, “co-creating” and “co-evolving” (Figure 4). Rather than repeating the patterns of thinking that have led to the multitude of global crises currently plaguing the planet, Theory U suggests looking to the emerging future as a source of knowledge for how to address complex issues. Those issues are most broadly placed into three categories or “Divides”: Ecological, Social and Spiritual. According to Scharmer, the root cause for the kinds of problems evident in these divides in our world today has to do with a leadership blindspot around the inner source from which leaders operate. According to Bill O’Brian, former CEO of Hanover Insurance, “The success of an intervention depends on the interior condition of the intervener.” Aligned with this view, Scharmer and his team highlight the importance for change-makers to search within themselves and develop their own “awareness, attention or consciousness” when searching for new results in organizational or systemic change challenges (Scharmer, 2014).





**Figure 4. The 5 main steps of the Theory U model, supporting organizations' journey from ego to eco-awareness through an exploration of source and purpose**

In a certain respect, the exploration into embodied knowledge could be seen as one that brings balance to an equation already proposed by models like Theory U. Scharmer claims that the U-Journey is one that requires opening up mind, heart and will, by letting go of the voices of judgment, cynicism and fear. For many of my clients it has been helpful to contextualize this notion by connecting the "open mind" with an opening up of the IQ. This opening up could be understood as an increased ability to understand our organizations and systems through new information, facts and experience. Similarly, the "open heart" stage of increased empathy and compassion is derived from a capacity building around our emotional intelligence and our ability to connect with others through feeling and perspective taking. Lastly then, the "open will" stage, which is often described as the capacity to act from our source of greatest potential, requires a deep dive into our own core selves — into our bodies.

In order to ground the theory in experience, Scharmer linked head and heart with hand by asking Presencing Institute co-founder Arawana Hayashi to lead the development of an embodied U-Journey experience (Scharmer and Kaerfer, 2010). Building on nearly 40 years of background as a dancer, theater director and Buddhist, Hayashi took her own body of work, "Art of a True Move", and used it as the basis for the co-creation of four additional embodied practices. Although relatively undocumented until only recently, the last 7 years have seen great reiterations, developments and applications of Social Presencing Theater.

At its most fundamental, Social Presencing Theater makes visible the current and future realities of groups (known in Social Presencing Theater as social bodies) through a mindfulness and awareness-based presencing approach that includes 8 movement-based practices. Presencing is defined as a combination of the words "sensing" and "presence" and allows a person to sense and act from his or her own highest potential (Scharmer, 2014). As its main instrument, Social Presencing Theater places attention on the body and invites that attention to stay there for some time, a capacity that Hayashi defines as *mindfulness*.

Using the body as an instrument invites participants to increase their sensing capacity beyond that of only cognitive ability, thus allowing them to recognize the difference between actual embodied sensing and the subsequent cognitive meaning-making that is often confused with sensing. This distinction allows for an overall broadening of our attention and what it notices, and has been explored in detail in other research as well (Springborg, 2010). As such, participants are invited to view their embodied experiences as both ones that can be understood without further explanation as well as ones that can be the basis for further reflection.

The first and most fundamental of the 8 movement-based practices is the “20 minute dance”, in which participants become more embodied through the invitation to notice and let go of any floating thoughts they may have about the past, present and future. Instead, they are encouraged to allow their attention to land on the feeling and observation of their own bodies, maintaining a sense of groundedness while doing so. During this individual dance participants remain loyal to their bodies and shift between moments of stillness and movement while lying, sitting, standing or walking. This movement meditation encourages paying attention and noticing what it feels like to “just spend some time” with our own bodies — without agenda, purpose or goal-making — and follow whatever movement emerges on its own. The experience develops the capacity to sense through the body and to learn how to let go of habitual movement and meaning-making patterns. This allows participants to increase their observation skills and practice paying attention to their attention. In turn, participants cultivate a kind of egolessness that is both engaged and simultaneously relaxed and often leaves them feeling calmer, more comfortable and grounded.

During my own facilitations using this method in corporate settings, clients often realize for the first time that their bodies are more than just “brain taxis” (a term I first heard used by my colleague Francis Briers), carrying their minds from one cubicle or meeting to another. They report feeling like they have finally arrived in the room where our session is taking place. They notice how often they “forget their bodies” while being consumed with thoughts and how much clearer their minds now feel. They cite the immediate impact that this short embodiment practice has on their attention, listening and moment-to-moment consciousness. All of this sets the groundwork for later unlocking of fresh ideas and seeing from a fresh perspective. Most importantly, it allows them to notice that they possess a natural sense of *awareness* that connects them with others, the second cornerstone of Social Presencing Theater.

Awareness in Social Presencing Theater is defined as a 360-degree horizontal sensing capacity that connects our own bodies with the groups or social bodies in which we are always operating. According to Hayashi and the Shambhala Buddhist background supporting her work, all beings on the planet are naturally connected to each other. Such embodied mindfulness practices cultivate our natural capacity to be aware of and sense others. This builds on other research that has identified the body as a sensing organ that is able to connect with its surroundings in a variety of ways (Ropo and Sauer, 2008). In the next three methods of Social Presencing Theater practice — Duets, the Village, and Field Dance, explained in detail below — participants practice extending their embodied awareness into the larger social field around them and begin to notice the quality, texture and feel of their surrounding environment and context. With increased curiosity they notice aspects like space, the unknown, ambiguity and the intangible as well as group dynamics such as leading, following, mirroring, accepting, rejecting, soloing, supporting, controlling, manipulating and transitioning. Without words, a deep resonant and profound knowledge on such topics is acknowledged, experiential and relevant. The subsequent dialogue that can follow encourages participants to use their bodies and the embodied sensing they

experienced as reference for exploring how these themes play a role in their daily lives and work. For many, the embodied experience is the first time they discover that such topics even exist, not to mention the critical role they play in all social groups (teams, meetings, organizations and larger systems) of which they are a part. The felt experience and learning around the topic of unconditional connection between people often fundamentally changes participants' understanding of the role and relationship they have within their teams and organizations.

### **Client application using embodiment-practices (Social Presencing Theater)**

In my own work I have used Duets, which are non-verbal movement-based exchanges between two individuals, to explore topics such as leadership, conflict, communication, presence, collaboration, patience, deep listening, and how to both give and receive in interactions, even applying them directly to business cases where conflict or challenge is present. By offering and receiving gestures and movements one at a time, duets allow for a powerful and yet non-threatening communication to take place between two people. Here both persons obtain more understanding and information about a real situation by (1) embodying their own body-shape when reflecting on the situation and learning from that, (2) seeing and sensing into the embodiment of the other, and (3) noticing and feeling into what can emerge from the space in between them. In one instance, for example, this practice helped two competing leaders with whom I've worked to better understand the difficulties and pressure of the other, while simultaneously allowing them to explore what they shared and could co-create together, unlocking innovative ways for both to move forward.

Similarly, the Village invites participants to shift from feeling their own bodies to extending their attention outwards to the social body while moving freely around a space with a minimum of 5 people (and potentially as many as 20 or 30). During the practice, they are encouraged to notice their own motives, behaviors, reactions, habits, impulses, judgments and feeling within the natural group dynamics. They are also reminded to act both from loyalty to their bodies as well as sensitivity to what is happening around them (Scharmer and Kaerfer, 2010). It is a powerful tool for highlighting aspects like the source for group inspiration and innovation as well when forces like destruction and exclusion take over (Figure 5). It is also an incredible barometer that I use with teams to sense the current feeling, inclinations and tendencies that characterize team and organizational culture.



**Figure 5. Participants during a MOVE Leadership workshop using Social Presencing Theater to make visible underlying dynamics, relationships patterns and habits within the group**

For one of my clients, a group of food entrepreneurs all working together at the same institution, the experience of the Village surfaced observations around the group's tendency to shepherd in anyone who strayed too far off from what the majority was doing. For a group of innovators, this was a surprising and important observation that led to a deeper dialogue around how they might be unconsciously limiting new ideas and opposing opinions. Like in this example, after the practice I often run a debrief around what participants noticed while being in the Village, and how this relates back to daily realities, observations and truths regarding their working interactions. With this client the insight and power derived from the Village was so meaningful to them that they have continued using the Village as an opening practice every time they get together as a group, as a way to uncover the most current — often otherwise invisible dynamic — taking place within the group. The embodied practice often allows group patterns, habits and norms to become visible with shocking clarity, and gives space for groups to concretely talk about relevant themes and elements that are often otherwise intangible and unknown to them. The Village also offers participants the opportunity to experiment with desired dynamics that do not currently exist in their workplace culture, such that they can try out and test new possibilities before then transferring their findings into decisions moving forward.

The Field Dance is another embodied practice that explores existing unconscious expectations and projections inherent to a set-up common to the business world: one individual standing before a group of others with something to say. The setting is often seen when leaders speak to teams, when teams appoint a peer to speak on their behalf, when

organizations make presentations to their clients or stakeholders, etc. Through its exploration of topics like unconditional confidence, presence and speaking on behalf and through the collective whole, the Field Dance reveals the deep “invisible” forces at play between speaker (known as a stander in this practice) and audience (known as sitters). The embodied practice invites the stander to walk and stand in front of the group and in some versions, also offer a gesture, series of gestures, or even words, all the while paying attention to the larger field connecting him/her with the sitters. Through the Field Dance, participants gain a felt experience of an alternative model prescribing the relationship possible between stander and sitter. This relationship is one in which the stander truly operates on behalf of the community and the sitters learn to let go of expectations and pay attention with equal interest to the stander in front of them as well as their fellow sitters to their left and right. The sense of collective unity that is achieved through this simple practice is so strong that I’ve seen more than a few participants moved to tears. It also sets the groundwork for real innovation and fresh idea generation through its utter focus on developing total presence and letting go of any previous agendas.

By the end of the Field Dance every participant has had the opportunity to embody the stander and sitter roles. After experiencing this embodied practice my clients approach similarly constructed speaking engagements in their work in a profoundly altered way. They become aware and are able to let go of their own prejudices as well as discover a way to speak from and on behalf of the groups they are addressing. It allows them to tap into the greatest potential existing between them and their audiences—be it clients or team members—and speak from a place of true presence and authenticity. They report greater connection with their clients and a stronger trust, bond and feeling of co-creation with their colleagues. Through this, they experience an unlocking of creativity, innovation and intelligence and understand how to tap into the field of possibilities between them and their groups, a field in which the sum is greater than the parts. Similarly, it allows audience members to sympathize and connect more with their speakers, while at the same time remaining connected to their fellow peers. This allows for a level of collective interaction and participation that is often otherwise hindered by the unrecognized forces usually holding groups back from operating at their full potential. Too often I work with groups in which one or two team members are barely noticed, heard or given a voice. The embodied practices of Duets, the Village and the Field Dance normalize participants’ possession of a horizontal 360-degree awareness that allows them to tap into the greatest intelligence possessed by everyone in the group.

Through these initial four Social Presencing Theater practices, participants embody and develop the capacity to pay attention to their attention, and to realize that the quality of our attention dictates the outcomes we see. This focus suggests that the inner place from which we understand ourselves and the world around us lends itself to the kind of world we experience (Scharmer and Kaeufer, 2010). Understanding this phenomenological relationship between attention and outcome is crucially relevant for organizational and systems change work, as it suggests that our attitudes, interests and habits directly impact the reality we then chose to believe in and experience. Through the practices, the participants’ experience of embodiment changes in relation to the adjustments in their attention focus. The greater their capacity to pay attention, the deeper, more empathic and more generative their felt experience. Practicing this first in the body allows them the opportunity to learn how to then maintain an open and curious attention in their daily lives as well.

Additionally, they practice and experience the feeling of being more embodied as people and explore how this relates to topics around leadership, presence, vulnerability and authenticity. The relevance of such topics resonates strongly with similar explorations in

other conducted research (Ladkin and Taylor, 2010). Most importantly, embodied practices like Duets and the Village allow participants to develop a felt sense and understanding of the Theory U notion that real innovation, fresh thinking and new ideas originate in the *margins*, rather than the center of any system or where our attention is usually focused. This belief is based on the observation that the marginalized parts of any system haven't yet been given a voice, power or consideration and as a result contain a high potential for offering new ways of thinking, observations and idea-making that haven't yet been included or heard in the mainstream conversation. As a result, learning to shift our attention and awareness to include the collective — and therefore the margins of any system with which we work — increases the information that is present to us when we grapple with challenges and seek to unlock solutions, creativity and innovation. The Village, for example, affords many opportunities to learn how to shift our attention from the limited "my experience only" kind to seeing and sensing the larger whole of any group: noticing small movements of others across the room, patterns of movements across time and relationships between gestures or shapes among various people, to name a few. Even simple adjustments in terms of where a participant stands in a room full of people, whether in the center or on the edge near the wall can be quite significant learning and produce new insight and perspective for leaders reflecting on their behavior back in the office (Ropo and Sauer, 2008). These gentle experiences allow participants to understand firsthand what is meant by the Theory U notion that we can only learn more about ourselves by going out into the world, and that we can only learn more about the world by searching more deeply within ourselves. These basic practices build the capacity to learn how to direct and pay attention to our attention.

Once exposed to the embodied experience of learning to bring their attention to the margins and the collective many of my clients quickly begin looking at their own organizational systems with fresh eyes. Suddenly, they see a new playing of field of possibilities right in their own backyard. They become eager to meet with employees from all levels of their organization and to include and seek out perspectives that are contrary to their own at every meeting. They also seek to widen their understanding of the needs and motives of the various internal/external stakeholders in their companies. They learn how to provide more meaningful space and silence within team meetings and how to pay attention in a way that surfaces greater intelligence from their groups. The benefits from this shift in perspective-taking has also been documented by research on the desired goals of facilitators and organizations involved with transition and change, whether on a quest for greater competitive innovation or exploring how to become more efficient, sustainable and creative (Chlopchik, 2014).

Fascinatingly, even with minimal exposure to the basic Social Presencing Theater practices, participants receive a lasting taste of embodied knowledge and how it relates to additional innovation, creativity and alternative intelligence. The application to their working context become immediate, whether in the way they run their office meetings, have conversations with their business partners, approach deep listening with their teams, address their audiences while giving a keynote, or lead large-scale transformative change projects. According to Hayashi,

When the body and mind stop fighting or going in different directions, then we can relax and feel less restricted. We appreciate and fully use all our senses. We can accurately perceive whatever situation we find ourselves in. We can pay attention to details and to the whole simultaneously. We develop a panoramic awareness that lessens the sense of separateness between our self and others ... When we rest in that awareness, letting go of preconceptions, we tap into our highest future self and the greatest potential of the situation. Awareness gives birth to insight, innovation and skillful action. Something fresh crystallizes out of

open perception that can then be put into action. The insight that arises can energize significant action in the world, action aligned with greater meaning and purpose. (Hayashi, 2014).

The remaining four Social Presencing Theater practices are the Stuck Dance, Case-Clinic 1.5, Seed Dance, and 4-D mapping. In these practices, the basic principles of mindfulness and awareness remain true and are applied to the details of more complex cases. Here, a number of elements or stakeholders of a system are positioned in relation to one another and within the context of the larger system of which they are a part (Figure 6). Through these advanced Social Presencing Theater practices, participants are able to use their expanded awareness and embodiment to tap into a deeper understanding of the systemic relationship between the various elements. They also gain very clear and often surprising insight about their motives and needs. In one business example where the Stuck, Case Clinic and 4-D Mapping methods were used, my client was for the first time able to visually understand and physically feel the dynamics at play within her own case, a situation that involved a complex tapestry of multi-national stakeholders each in possession of their own cultural bias and perspective that she previously hadn't taken into account. In another case, these practices allowed for otherwise marginalized voices within the business to finally be spoken aloud, leading to a great deal of new idea-generation and a broader more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics within the entire system.



**Figure 6. Participants using Stuck Dance at the Presencing Institute's Presencing Foundation Program to deepen their understanding of challenging situations by exploring the relationship between various elements in them**

As a result of these embodied practices, many participants cite learning about the importance of "seeing" with all senses of their body, and not over prioritizing only that which comes, for example, through their visual senses. Hayashi often says, "The eyes are just one sensing organ, but not of any greater or lesser value than all the other ones we have". Side and back-body listening are very much emphasized during all Social Presencing Theater practices and allow people to develop the capacity to put their judgments and projections aside and listen to the whole of someone's being and the space around them. This engagement with deeper, embodied listening is cited by Theory U as critical to

innovation and the development of new thinking and understanding. Through the embodied practice of learning to listen to the collective whole, participants often also find that they are able to better listen and speak on behalf of the collective group in the subsequent dialogue and back at the workplace. Indirectly and directly, these experiences encourage leaders to get in touch with their own inner source of power, values and purpose. They are connected with an embodied knowledge that ultimately opens up their minds to cultivate *curiosity*, opens up their hearts to develop *compassion*, and opens up their will to build *courage*.

## Conclusion

Based in the personal practice of embodiment consultant Daniel Ludevig, this paper has explored the theoretical and practical approach to surfacing embodied knowledge in the business world as well as its application to unlocking organizational potential and business success. Methods like the movement-exercises (dance) and embodiment-practices (Social Presencing Theater) outlined in this paper allow us to “turn-on” our embodied knowledge and explore our inner conditions and their relation to our exterior worlds. Through embodied knowledge we have the opportunity to see the invisible, feel the untouchable and experience the intangible. These experiences surface greater understanding around topics such as leading, following, deep listening, creativity, innovation, collective intelligence, self-awareness, group dynamics, presence and transformation, to name a few. The dialogue and insight that then emerge are often as personally relevant as they are systematically true and can lead to real transformation and shifts in organizational culture and ways of doing business. The art ultimately lies in bringing all three intelligences — IQ, EI and embodied knowledge — into balance and tapping into the greatest potential for any given organizational or systemic challenge. I for one am certainly looking forward to the day when a majority of business leaders are fully engaged with embodied knowledge as a path to unlocking innovation, intelligence and creativity for their organizations. Based on the momentum I already see taking place for my own clients, I would bet that that day isn’t too far off into the future.

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**About the Author(s)**

Daniel Ludevig's expertise lies in facilitating deep conversations for organizations and systems using a cutting-edge embodiment and creativity approach to address transformational change around culture, communication and strategy. His work is informed through his own facilitation consultancy, MOVE Leadership, as well as his training as a professional swing dancer. He was born in the U.S. and currently lives in Berlin. Daniel's work in the US, Europe, Asia and Africa has provided opportunity for him to explore the ways in which company culture and values, as well as the capacity to access one, two, or all three of our intelligences, influence professional and social development and interaction in the workplace and everyday life.