

THE CREATIVE ADVANCE INSTITUTE PRESENTS

THREADS OF BECOMING

Tier 1: Foundations Workshop

4-Hour Professional Development Experience

Workshop Overview

MODULE 1 • 45 MIN

The Core Insight

Understanding creative tension

MODULE 2 • 60 MIN

The Seven Threads

Mapping universal tensions

MODULE 3 • 45 MIN

Collapse Dynamics

Recognizing when we get stuck

MODULE 4 • 60 MIN

Thread Discovery

Experiential practice

MODULE 5 • 30 MIN

Spiral vs. Circle

Understanding recurring patterns

By the end: You'll understand the framework,

recognize your own patterns, and have tools to apply it.

MODULE 1

The Core Insight

45 minutes

What Gets Us Stuck?

Think of a time you felt caught between two things that both felt true—but couldn't seem to be held together...



Entrenchment

"I'm right, you're wrong."

Dig in. Fight harder.



False Compromise

"Let's meet in the middle."

Lose what matters to both.



Creative Tension

"Both carry truth."

Hold until something new emerges.

Tension, held without collapse,
becomes the
birthplace of the genuinely new.

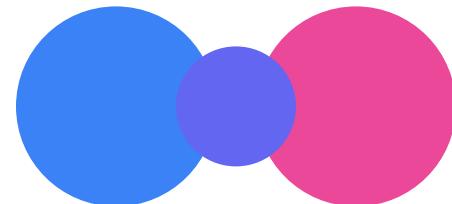
This is the foundational principle of Threads of Becoming.

The Both/And Principle

Either/Or thinking: One pole is right, the other wrong.
Choose a side.

Both/And wisdom: Both poles carry essential truth. The work is integration.

Creative tensions are not problems to solve. They are polarities to navigate—ongoing, dynamic, alive.



The overlap is where emergence happens.

Why Do We Collapse?

Collapse is not failure. It's a protective mechanism that becomes rigid:

1. Tension feels threatening

The discomfort of holding two truths triggers our nervous system.

2. We seek relief

Picking one pole reduces anxiety. It feels like clarity.

3. Protection becomes prison

What once protected us now keeps us stuck.

Key insight: Collapse is information, not failure. It shows us where we need support.

REFLECTION

Think of a current situation where you feel caught
between two truths.

- What are the two poles?
- Which one do you lean toward?
- What might you be missing?

Take 2 minutes to reflect, then share with a partner.

MODULE 2

The Seven Threads

60 minutes

The Seven Universal Tensions

PRESENCE

Who's there? — Within ↔ Between

CONSENT

May I? — Yes ↔ No

MEMORY

What happened? — Given ↔ Chosen

PAUSE

Why wait here? — Not Yet ↔ Now

EMBODIMENT

How does my body know? — Think ↔ Feel

UNCERTAINTY

What is the mystery? — Hide ↔ Seek

BECOMING

Who am I now? — Same ↔ Different

Each thread names a universal human tension. Both poles carry truth. We'll explore each one.

THREAD

PRESENCE

"Who's there?"

THE POLES

Within ↔ Between

COLLAPSE SIGNS

← Elsewhere (isolation)

Here (enmeshment) →

EXAMPLE

A couple struggles: she craves connection (Between), he needs solitude to recharge (Within). Neither is wrong—but they've collapsed to opposite poles.

THREAD

CONSENT

"May I?"

THE POLES

Yes ↔ No

COLLAPSE SIGNS

← Always Yes (boundaryless)

Always No (rigid) →

EXAMPLE

An employee struggles to say no to extra projects (Always Yes), while a colleague refuses all collaboration (Always No). Both miss the nuanced dance of boundaries.

THREAD

MEMORY

"What happened?"

THE POLES

Given ↔ Chosen

COLLAPSE SIGNS

← Told (possessed by story)

Telling (rootless) →

EXAMPLE

A congregation fights over worship style: traditionalists (Given) vs. innovators (Chosen). Each side holds truth—heritage AND evolution matter.

THREAD

PAUSE

"Why wait here?"

THE POLES

Not Yet ↔ Now

COLLAPSE SIGNS

← Never (paralysis)

Now! (reactivity) →

EXAMPLE

A leadership team splits: 'We need more data!' (Not Yet) vs. 'We're missing the window!' (Now). Both timing concerns are valid—but collapse prevents integration.

THREAD

EMBODIMENT

"How does my body know?"

THE POLES

Think ↔ Feel

COLLAPSE SIGNS

← Dissociated

Flooded →

EXAMPLE

A trauma survivor oscillates between intellectual analysis (Think) and overwhelming emotion (Feel). Integration means both—thinking AND feeling, together.

THREAD

UNCERTAINTY

"What is the mystery?"

THE POLES

Hide ↔ Seek

COLLAPSE SIGNS

← Threat (paralyzed)

Naïve (reckless) →

EXAMPLE

A team faces a market disruption: some want to 'wait and see' (Hide), others want to 'move fast' (Seek). The mystery requires both caution and curiosity.

THREAD

BECOMING

"Who am I now?"

THE POLES

Same ↔ Different

COLLAPSE SIGNS

← Stuck (rigid identity)

Unmoored (lost) →

EXAMPLE

A leader is offered a promotion but fears losing their identity.

Collapse into Same ('I can't change') or Different ('I must reinvent completely') both miss the path.

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Match Real Situations to Threads

1. "I want to honor my family's expectations
AND follow my own dreams."
2. "Should we launch now or wait for more
testing?"
3. "I need time alone, but my partner feels
abandoned."
4. "I don't know if this risky opportunity is
exciting or terrifying."

In groups of 3-4, identify which thread each situation activates. 10 minutes.

MODULE 3

Collapse Dynamics

45 minutes

What Is Collapse?

Collapse is when we lose access to one pole of a creative tension. We fall into one side and can no longer see or value the other.

It often starts as protection. Picking one pole reduces the anxiety of holding complexity. But over time, the unchosen pole becomes invisible—or even threatening.



Healthy tension: access to both



Collapse: stuck in one pole

Key distinction: Having a preference for one pole is healthy. *Losing access* to the other pole is collapse.

Collapse Begins as Protection

The pattern:

1. We experience pain or threat
2. One pole feels safer
3. We retreat there repeatedly
4. The path becomes a groove

Example: A child learns that expressing needs leads to rejection. They collapse into "Within" (PRESENCE thread). As an adult, they struggle to ask for help—the "Between" pole feels dangerous.



Protection → Prison

What once kept us safe
now keeps us stuck.

Compassion note: Collapse is not a character flaw. It's an adaptive response that outlived its usefulness.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Where Do You Tend to Collapse?

Review the seven threads. For each one, notice:

Do you have a "home pole"—a side you default to?

Reflection prompts:

Which pole feels comfortable? Which feels threatening?

What story do you tell about the pole you avoid?

Take 3 minutes for personal reflection. We'll share in pairs.

Collapse as Information

When you notice collapse—in yourself or others—don't judge it. **Get curious.**



What is this collapse
protecting?



What wisdom lives in the
avoided pole?



What might emerge if
both were held?

MODULE 4

Thread Discovery

60 minutes — Experiential Practice

The Navigation Conversation

A 20-minute structured dialogue for navigating creative tension:

1

ARRIVE

2-3 min

Ground and connect

2

NAME

4-6 min

Identify thread & poles

3

HOLD

8-12 min

Sit with the tension

4

INTEGRATE

3-4 min

Notice what emerged

Facilitator stance: "Am I trying to fix, or am I willing to hold?"

PHASE 1 — 2-3 MINUTES

ARRIVE

Ground yourself and the other person. Create safety for what follows.

WHAT TO DO

Take a breath together

Notice your body, the room

Ask: "What's alive for you right now?"

Listen without agenda

OPENING SCRIPTS

"Before we dive in, let's just arrive. Take a breath..."

"What's most alive for you right now?"

PHASE 2 — 4-6 MINUTES

NAME

Identify which thread is activated. Name both poles. Check for collapse.

WHAT TO DO

- Listen for the underlying tension
- Use seed questions to diagnose
- Name both poles explicitly
- Notice which pole they lean toward

NAMING SCRIPTS

- "It sounds like there's a tension between [pole A] and [pole B]..."*
- "I notice you're leaning toward [pole]. What might [other pole] be offering?"*

PHASE 3 — 8-12 MINUTES

HOLD

The heart of the work. Resist the urge to solve. Stay with the tension.

WHAT TO DO

- Validate both poles
- Honor the unchosen pole
- Use diagnostic questions
- Watch for emergence signs
- Don't force resolution

HOLDING SCRIPTS

- "What if both of these are true?"*
- "What does [avoided pole] know that you might be missing?"*
- "Stay with that for a moment..."*

PHASE 4 — 3-4 MINUTES

INTEGRATE

Notice what shifted. Name it. Identify the smallest next step.

WHAT TO DO

- Ask what's different now
- Honor any shift—even small
- Don't force a conclusion
- Identify one small action
- Close with presence

INTEGRATION SCRIPTS

- "What's different now from when we started?"*
- "What's the smallest step that honors what emerged?"*
- "Thank you for holding this with me."*

PRACTICE EXERCISE

Navigation Conversation Practice

In triads (Practitioner, Client, Observer):

1. Client shares a real tension (5 min prep)
2. Practitioner leads Navigation Conversation (15 min)
3. Observer gives feedback (5 min)
4. Rotate roles (3 rounds total)

Use the Cheat Sheet for reference. Focus on holding, not fixing.

MODULE 5

Spiral vs. Circle

30 minutes

Why Do Patterns Recur?

If you've done deep work on an issue and it comes back, you might wonder: "Did the work even help?"

Circular pattern: Same issue, same place, same reaction.

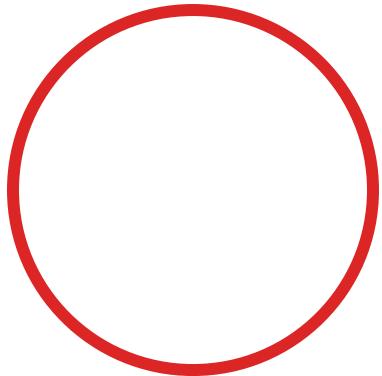
You're stuck in a loop. The pattern owns you.

Spiral pattern: Similar issue, but you're meeting it differently. You have more capacity, more awareness, more choice. Growth.

The question isn't "Will this come back?"

It's "**Will I meet it the same way?**"

Circle vs. Spiral



CIRCLE

Same point, same reaction
Repetition without growth
Pattern controls you



SPIRAL

Similar point, new capacity
Each pass adds perspective
You choose your response

How to Know Which You're In

Signs of CIRCLE

- Same emotional intensity each time
- Feeling helpless or victimized
- "Here we go again" despair
- Blaming external circumstances
- No new insight or options visible

Signs of SPIRAL

- "I recognize this pattern"
- Catching yourself earlier
- Curiosity instead of reactivity
- Seeing options you didn't before
- Compassion for your own process

The shift from circle to spiral often begins with awareness: "Oh—I know this thread."

CLOSING COMMITMENT

One Tension to Hold Differently

Think back to what surfaced for you today.

Choose one thread, one tension, to practice with this week.

**When I notice this tension arising,
I will pause and ask:**

"What wisdom lives in the pole I'm avoiding?"

What You've Learned Today

Core Insight: Tension held without collapse becomes the birthplace of the genuinely new.

Seven Threads: Universal tensions we all navigate. Both poles carry truth.

Collapse: When we lose access to one pole. It's protection that became prison.

Navigation: ARRIVE → NAME → HOLD → INTEGRATE. Hold, don't fix.

Spiral Growth: Patterns recur—but we can meet them with new capacity.

Next steps: Tier 2 Practitioner Certification (16 hours + supervision) for professional application.

"Tension, held without collapse,
becomes the
birthplace
of the genuinely new."

Thank you for being here.

The Creative Advance Institute

Threads of Becoming — Tier 1 Foundations