Liberating Structures

Cards to help in planning a meeting or an event

Use the following cards to help in planning an event.
- Top left: LS number according to website www.liberatingstructures.com
- Center: goals toward which the LS helps
  - Solutions: Discovering Everyday Solutions
  - Patterns: Noticing Patterns Together
  - Action: Unleashing Local Action
  - Prototypes: Drawing Out Prototypes
  - Innovation: Spreading Innovation
- Center: overall description of LS
- Below center: links to possible userful other LS
- Bottom left: indicative duration
- Bottom middle: difficulty
- Bottom right: page number according to 1st edition of book

1-2-4-All

Conversing in Rapid-Cycles: Self-Reflection, Pairs, Small Group, Whole Group

You are asked a question in response to the presentation of an issue or a problem to resolve or the presentation of a proposal (e.g., What opportunities do YOU see for making progress on this challenge? How would you handle this situation? What ideas or actions do you recommend?)

Goals: Solutions, Patterns, Action, Prototypes, Innovation

Links to: most of other Liberating Structures

2 **Impromptu Networking**

Focusing on People, Purpose & the Power of Loose Connections

You are asked, "What big challenge do you bring to this gathering?; What do you hope to get from and give this group or community?

Goals: Solutions, Patterns

Links to: *23 Social Network Webbing*

Nine Whys

Becoming Clear About Purpose

You are asked: "What do you do when working on _____ (the subject matter or challenge at hand)? Please make a short list of activities."

Then, "Why is that important to you?" Why, why, why nine times or until you can go no deeper.

Goals: Solutions, Patterns, Prototypes, Innovation

Links to: *33 Purpose-to-Practice, 26 Generative Relationships, 13 Wise Crowds, 9 W³*

Wicked questions

Framing a Paradoxical Challenge That Engages Everyone's Imagination

You are asked, "What opposing-yet-complementary strategies do we need to pursue simultaneously in order to be successful?"

Goals: Solutions, Prototypes

Links to: *15 Improv Prototyping, 31 Ecocycle Planning, 12 25/10 Crowdsourcing*

Discovering and Building On the Root Causes of Success

You are asked, "Please tell a story about a time when you worked on challenge with others and you are proud of what you accomplished. What is the story and what made the success possible?

Goals: Solutions, Patterns, Action, Prototypes

Links to: 14 Min Specs

6 Making Space with TRIZ

Designing a Perfectly Adverse System to Make Space for Innovation

With a sly smile, you are asked:

1. "What can we do to reliably get the worst result imaginable? List your top strategies and behaviors.

2. How does this list compare to what we do now? Be brutally honest.

3. What first steps will help us stop what we know creates terrible results?"

Goals: Solutions, Patterns, Action, Innovation

Links to: 31 Ecocycle Planning, 8 Troika Consulting, 13 Wise Crowds

7 **15% Solutions**

Noticing the Influence, Discretion and Power Individuals Have Right Now

You are asked, "Where is your 15%?" Where do you have discretion and freedom to act?"

Goals: Solutions, Patterns, Action, Prototypes, Innovation

Links to: 8 Troika Consulting, 13 Wise Crowds, 25 Open Space Technology, 16 Helping Heuristics, 29 Integrated~Autonomy

20 min

Troika Consulting

Guiding Your Next Steps with Colleagues

You are asked, "What is your challenge? What kind of help do you need?"

Goals: Solutions, Action, Prototypes

Links to: 7 15% Solutions, 16 Helping Heuristics, 19 Heard Seen Respected, 3 Nine Whys

9 What, So What, Now What?

Reflecting on Your Progress and Making Adjustments-As-You-Go

After a shared experience, you are asked progressively:

- "WHAT? What happened? What did you notice, what facts or observations stood out?"

- Then, "SO WHAT? Why is that important? Is there a pattern or conclusion emerging?"

- Then, "NOW WHAT? What actions make sense?"

Goals: Solutions, Patterns, Action, Prototypes

Discovery & Action Dialogue (DAD)

Discovering Solutions To Challenges In Plain Sight

You are asked, "How can we uncover hidden and untapped solutions (i.e., tacit and latent know how) among people in your working group, unit, or community?" Seven progressive questions are employed regarding a shared challenge.

Goals: Solutions, Patterns, Action, Prototypes, Innovation

Links to: 6 TRIZ, 15 Improv Prototyping

11 Shift & Share

Spreading Good Ideas from the Grass Roots Up & the Fringe In

You are invited to share something new or innovative you are doing that may be of value to others.

Goals: Solutions, Patterns, Prototypes, Innovation
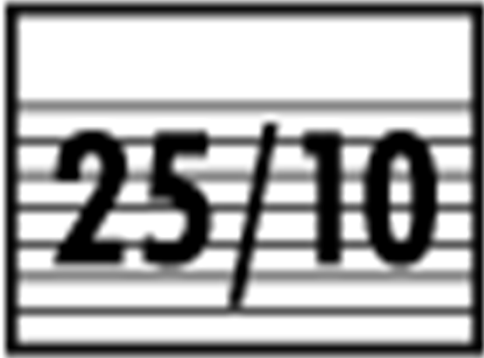
Links to: 9 W³, 15 Improv Prototyping

90 min

25/10 Crowd Sourcing

Vetting Powerful Ideas and Igniting Action

You are asked, "If you were 10 times bolder, what big idea would you recommend? What first step would you take to get started?"

Goals: Solutions, Patterns, Action, Prototypes

Links to: 25 Open Space Technology, 27 Agreement-&-Certainty Matrix

13 Wise Crowds

Tapping the Wisdom of Crowds

- As a "client," you are invited to ask others for help with a challenge you face.

- As "consultants" to a "client," you are invited to help the "client" clarify their challenge and offer advice or recommendations.

Goals: Solutions, Patterns, Prototypes, Innovation

Links to: 16 Helping Heuristics,19 HSR, 3 9-Whys, 8 Troika Consulting, 5 Appreciative Interviews

15 min / person

p217

14 Min Specs

Unleashing Innovation by Specifying Only "Must-dos" & "Must-not-dos"

You are invited to sift through all the do's and don'ts, reducing them to the absolute minimum to achieve your purpose.

Once developed, you are invited to do anything to achieve your purpose as long as you abide by the Min Specs.

Goals: Solutions, Patterns, Prototypes, Innovation

Links to: 28 Simple Ethnography

35-50 min

p228

15 Improv Prototyping

Developing Inventive Solutions to Chronic Challenges

You invited to identify a frustrating chronic challenge in your work.

You are invited to playfully experiment, invent and discover better ways to address the challenge by acting it out.

Goals: Solutions, Patterns, Action, Prototypes, Innovation

Links to: 10 Discovery & Action Dialogues, 28 Simple Ethnography, 21 Design Storyboards

20 min / round

p232

16 Helping Heuristics

Practicing Progressive Methods for Helping Others and Asking for Help

You are invited to view all human interactions as offers that are accepted or blocked (e.g., improv artists are trained to accept all offers).

You are invited to act, react or observe four patterns of interaction.

You are invited to reflect on your own pattern as well as shifting how you ask, offer, and receive help.

Goals: Solutions, Patterns

Links to: 19 HSR, 5 Appreciative Interviews, 8 Troika Consulting, 13 Wise Crowds, 24 WINFY, 15 Improv Prototyping, 28 Simple Ethnography

15 min   p236

Conversation Café

Forming Consensual Hunches about Challenges

You are invited to listen and reflect together on a shared challenge while respecting dialogue agreements.

Goals: Solutions, Patterns

Links to: 4 Wicked Questions, 9 W³, 7 15% Solutions, 21 Design StoryBoards, 25 Open Space Technology

35-60 min

18 Users Experience Fishbowl

Sharing Insights Gained from Experience with a Larger Community

- If in the fishbowl, you are invited to describe—informally, concretely and openly with others—your experience

- If outside the fishbowl, you are invited to listen, observe non-verbal exchanges, and formulate questions

Goals: Solutions, Patterns, Action, Prototypes, Innovation

Links to: 9 W³, 15 Improv Prototyping, 12 25/10 Crowdsourcing, 31 Ecocycle Planning, 28 Simple Ethnography

35-70 min

Heard, Seen, Respected (HSR)

Practicing Deeper Listening and Empathy in the Midst of Challenges

> You are invited to tell a story about a time when you were not heard, seen, or respected.

Goals: Solutions, Patterns

Links to: 8 Troika Consulting, 16 Helping Heuristics, 26 Generative Relationship STAR, 5 Appreciative Interviews, 17 Conversation Cafe

35 min

Drawing Together

Drawing Out Insight That Precedes Logical Understanding

You are invited to tell a story about a challenge you face using only five symbols without words.

Goals: Solutions, Patterns, Prototypes

Design StoryBoards

Deciding Design Elements for Meetings

You are invited to create a detailed plan, including visual cues, for how participants will interact to achieve their purpose.

Goals: Solutions, Prototypes, Innovation

Links to: 3 9-Whys, 9 W³

25-70 min ★★ p251

Celebrity Interview

Exploring Big Challenges with an Expert or Leader

- If you are the celebrity, you are invited to let go of your formal presentation or speech and answer the *harder* questions on everyone's mind in a casual "talk show" format.

- If a group member, you are invited to listen, see the person behind the celebrity, and write down questions with colleagues.

Goals: Solutions, Patterns, Innovation

Links: 18 User Experience Fishbowl, 25 Open Space, 10 DAD, 24 WINFY

23 Social Network Webbing

Drawing Out Informal Connections and Creative Adaptability

In regard to a shared purpose, you are invited to name individuals you currently work with and those you would like to include in the future (i.e., people with influence or expertise you need to achieve your purpose).

You are invited to "weave" connections in the network web to advance your purpose.

Goals: Patterns, Action, Innovation

Links: 7 15% Solutions, 21 Design Storyboards

60 min

24 "What I Need From You" (WINFY)

Surfacing Needs and Working Across Functions & Disciplines

You are invited to ask for what you need from others (often in different functions or disciplines) to be successful.

You are invited to respond to requests unambiguously.

Goals: Solutions, Patterns, Action

Links to: 16 Helping Heuristics, 29 Integrated~Autonomy, 5 Appreciative Interviews

25 Open Space Technology

Liberating Inherent Creativity, Action and Leadership In Large Groups

You are invited to propose topics you are passionate about, convene a group of people that want to explore the same topic, and take action.

In pursuing your purpose, you are invited to "use your two feet to go to where you are learning or contributing".

Goals: Patterns, Action, Prototypes, Innovation

Links to: 6 TRIZ, 12 25/10 Crowd Sourcing

90 min – 3 days

Generative Relationships STAR

Understanding Patterns in Relationships that Create Surprising Sources of Value

You are invited to assess your working group or team regarding four attributes:

- **S** Separateness or diversity in perspective, expertise, and background among group members
- **T** Tuning (listening deeply, reflecting, and making sense of challenges together)
- **A** Action opportunities (opportunities to act on ideas or innovate with group members)
- **R** Reason to work together (clarity on why it is important to work together)

You are invited to jointly shape action steps to boost generative results.

Goals: Patterns, Action

Links to: 17 Conversation Café, 11 Shift & Share, 9 W³, 13 Wise Crowds, 8 Troika Consulting, 19 HSR, 12 25/10 Crowd Sourcing, 7 15% Solutions, 25 Open Space Technology, 24 WINFY

Matching Simple, Complicated, & Complex Approaches to Your Challenges

You are invited to categorize your current challenges as simple, complicated, or complex.

You are invited to think about the approaches you are using to address each challenge, contemplating how well they fit and where there are mismatches.

Goals: Patterns

Links to: 30 Critical Uncertainties, 33 P2P, 31 Ecocycle Planning, 32 Panarchy, 29 Integrated~Autonomy

45 min

28 Simple Ethnography

Making Field Observations of User Experience

> You are invited to observe local interactions and then coax more beauty and insight out of everyday reality.

Goals: Patterns, Prototypes, Innovation

75 min to 7 hours

★ ★ ★

29 Integrated~Autonomy

Moving from *Either-Or* to *Both-And* Creative Solutions

You are invited to explore, "Will our purpose be best served by increased local autonomy, customization, competition, and freedom among units/sites? Or, will your purpose be best served by increased global integration, standardization, and control among units/sites? Or, both?"

Goals: Action, Innovation

Links to: 13 Wise Crowds, 8 Troika Consult, 7 15% Solutions, 142 Min Specs

80 min ★★★ p287

30 Critical Uncertainties

Strategy-Making for Surprising Yet Plausible Futures

You are invited to identify and explore the most critical *and* uncertain "realities" in your operating environment or market.

You are invited to formulate strategies that would help you operate successfully in different operating environments or markets.

Goals: Patterns, Action

Links to: 9 W³

100 min

p291

31 Ecocycle Planning

Engaging Groups in Growing and Sifting Their Portfolio of Activities

You are invited to view, organize and prioritize current activities using four developmental phases—birth, maturity, creative destruction, and renewal.

You are invited to formulate action steps linked to each phase—actions that are entrepreneurial (birth), bureaucratic (maturity), heretical (creative destruction), or network building (renewal).

Goals: Patterns, Action, Innovation

Links to: 32 Panarchy, 24 WINFY, 6 TRIZ, 9 W³

32

Panarchy

Spreading Your Innovation or Good Idea At Many Levels Simultaneously

You are invited to identify what is contributing to the existence of a challenge at levels above and levels below you.

You are invited to specify different strategies and opportunities for change within each level and across multiple levels.

Goals: Patterns, Action, Innovation

Links to: 31 Ecocycle Planning, 24 WINFY, 23 Social Network Webbing, 9 W³

120 min

p300

33 Purpose-To-Practice (P2P)

Designing for Shared Ownership, Adaptability, and Resilience

- To clarify the first element, **Purpose**, ask the question: "Why is the work important to you and the larger community?"
- **Principles**: "What rules must we absolutely obey to succeed in achieving our purpose?"
- **Participants**: "Who can contribute to achieving our purpose and must be included?"
- **Structure**: "How must we organize (both macro- and microstructures) and distribute control to achieve our purpose?"
- **Practices**: "What are we going to do? What will we offer to our users/clients and how will we do it?"

Goals: Patterns, Innovation

Links to: 3 9-Whys, 5 Appreciative Interviews, 17 Conversation Café