

# Introduction to coaching Models and Approaches - Theory U



# Theory U is:

- A Phenomenon – wake up to a deeper level of awareness that we use as a source.
- A Framework and Language – for seeing and talking about our deeper levels of experience.
- A Methodology – to help us to be more effective in operating from the deeper space.

## Key Question:

- Given the state of the world – how do we as leaders create and innovate in times when the ground on which we stand is pulled away and know the past doesn't seem to help with what we are facing?

# 7 leadership capacities required

1. Holding the space: listening to what life calls you to do. Listen to others. Listen to what emerges.
2. Observing: Attend with your mind open. Suspend your voice of judgement. Embrace change. Ignore past experience.
3. Sensing: connect to deeper change with your heart. Facilitate the opening process. Letting go.
4. Presencing – connect to the deepest source of your will. This allows you to begin to act from the emerging whole. Feeling connected.
5. Crystalizing: Access the power of intention. Commit to the purpose & outcomes. Create the energy of attraction. Build momentum.
6. Prototyping: Integrating head, heart and hand. Deal with the resistance of thought. Be practical and try it out.
7. Performing: Playing the Macro Violin. Listen and act from a different place. Move to beyond yourself and your comfort zone. As a leader, pick the right people and create the right environment.

# Two types of cognition

1. Downloading – application of existing frameworks.
2. Accessing one's inner knowing. This requires 3 steps: (the core of the U process)
  1. Observe, observe, observe – (time to think). Stop downloading and listen.
  2. Retreat and reflect – go to an inner place of stillness where knowing surfaces. (meditation).
  3. Acting in an instant. 4,3,2,1 decide.

# Theory U

- To complete the 5 steps, you need to add:
  1. Initial phase of building common ground – co-initiating.
  2. A concluding phase that includes reviewing, sustaining and advancing practical results – co-evolving.
- Compare this to change theory.

# Scharmer's U Process



*Starting*  
**1 Co-Initiating**

Build Common Intent

Listen to your calling  
Listen to others

**2 Co-Sensing**

Observe, observe, observe

Go to places that stimulate your potential and listen with an open heart and open mind

Go to the place of silence and allow inner knowing to emerge

**ACTING**  
Doing

**THINKING**  
Access your ignorance

**FEELING**  
Access your EQ

**WILL**  
Access Your Self

**PRESENCING**

3 Co-Inspiring

*Realising*  
**5 Co-Evolving**

Embody the new in ecosystems that facilitate seeing & acting from the whole

**4 Co-Creating**

Prototype the new in living examples to explore the future by doing

Connect to the source of inspiration & will.

LETTING GO

LETTING COME

# Listening 1 Downloading

- Think of a leadership challenge you are currently facing or will be facing in the near term future. (Could be any context- personal, professional, family etc.)
- Reflect on the assumptions/beliefs you are holding in your mind about that challenge (could be positive, negative or neutral). List the on a piece of paper.
- Choose a partner and share your leadership challenge and the assumptions and beliefs you are holding regarding your challenge, the partners role is to listen carefully.
- Then switch roles and have the other partner share their leadership challenge and the assumptions and beliefs they are holding about their leadership challenge.



# Part II Presencing Directions:

- Reflect deeply on your leadership intention, what is the future you want to create? Following the meditative practice, write down the thoughts, images, insights, feelings or whatever came into your mind during the exercise
- In order to create the future I want to create, what do I:
  - need to let go of?
  - need to learn?
  - Reflect on these questions and write down what comes to you.
- Reconnect with your partner from the first exercise and share what came into your mind, including thoughts insights images, feelings.
- Your partner listens carefully and makes sure they understand what you are communicating, then share there reactions, thoughts regarding what they have heard.
- Switch roles.

## Part III Letting Come Directions:

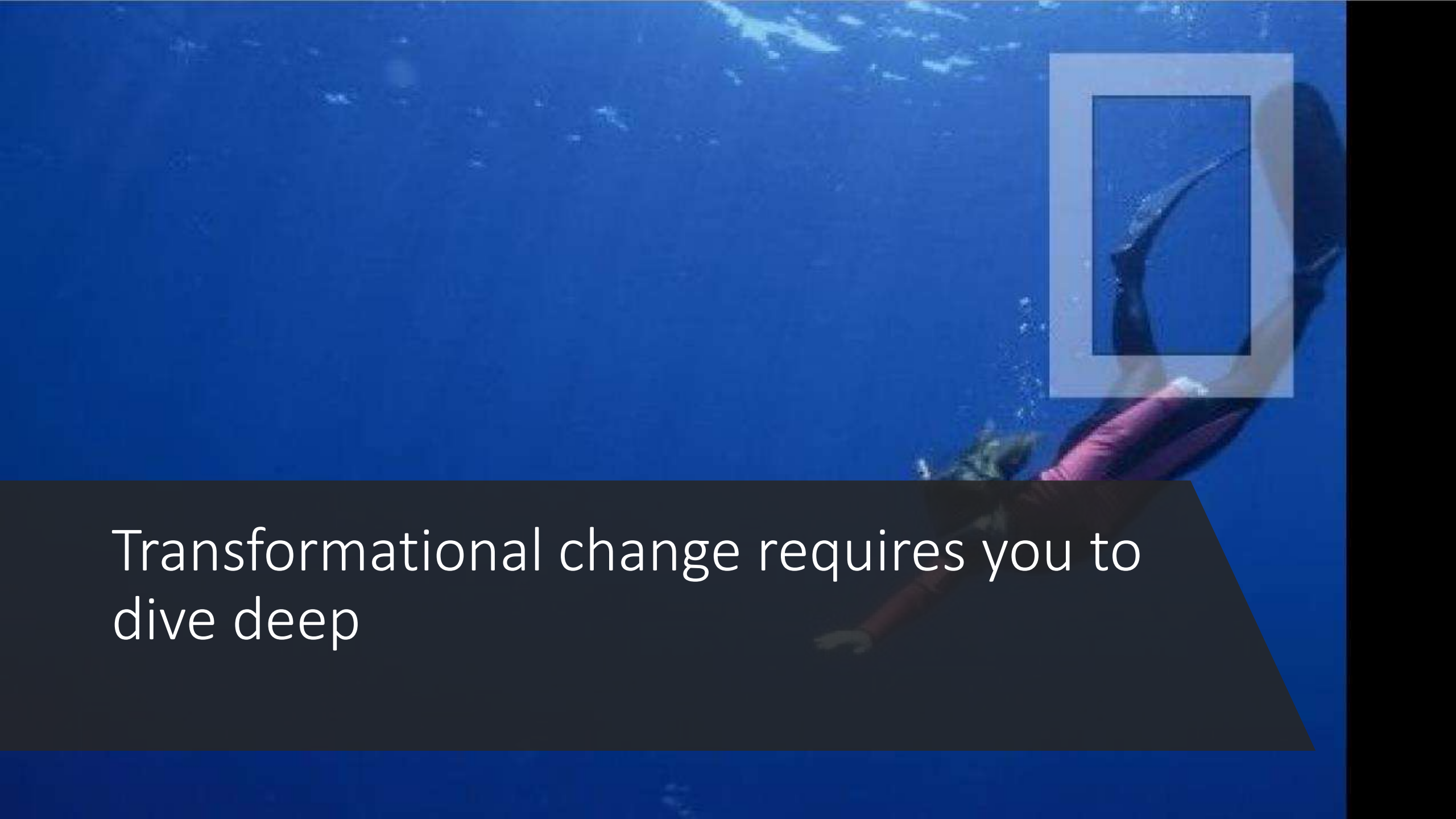
- In order create your intention, create the future you want to create, reflect on what help you may need, people resources, input etc.
- Meet in groups of four, each person one at a time shares their leadership challenge, what they want to create and what help or support they need to accomplish their intentions.
- Large group debrief - What was your most important learning from this experience?

# What is theory U about?

- Learning, Leadership, Innovation,
- Transformational Change

# True Change

True change can only take place with the transformation of the human heart

An underwater scene with a diver in a red wetsuit swimming towards the right. A white rectangular frame is overlaid on the image, containing a close-up of a shark's head. The background is deep blue water with some light reflections.

Transformational change requires you to  
dive deep



Why is  
Theory U  
important?

21st century chaos and complexity.

# Transformational change

The reactive mindset that has governed the last two centuries is ill-equipped to eradicate systemic root cause for transformational change



Problems can't be solved by the same level of consciousness  
that created them.

Albert Einstein



The success of an intervention depends on  
the interior condition of the intervenor.”

Bill O’Brien  
Ex-CEO, Hanover Insurance



# Core principles



To think  
appropriately, we  
need to slow down

Feel like stepping on the accelerator?

# Levels of listening

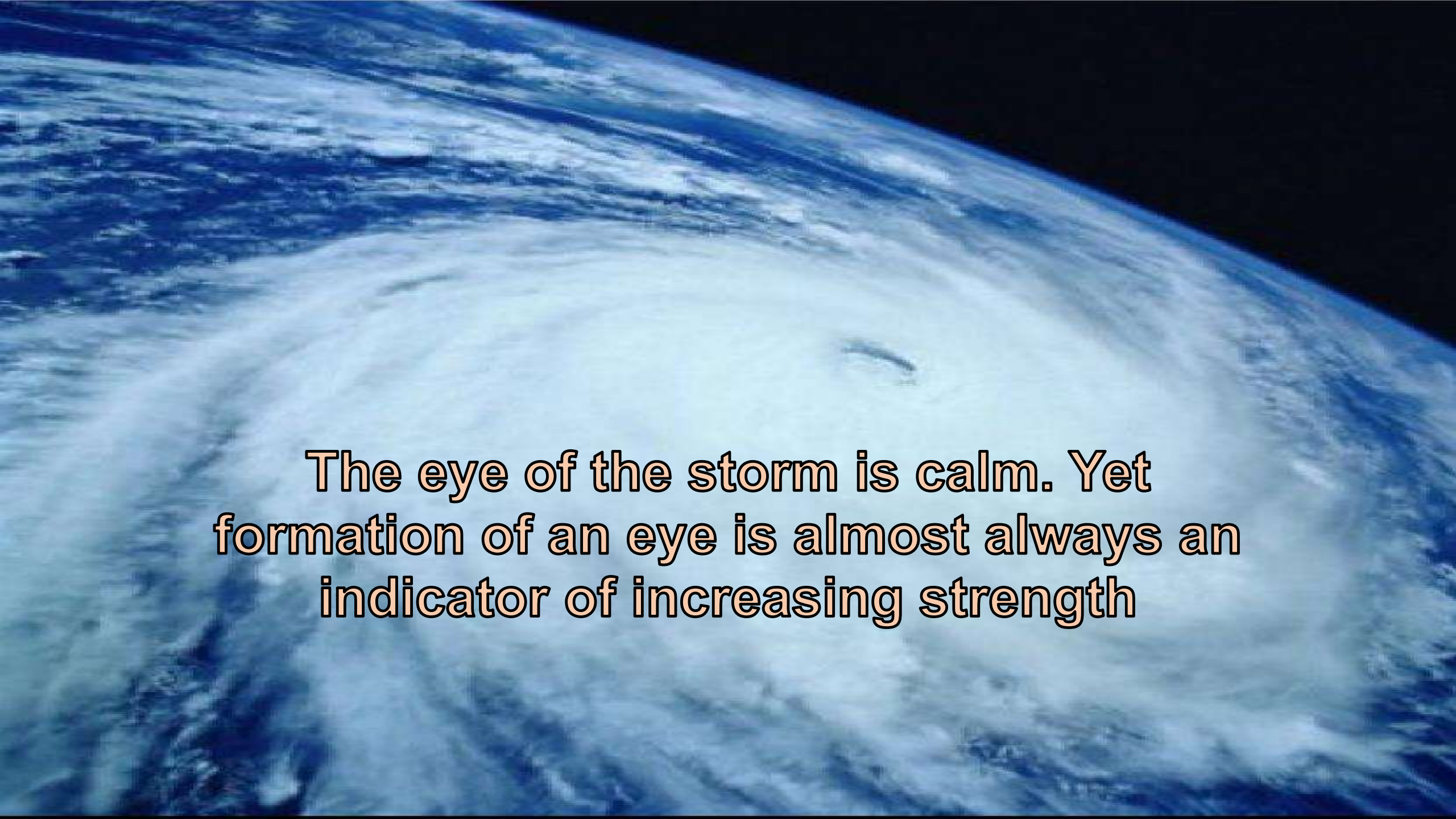
1. Downloading habits of thought.
2. Factual or object focused.
  - Paying attention to facts and novel or disconcerting data.
  - What is different? What shifts have taken place?
3. Empathetic
  - Engaged in real dialogue and paying attention.
  - I know how you feel.
4. Generative
  - I can't express what I feel in words – my whole being has slowed down and I feel quiet and present and my real self.

# Results of levels of listening

1. Downloading
  - Reconfirms what you know and habits of thought.
2. Factual or object focused.
  - Disconfirm what you know and notice the new/ different.
3. Empathetic
  - Perspective is redirected to seeing through the eyes of another. (sensing)
4. Generative
  - You are no longer the person who started out.
  - You have undergone subtle but profound change and are connected to a deeper source of knowing, including the knowledge of the best future possibility for yourself.
  - Shift in identity and self.
  - Connecting to a new emerging whole.

# Presencing = presence + sensing

- Heightened attention allowing groups and individuals to shift inner place from which they function.
- See deeply and collectively allowing future possibilities to emerge.



The eye of the storm is calm. Yet formation of an eye is almost always an indicator of increasing strength



**Strip down so new possibility can emerge**





Experiment.  
Integrate.  
Improvise.



Listen and perform beyond the self.

# Summary

## Past practice

- Control
- Reflect
- Learn from the past
- IQ only
- Meet, consider
- Talk

## U theory

- Improvise
- Connect
- Learn from the future
- IQ+EQ+SQ
- Decide in an instant.
- Act

# Theory U in Practice

