MINDSET AND POSTURE

Transformative Design Course

February 21, 2024

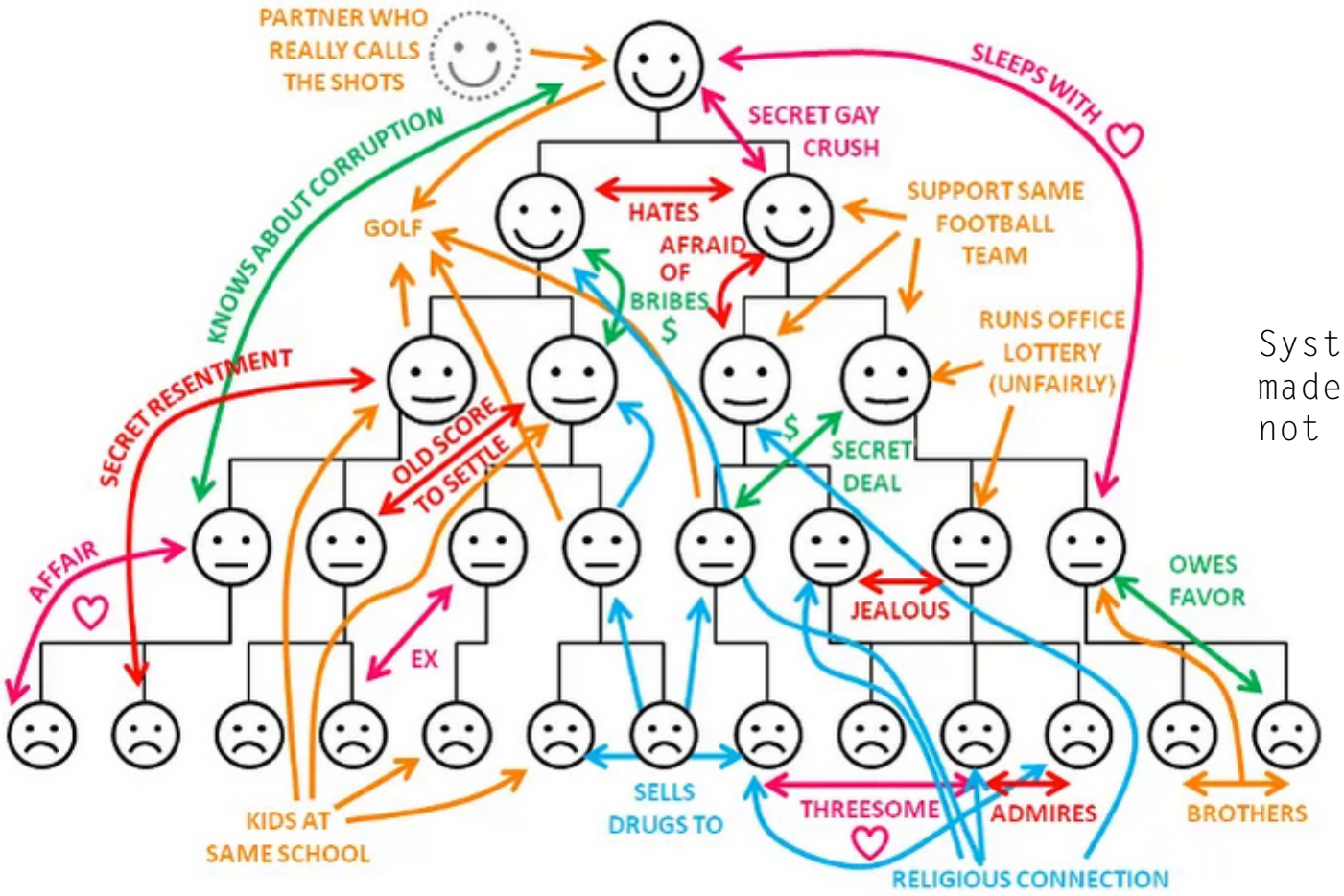
TRANSITION IMPLIES CHANGE

If designers are to be agents of change at some level (from niche to systems), design work requires **“a new way of ‘being’ in the world”** — the one that fosters new ways of interacting and shaping current and future systems and transitioning from design *thinking* to design *doing*, based upon a specific **mindset and posture.**

FROM DESIGN THINKING TO DESIGN DOING

- Systems are created through complex relationships between people, ecologies, and artefacts.
- Designing in complexity implies collaborations with others to get the work done, although you might not like them or hold the same values
- The outcomes thus depend on mindsets, postures, paradigms (worldviews), and power structures of the people that make up the system

REAL ORGANIZATION CHART



Systems are made of people, not products

INNER AND OUTER

Person's behavior is only the visible tip of the iceberg.

Our interior, invisible world animates our actions.

The dynamic interaction between our exterior environment and our body/mind produces our inner subjective experience that informs our behavior

Thus, transition designer focuses on re-creating our individual ways of seeing and behaving as a leverage point for systemic change.

See 'The Mindset and Posture Required to Engender Life-Affirming Transitions' by Hannah du Plessis, 2015

> *Our patterns of feeling, thinking and reacting become our habits, our unconscious operating system.*
>
> *Unless we intervene,we will continue to live from our culturally installed operating system and perpetuate our current reality.*

Hannah du Plessis, 2015

SO, WHERE ARE YOU RIGHT NOW?

The mindset and posture cannot be thought,
but can be experienced, worked on, and changed

A LITTLE EXPERIMENT

Let us first breathe together

THE MINDSET

What is transition design for you?

THE MINDSET

- Capable of dealing with uncertainty, ambiguity, chaos, and contradiction.
- Capable of finding the shifting moments of aligned, overlapping self-interests across participating parties (in the project).

This implies open mindedness,… continue the list

THE NATURE OF MINDSET

The nature of mindset

“Your beliefs become your thoughts,
your thoughts become your words,
your words become your actions,
your actions become your habits,
your habits become your values,
your values become your destiny.”
— Mahatma Gandhi

THREE COMMON TYPES

"The most important question anyone can ask is: What myth am I living?" — Carl Jung

While everyone's mindset is unique there are some common types that are useful to be aware of.

This includes the Fixed, Growth and Benefit Mindsets which reflect common beliefs people hold about the nature of learning and leadership.

LISTEN

Rumi, read by Coleman Barks, start at minutte 1.55, to 3.25

Trying to relate the mindsets we talked about to the poem, could you relate parts of it with different mindsets?

THE MINDSET OF TRANSITION DESIGNER

Some characteristics that are often needed:

1. Being present.
2. Being open and accepting.
3. Working with emergence.
4. Not considering short term, but long-term benefits.
5. Being reflective and willing to learn, also by failing.

EMERGENCE

Wicked, complex problems call for identification of good entry points and directions to look in.

Thus, design and research are often emergent. That implies, exploratory design and research, not predictable one, but the one that values surprise.

HOW TO SUPPORT EMERGENCE?

- Emergence Strategy No.1 - Consider anomalies to be inspirations.
- Emergence Strategy No.2 - Seek idiosyncratic examples of design settings.
- Emergence Strategy No.3 - Allow technical afordances to suggest new directions.

MAINTAINING EMERGENCE

- Emergence Strategy No.4 - Understand emergence in terms of research programmes as well as projects.
- Emergence Strategy No.5 - Emphasise design in settings.
- Emergence Strategy No.6 - Be mindful of what emerging directions may contribute.

NARRATING EMERGENCE

- Emergence Strategy No.7 - Present design research as a journey, not a quest with a predetermined goal.

- Emergence Strategy No.8 - Tell the full backstory for an appreciation of the undertaking and the sorts of trajectory that might emerge.

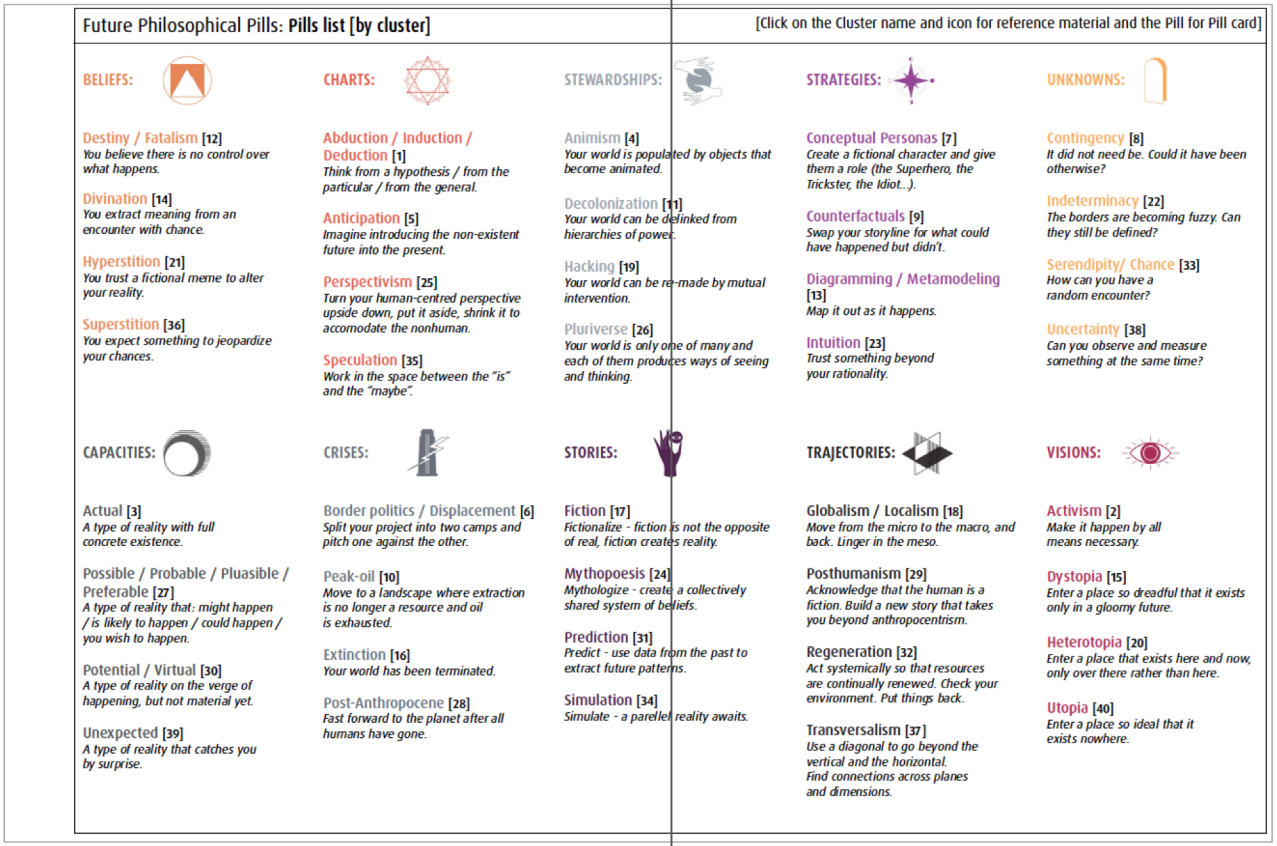
- Emergence Strategy No.9 - Seek inspiration from diferent literary genres. The narrative needs not be linear.

ASSESING EMERGENCE

- Emergence Strategy No.10 - Recognise starting points as provisional.
- Emergence Strategy No.11 - Assess outputs on their own terms.
- Emergence Strategy No.12 - Value agility and responsiveness.

FUTURES PHILOSOPHICAL PILLS

[Fuel4Design]



Future Philosophical Pills: **Pills list [by cluster]**

[Click on the Cluster name and icon for reference material and the Pill for Pill card]

BELIEFS:

Destiny / Fatalism [12]
You believe there is no control over what happens.

Divination [14]
You extract meaning from an encounter with chance.

Hyperstition [21]
You trust a fictional meme to alter your reality.

Superstition [36]
You expect something to jeopardize your chances.

CHARTS:

Abduction / Induction / Deduction [1]
Think from a hypothesis / from the particular / from the general.

Anticipation [5]
Imagine introducing the non-existent future into the present.

Perspectivism [25]
Turn your human-centred perspective upside down, put it aside, shrink it to accomodate the nonhuman.

Speculation [35]
Work in the space between the "is" and the "maybe".

STEWARDSHIPS:

Animism [4]
Your world is populated by objects that become animated.

Decolonization [11]
Your world can be delinked from hierarchies of power.

Hacking [19]
Your world can be re-made by mutual intervention.

Pluriverse [26]
Your world is only one of many and each of them produces ways of seeing and thinking.

STRATEGIES:

Conceptual Personas [7]
Create a fictional character and give them a role (the Superhero, the Trickster, the Idiot...).

Counterfactuals [9]
Swap your storyline for what could have happened but didn't.

Diagramming / Metamodeling [13]
Map it out as it happens.

Intuition [23]
Trust something beyond your rationality.

UNKNOWNS:

Contingency [8]
It did not need be. Could it have been otherwise?

Indeterminacy [22]
The borders are becoming fuzzy. Can they still be defined?

Serendipity/ Chance [33]
How can you have a random encounter?

Uncertainty [38]
Can you observe and measure something at the same time?

CAPACITIES:

Actual [3]
A type of reality with full concrete existence.

Possible / Probable / Pluasible / Preferable [27]
A type of reality that: might happen / is likely to happen / could happen / you wish to happen.

Potential / Virtual [30]
A type of reality on the verge of happening, but not material yet.

Unexpected [39]
A type of reality that catches you by surprise.

CRISES:

Border politics / Displacement [6]
Split your project into two camps and pitch one against the other.

Peak-oil [10]
Move to a landscape where extraction is no longer a resource and oil is exhausted.

Extinction [16]
Your world has been terminated.

Post-Anthropocene [28]
Fast forward to the planet after all humans have gone.

STORIES:

Fiction [17]
Fictionalize - fiction is not the opposite of real, fiction creates reality.

Mythopoesis [24]
Mythologize - create a collectively shared system of beliefs.

Prediction [31]
Predict - use data from the past to extract future patterns.

Simulation [34]
Simulate - a parellel reality awaits.

TRAJECTORIES:

Globalism / Localism [18]
Move from the micro to the macro, and back. Linger in the meso.

Posthumanism [29]
Acknowledge that the human is a fiction. Build a new story that takes you beyond anthropocentrism.

Regeneration [32]
Act systemically so that resources are continually renewed. Check your environment. Put things back.

Transversalism [37]
Use a diagonal to go beyond the vertical and the horizontal. Find connections across planes and dimensions.

VISIONS:

Activism [2]
Make it happen by all means necessary.

Dystopia [15]
Enter a place so dreadful that it exists only in a gloomy future.

Heterotopia [20]
Enter a place that exists here and now, only over there rather than here.

Utopia [40]
Enter a place so ideal that it exists nowhere.

◂ Figure 4
Pills List (by Cluster), Future Philosophical Pills, IO2, FUEL4DESIGN: Link ▸

DEMOCRACY AT SOD

https://systemsorienteddesign.net/category/design-for-democracy/

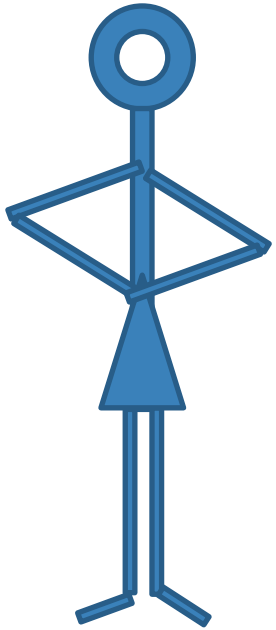
POSTURE (OR POISE?)

> *A GOOD STANCE AND POSTURE*
> *REFLECT*
> *A PROPER STATE OF MIND*

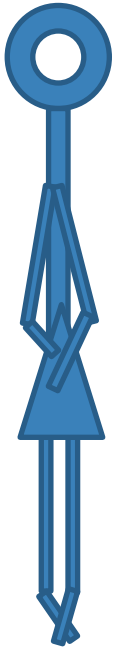
Morihei Ueshiba

THE POSTURE EXERCISE

CHOOSE ONE



Confident/arrogant



Shy/insecure

Mindset (Worldview & Values)		**Posture** (Approach)
Dominant	**Holistic**	**New**
World Metaphor: World as a machine; 'parts' and are separate and independent of each other.	**World Metaphor**: World as a living organism; 'parts' are self-organizing, interdependent, mutually influencing and reinforcing and co-evolving.	Posture of **humility, reverence for nature** and acknowledgement of human ignorance (we can never fully understand or 'manage' complex natural or social systems); any action may have unseen short and long-term ramifications. Actions and solutions are conceived with **welfare of the natural world and future generations** in mind.
Human Presence: humans are viewed as separate from, and superior to, other forms of life and the natural environment.	**Human Presence**: humans are viewed as part of an interdependent web of life that includes other species and the natural environment.	
Nature: is viewed as a storehouse of resources for human use and consumption.	**Nature**: is viewed as the context for human life; human health is directly connected to the health of the natural environment.	
Timeframe: Conceives actions in short horizons of time with the welfare of self and present generation in mind.	**Timeframe**: Conceives actions in long horizons of time with the welfare of present and future generations in mind.	
Environmental & Social Crises: (if acknowledged) are viewed as things that can be fixed within existing socio-economic-political paradigms through technology, economic growth and 'business as usual'.	**Environmental & Social Crises**: are viewed with optimistic grumpiness; dissatisfaction with status quo and a sense of urgency combined with the belief that positive change is possible but only within new, alternative paradigms.	Posture of action and **sense of urgency tempered with patience** to carefully observe short-term ramifications of actions and consider their **long-term implcations**. Commitment to the development of radically alternative socio-economic-political forms.

Individual vs. Community: focus is placed on the individual and their own self-fulfillment with an emphasis on material wealth/possesions.	**Individual vs. Community**: focus is placed on community and fulfillment through interdependence, reciprocity and belonging.	Willingness and desire to **collaborate** and foster **positive interactions among groups** is seen as an essential skill.
Business & Economy: are viewed as the context for everyday life. Focus placed on career, earning power and personal identity/reputation. Disciplinary expertise and individual achievement is highly prized.	**Business & Economy**: everyday life is viewed as the primary context for problem solving. Business and the economy exist to satisfy human needs, without compromising the ability of other species/ future generations to meet theirs. Focus placed on quality of life and the bonds of community. Disciplinary expertise is best realized through trans/cross-disciplinary collaboration.	Commitment to **balance in one's own life** and others' lives. Ability to **collaborate effectively in transdisciplinary groups** is seen as a vital skill and source of satisfaction/reward.
Problem Solving: focuses on individual parts (decontexualization), emphasizes and values disciplinary expertise, strong belief in linear cause-and-effect outcomes, predictability and control and priviledges quantifiable and replicable results.	**Problem Solving**: focuses on understanding the whole system (context) in order to solve for a part, emphasizes transdisciplinary collaboration and understanding the emergent (and therefore unpredictable) properties of social and natural systems, priviledges qualities and values.	Embraces **transdisciplinary knowledge and collaboration** as the optimum basis for coordinated action and problem solving. Involves **posture of tinkering** or 'shepherding' solutions into existence.

Competition vs. Cooperation: belief in competition and proprietary knowledge as the pathway to success. Effective action and solutions take place within the dominant, single bottom line economic paradigm/marketplace.	**Competition vs. Cooperation**: belief in cooperation and open source information/knowledge ('the commons'). Effective action and solutions are conceived within alternative economic models.	Commitment to **sharing information and knowledge** as the basis for improving conditions of the whole (society and the environment). **Generosity** and sharing are seen as essential attributes.
Predictability & Control: sees lack of order and chaos as a problematic and something to be 'fixed'. Pre-conceived solutions based upon predicted outcomes are 'imposed' within top-down, often centralized structures.	**Predictability & Control**: sees chaos as a rich bed of possibilities where new forms of order and behavior arise spontaeously and unpredictably at the grass roots level. These dynamics can be leveraged/amplified in the formulation of solutions but change cannot be predicted or controlled.	Posture of **watchful anticipation** and willingness to look for the clues for how to act in the system itself. **Trust** that the **seeds of solutions are already present** in what is perceived as chaos
Ambiguity & Uncertainty: viewed as an undesirable state and/or as a problem to be solved.	**Ambiguity & Uncertainty**: viewed as a natural component of the process of change within social and natural systems.	Posture of **flexibility and comfort with uncertainty** combined with a desire to be **grounded, yet open to new ideas** and ways of acting
Designers' Role: designers see themselves as expert practitioners and problem-solvers, working alone or in positions of leadership within cross-disciplinary teams.	**Designers' Role**: designers see themselves as change agents and catalysts for positive social/environmental change in a co-design process that involves both leadership and followership.	Posture of **humility and an openess** to both lead and be led, commitment to be aware of **when one has stepped out of one's domain of expertise**.
Pace: emphasis on face-paced processes that arrive at solutions quickly and efficiently; time is money.	**Pace**: emphasis on a slower, mindful approach and consensus building with multiple constituencies. Focus on development of longer term solutions.	Posture of **patience and a willingness to learn** and acknowledge what one doesn't not know.

Terry Irwin, Carnegie Mellon University, 2015. Originally developed for Design & Culture Journal, 9.15.

QUESTIONS?

- Please share some experiences