Ecology of Design In Human Systems

What we are In Service to: _The potential to form a 'community of practice' as well as a community of practitioners— dedicated to capacity building of ourselves that will enable capacity building in the world. Through our individual and collective work we will accelerate and improve growth of our individual offerings in the world (as practitioners) as well as enhancing versatility for co-creation within the complex presenting conditions of real-life demands and the challenges of complexity._

WHY it is important: Given the various challenges emerging in our social and ecological arenas, **increasing our capacity to comprehend, embrace and _design_ effectively for _complexity_ is critical** to enhancing our future prospects for health, well-being and, possibly, even our very survival on this planet.

In our society, when recognizing "a problem" – something that isn't "right" or isn't working -- **we have been conditioned _to just fix it_**…and not to pause, examine how it might have occurred, or question what might be going on "upstream"; nor how we might engage others' thinking to respond from a more comprehensive perspective.

Good _design_ is sourced in breakthrough thinking—that of the human system designer and those for whom the design is intended to engage. Design in this view **enables creative, innovative solutions to complex human-centered issues** – co-creating healthy and healthful human systems.

Our intention is to create a different forum for professional development **that contributes to integrated capacity building of the designer to design** responsively for the emerging conundrums we all face in the world. We believe we are all designers impacting and influencing our environments—as leaders in all sectors, as internal and external change agents and as consultants, educators and activists looking for ways to build our capacity to effect change.

Emphasis is upon:
- "Being the practitioner I have the potential to become"
- The _"work"_ to do the work in the world where _the conditions_ in the world are calling for different approaches AND calling forth new capabilities (in us). There are new conditions in the world on all fronts that we have never seen before…this requires us to live fully into our potential as agents of change.
- Learning how to learn…embracing ambiguity and unpredictability; designing in-the-moment

     **Some conditions that might activate your yearning to take a deep dive:**
   - ✓ Hitting your ceiling? At your practitioner edge? Finding yourself in deep water, out of your element? Discovering your 'blind spots'?
     - ✓ Keeping apace with new and better ways to engage human system?
     - ✓ Exploring your brilliance—teasing apart where things have worked magically, revealing how we do what we do that has worked so well—in order to replicate in other situations: _"What is it that worked so well over there in that situation that allowed me to work it so well?"_
     - ✓ Enhancing teams engaged in organization change projects, leadership development and culture shifting-where the team's work is the content for the design studio learning

WHAT: An arena for co-learning and co-creation with other seasoned and experienced professionals
- Utilizing inquiry-based exploration through practical prototyping of methodologies and applications
- Developing the capacity to assess the readiness of any system for whatever capacity development wants to occur
- Exploring key critical *conditions* within any on-going situation, such as
  - ✓ What does conscientious consideration of 'the conditions' occurring within a client group/culture make possible?
  - ✓ What would ignoring these conditions risk?
  - ✓ What are 'the conditions' in ME that enable my best self to come forth – and what do I do when it doesn't?

Why Design of the Designer? Firstly, it is a foundational introduction into the Design Studio Series. Secondly, to take the orientation of "fixing" the complex, interdependent problems facing us by using the same methods and ideas over and over only gets us more of what we have – old furniture that's been refurbished. As Albert Einstein stated so well: "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results."
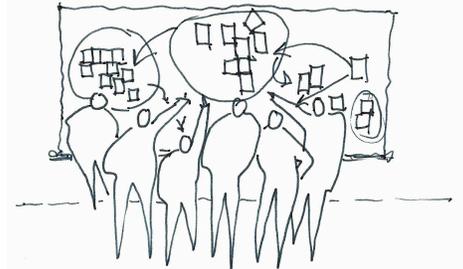
We are at an unprecedented stage of *global* human relations; a place and set of conditions that we've never had to respond to before. **We are in new territory standing on very different ground in a rapidly emerging landscape**. We notice that such conditions are requiring a new level and varying types of adaptive response-abilities, which currently are not available to us by simply 'tweaking' existing change management and OD practices. It is our premise that the emerging complexity can only be responded to effectively from a collective base of intelligence generated by a community of practitioners able to learn from and with each other. **This is about capacity building in practitioners by building a practice of social learning and collective competencies** in service to more effective social engagement and client deliverables – no matter what sector or area of expertise. **In short, *the foremost design is of "the designer."* The Design Studio Series engages people responsible for change and complexity in human systems.**

Here's what experienced others are saying:
- **Linda Ackerman-Anderson** in *Reflections on the Field of OD, Change Consulting, and the Future* – "*What is missing is more attention to the system as a whole, and to focusing our practices on large–scale change. Bias acknowledged, this is where I have spent my entire career. In thirty years teaching change consultants to succeed at large-scale change work, I find the skills and understanding of what this takes needs much more attention. There are painfully too few consultants truly aware, gifted and experienced in doing this work at both the organizational and personal levels, and still doing it. Those that I have encountered have been joyful relationships, but there are not nearly enough of them to do what our organizations require today. This concerns me deeply. Who is going to help lead the myriad changes prompted by today's economic, social, technological, political, and ecological challenges?*"
- **Weatherhead School of Management** at Case Western Reserve University recognizes that *the art of design is increasingly important to the practice of management. Our world needs leaders who observe with fresh eyes, conceive and model new possibilities, experiment with alternatives, implement and refine best ideas, and continue to question existing conditions in search of betterment for individuals, organizations, and society…. Design skills and methods enable managers to respond to complex situations creatively, holistically, and productively.* (adapted from Manage by Designing at http://design.case.edu)
- **Tim Brown** quote from *Change By Design* (2009) -- *Today, rather than enlist designers to make an already developed idea more attractive, the most progressive companies are challenging them to create ideas at the outset of the development process. The former role is tactical; it builds on what exists and usually moves it*

one step further. The latter is strategic; it pulls "design" out of the studio and unleashes its disruptive, game-changing potential. (p. 7)

- **Daniel Pink**, in *A Whole New Mind* (2005), emphasizes: *Not just function but also DESIGN. It's no longer sufficient to create a product, a service, an experience, or a lifestyle that's merely functional. Today it's economically crucial and personally rewarding to create something that is also beautiful, whimsical, or emotionally engaging. (p. 65)*

Designing new 'things' is different than designing for human engagement in human systems. Design as we have defined involves an intentional "scaffolding" that supports the designer to co-create *the conditions* for innovation and transformation of themselves, of the people they work with, and of their human systems.

HOW – A LEARNING COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT:

- A blend of face to face intensives with on-line peer to peer learning groups and coaching in between based on real time/real work AND upon your "Individualized Learning Plan"
- Project-Based Design Challenges; bringing self as source (internal) into fully engaging the human systems in our workplaces and assignments/work projects (external)
- Deepening our practice edge; integrating new design practices & processes into the workplace; demonstration of engaging adaptive response-abilities to address emergent conditions

WHAT IT MAKES POSSIBLE:

- Building a community of practitioners that practices together 'as a community' of learners learning from and with each other
- A cadre of seasoned practitioners/leaders to draw on—action learning & action research
- Professional development (over and beyond graduates school, conferences, session intensives on a particular process) that is directly correlated to real-time, real-work/projects 'as a laboratory'
    - ✓ Enhancing the capability to engage effectively with highly complex and emerging conditions
    - ✓ Increasing the design capacity—for practitioners, leaders and those in the system itself— for responding to in-the-moment demands arising from complex issues while in the midst of dynamic tensions

WHAT'S THE COMMITMENT?

Since we are focusing the learning together through the individual real life work each person is bringing into this arena, we can realistically estimate face-to-face and on-line engagement hours but not what you personally might choose to invest into this capacity building experience.

- **An initial framing of the process:**
    - ✓ A six month commitment
    - ✓ with (2) 3-day and (2) 2-day intensives (in Seattle) every 6 weeks
    - ✓ with on-line peer learning group work in between intensives at a minimum of two-week intervals plus coaching
    - ✓ any group can choose to meet more often on the on-line learning platform.
    - ✓ "Estimated" Prototype Cost: $4000 (This is a one-time opportunity at this cost.) *Discounts for intact teams are available!*

In this six-month period each participant gets at a minimum of (4) coaching sessions of 2 hours each with Design of Designer facilitators. Each person determines when these coaching sessions would be the most useful for their individual learning.

For expressions of interest in the *Design of the Designer Studio Series*, questions, registration, please use our 'Contact Us' at www.ecologyofdesigninhumansystems.com