

EMBODYING PRESENCING MASTERY AS A LEADERLY WAY OF BEING:

An Archetypical Journey

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Abstract: Over the past decades, presencing has gained increasing weight as an approach to address complex societal and organizational challenges. But could presencing be more than a method to gain contextual knowledge? Could it be a path to more profound ways of experiencing the world and our place in it? Embracing the increasing complexity, uncertainty, and ambiguity in organizations seems to require not just a different toolset or way of *doing*, but an entirely different way of *being* – one that is able to move in sync with our VUCA environment by incorporating the presencing process and disposition in our day-to-day life. *What would it mean to develop this form of presencing mastery and embody presencing as a second nature in our leadership, life, and work? What finer aspects of the presencing process and disposition would we need to deeply integrate? Which challenges might we need to grapple with on the journey? And which potential might lie in incorporating presencing mastery as a leaderly way of being?* Based on a six-year doctoral action research, this article fleshes out the archetypical inner journey towards presencing mastery. Ongoing cycles of action and reflection with a long-term collaborative inquiry group of organizational leaders have revealed key insights and practices for the process of developing presencing mastery as an embodied way of being. The findings also suggest that in order to incorporate and navigate with a noted degree of presencing mastery, we need to face the inertia of conventional mental models and commit to the costs and growing pains of embracing post-conventional epistemologies and ontologies. Through this ongoing commitment we may come to discover presencing mastery as a powerful way of participating in an unfolding, interconnected world and co-creating generative ways of living and leading in it.

Keywords: presencing, presencing mastery, inner knowing, embodiment, leadership, leadership journey, way of being, VUCA

I. A transformative personal journey towards presencing mastery

Many of the leaders I have been working with as an executive coach look for

ways of mastering the complexity and uncertainty inherent in their leadership challenges but often find themselves trapped in recurring crises as they seek new answers through old paradigms. It is becoming more and more evident that the ever-increasing complexity and volatility in organizational reality requires fundamentally different responses to those that have brought most leaders to success. Approaches to complex challenges that promise the idea of “having things under control” tend to distract our attention away from the essential nature of the reality we are facing.

Over the past decade, a good part of my attention has been focused on developing an approach that enables leaders to confidently navigate in a complex world, a capacity of *being with* disruption and uncertainty and acting from an inner compass, rather than from external metrics which risk becoming obsolete shortly after they are developed. In several key moments in my life, I have had profound encounters with this inner compass, which made me acutely aware of the powerful guiding quality of this particular form of inner knowing – a holistic knowing that is able to point us forward in transformative ways. But this form of knowing didn’t seem compatible with how leadership is socially constructed (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Grint, 2005). How could I decode and understand this compass deeply enough to make it available to leaders who operated from conventional mental models and positivist worldviews? And more importantly, what would it require to integrate this compass in our very being, so that it could become second nature in our leadership, life and work? These questions were the birthplace of a long process of personal inquiry (Sell, 2017) that eventually found its way into a six-year executive doctoral research study (Sell, 2021).

Throughout the years of personal and doctoral inquiry I deeply engaged with the ideas and practices around Theory U and presencing (Scharmer, 2016; Scharmer & Kaeufer, 2013) as a relevant method to break through habitual thinking patterns and access a deeper knowing related to specific challenges. As impactful as these breakthrough-moments were, I was intrigued to find out if we could ground ourselves in this inner knowing more deeply. Could an ongoing commitment to and engagement with presencing be a means to awaken the compass of our inner knowing not just momentarily and contextually but as a general way of being amidst complexity and uncertainty? What would it require to attain such presencing mastery as our second nature in our leading and living?

To deepen the exploration of presencing mastery, a more profound understanding of the actual presencing experience at the bottom of the U was needed. What exactly happens on a phenomenological level in the process between *letting go* (of

habitual mental models) and *letting come* (of the emerging insight or future)? Since years before embarking on the formal research, I had engaged in embodied awareness practices, amongst others those inspired by physicist and awareness teacher A. H. Almaas (1986). By a very attentive embodied inquiry into this very moment, I had experienced moments of tapping into an expanded sense of being, a profound level of consciousness – a phenomenon that Theory U might relate to the realm of source that we are tapping into in deep presencing. I was intrigued by the encounter with this subtle realm as it seemed to hold a deeper wisdom than that which we can access by deliberative thinking. Tapping into it not only serves as a guiding quality, but also fills me with an invigorating presence: a sense of aliveness born from feeling almost viscerally connected to an underlying wholeness far bigger than my individual self. These experiences pointed to something more profound than attaining contextual knowledge related to specific questions. They pointed to a particular state of being that is able to connect us to an expanded consciousness through which we can approach life and its challenges in generative ways.

Gunnlaugson’s Dynamic Presencing (2020), a phenomenological and ontological advancement of Scharmer’s Theory U, strongly correlates with the subtle experiences of my awareness practice and offers an in-depth unpacking of the underlying dynamics at the bottom of the U. Dynamic Presencing unpacks the process at the bottom of the U into five primary movements. Each movement consists of key core shifts that are needed to experience the depth of the presencing process² and an overall process of presencing mastery.

In relation to the presencing mastery inquiry as to how presencing can advance into a way of being, the first movement of *primary presence* is an essential one. Unlike Theory U, which sees being present mainly as a precondition for moving on to bringing forth the emerging future, Gunnlaugson sees primary presence as a “foundational way of being” or “a generative embodied ground” (Gunnlaugson, 2020, p. 33) out of which the other movements follow. In order to reach the full depth of this embodied ground of presence, we have to suspend our wish to “get somewhere” with presencing and move into the increasing depth of the four lifeworlds of *being real* (letting go of any self-image and facing our immediate experiential reality), *being witness* (transitioning into an observer of our experiential reality), *being essence* (entering a felt contact with our essential nature) and finally *being source* (reaching a state of unity that allows us to “reconnect with

² For a detailed discussion and empirical advancement of the primary movements and their core shifts see doctoral thesis (Sell, 2021).

the deeper flowing wholeness that pervades reality” (Gunnlaugson, 2020, p. 57)). Mastering these lifeworlds yields corresponding embodied forms of presence that strongly correlate with the experiential qualities in my personal and collaborative presencing practice and underpin the practical findings of my doctoral inquiry. Attuning to and learning to abide in presencing as a second nature, we have realised again and again, is not a practical exercise or learning journey one performs iteratively but requires a committed in-depth apprenticeship of connection and re-connection to our deeper ontological realms of being.

To realize presencing as a way of being—a core accolade of Dynamic Presencing’s vision for presencing mastery—also asks us to strengthen our relationship with the particular knowing that arises in the process of *letting come*, which has entirely different qualities to the conceptual, abstract knowing in day-to-day life. Like Scharmer, Gunnlaugson (2020) uses the term *primary knowing* to frame this knowing, though applies it differently as originating from an in-depth process of *letting be*. Originally termed by cognitive psychologist Eleanor Rosch (1999, 2001), primary knowing comes as an all-encompassing sense that has a quality of field-consciousness and holds unconditional value and openness. Action from this awareness-based knowing, Rosch argues, is “spontaneous, rather than the result of decision-making; it is compassionate, since it is based on wholes larger than the self; and it can be shockingly effective” (Rosch, 2001, p. 2). The phenomenon of primary knowing grounds in a participative ontology (Heron & Reason, 1997; Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011), which sees the world as an interconnected whole, within which our experience forms the ground of our being and knowing. Primary knowing thus can be seen as an expression of our embeddedness in and participation with the living world, emerging from an invisible attunement with the hidden dynamics within and around ourselves, and making itself known through our wider senses. The phenomenon of primary knowing receives a lot of grounding through Ian McGilchrist’s extensive research on the underutilized and devalued role of the brain’s right hemisphere in western civilization (2018). The left hemisphere works in a decontextualized, explicit, and disembodied way and mediates abstract, unambiguous knowledge. It speaks to the positivist ontology prevalent in conventional science and society that aims to predict and control from a neutral, disengaged position (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011). The right hemisphere knowing, by contrast, comes through direct presentation, without preconception, and evolves from a self that is “drawn into and inextricably bound up with the world in a relation... suggesting involvement of the whole experiential being, not just the process of cognition” (McGilchrist, 2018, p. 153).

As McGilchrist elaborates, the right hemisphere’s “primary consciousness” (2018, p. 149) – correlating with primary knowing - constitutes our world and gives us a holistic understanding of it. However, in western societies we seem to be locked into the way of thinking of the left hemisphere, which disconnects us from an intimate contact with and knowing from a more profound realm of reality. This realm “puts us in direct communication and participation with the very heart of emergence” (Gunnlaugson, 2020, p. 58). As a practice, presencing momentarily “unlocks” us from the restrictions of the left hemisphere and facilitates our contact with the right hemisphere’s primary knowing. As a way of being in our life and work, presencing asks us to create a whole new balance by stepping out of the confinements of the left hemisphere’s dominance with the habitual need to conceptualise, abstract and control and instead re-ignite the right hemisphere’s expanded, interconnected and often ineffable take on reality. In this spirit, the journey towards presencing as a way of being also challenges taken-for-granted epistemologies and explores new ways of meaning-making and relating to life. Analogue to how transpersonal psychologist Rosemarie Anderson (2011, p. 59) frames intuitive inquiry, this research endeavour can be seen as a quest “to find trajectories for new and more refined ways of being human in the world.”

Within this context and theoretical foundation, this article explores two presencing mastery-based inquiry questions around our transitioning from presencing as a situational leadership tool to an embodied ontological disposition in our lives:

1. *What finer aspects of the presencing process and disposition do we need to master to make presencing a second nature in our leadership, life, and work?*
2. *And which potential lies in incorporating presencing as a way of being?*

The following section will outline the specific participative action-research approach that facilitated a "presenced" research process and summarize the key aspects of the inquiry process. Drawing on the findings of my research, I will then illuminate the finer aspects of a presencing mastery level disposition and practice that hold transformative potential towards a generative leaderly way of being. After summarizing key practices for the archetypical presencing mastery journey, I conclude with highlighting the possibilities that arise from transitioning into the ontological disposition of presencing as a way of being, suggesting presencing mastery as a timely and relevant leadership path.

II. Mirroring the presencing process in the research approach

As my research into “presenced” ways of coming to know explores a territory

that emerges from the edges of human consciousness, I second Scharmer's claims that such an investigation implies that "philosophers and systems thinkers must leave their reading room and immerse themselves in the real world in order to actively participate in its unfolding" (2016, p. 105). Diverging from the Cartesian approach inherent in positivist research "trying to be a spectator rather than an actor in all the comedies that are played out" (Descartes, 1985, p. 125), such action-oriented view urged me to go right into the matter and expose myself to experiencing my inquiry first-hand.

In this spirit, my research is situated in the following methodological approaches. Action research (Reason & Bradbury, 2008) provides an overarching framework to this research, particularly in the way it orientates the inquiry towards practical knowing as to how presencing as a way of being might be a resource in our leadership and life. Action research as a family of practices of living inquiry is defined by Reason and Bradbury as:

a participatory process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes. It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice... in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern... (2008, p. 4)

Being a reflexive inquiry practice, action research values the situated and specific over the generalizable, which supports the nature of an inquiry that explores the depths of our inner world. In addition to the depth and quality of insight, the subjectivism of intuitive, first- and second-person data may reveal a deep intersubjectivism, which according to qualitative researcher Vallack (2010, p. 113) is steeped in "common and eternal images for humanity". A further relevant aspect of action research as a supportive methodological orientation is its use of *extended epistemologies* (Heron, 1996; Heron & Reason, 2008): a multi-dimensional account of knowing that pays credit to the fact that knowing in the realm of human experience has wider dimensions than the merely intellectual one. Heron (1996, pp. 52-57) suggests a pyramid of four dimensions of knowing that jointly inform research outcomes: *experiential, presentational, propositional* and *practical knowing*. *Experiential knowing* offers a foundational quality for robust research outcomes, which is congruent with an inquiry into the depths of the presencing experience. As Heron and Reason (1997, p. 276) argue, the "experiential encounter with the presence of the world is the ground of our being and knowing" and this encounter cannot be confused with the symbolic representation of it. The *experiential* and *presentational* dimensions add robustness and depth to the abstracted *propositional* knowing. All three ways of knowing culminate in the purpose of *practical* knowing which translates our inquiry into "worthwhile action in the

world” (Heron & Reason, 2008, p. 378). In the pursuit of *practical* knowing around incorporating a presencing disposition in our leadership, I have embraced the *participative* approach of action research - doing research *with* others rather than *on* others – and invited a group of leaders into a long-term collaborative inquiry. Over two years, we explored in cycles of action and reflection how we could navigate the challenges in our work and life with a presencing disposition and what it took to embody this disposition more profoundly. This shared journey of action and reflection over time allowed for the possibility to make the inquiry a developmental process and “effect desired change as a path to generating knowledge” (Bradbury, 2010, p. 93). Indeed, we did experience a profound developmental and transformational journey in our group, which I will further describe in the following sections.

Within the methodological framework of action research, I situate my methodology in heuristic research as developed by Clark Moustakas (1990, 1994), an approach that I consider particularly adept at exploring the subtleties and ineffable qualities of presencing as a way of being. Heuristic research (Moustakas, 1990, 1994; Douglas & Moustakas, 1985) engages with a question of personal significance through a process of open-ended inquiry, self-directed search and immersion in active experience. It aims at the discovery of the underlying meanings of important human experiences and requires a “passionate, disciplined commitment to remain with a question intensely and continuously until it is illuminated” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 15). Heuristic inquiry can be seen as an advancement of central phenomenological ideas. Originating in the ideas of Edmund Husserl (1960, 1970), phenomenology claims our day-to-day world of lived experience, our lifeworld, as the arena in which knowledge can be developed. Merleau-Ponty (1962) regarded the human body as the mediator between human experience and the world, which in return means we need to be embodied in our presence to experience the world fully. This forms a direct link to the stance that presencing needs to be embodied in order to take us to deeper realms of knowing and being. Heidegger’s view that reality is not a thing but a process of *coming into being* (1999) supports the participative perspective of living, dynamic systems in which our reality emerges. From a phenomenological perspective, consciousness develops within an “ecological system in constant and dynamic association with the world beyond it” (Ladkin, 2014, p. 614).

This systemic and relational perspective is congruent with the ideas behind Dynamic Presencing (Gunnlaugson, 2020) and a participative ontology (Heron & Reason, 1997; Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011). Whilst sharing these general foundations, heuristic research departs from phenomenology in several ways: It

encourages not detachment from but *connection and relationship* to the phenomenon investigated; it aims for *depictions of essential meanings* and personal significance rather than definite descriptions; it does not conclude with distilled structures of experience but a creative synthesis that *includes the researcher's intuition* and tacit understanding; and it does not lose but *keeps visible the research participants* in the meaning-making. This stance of embracing the relational and intuitive aspects of experience speaks to the presencing process itself and establishes congruence between the nature and methodology of this research. In an additional congruence, the six phases that guide heuristic inquiry (Moustakas, 1990, pp. 27-32) broadly reflect the Dynamic Presencing process itself, involving phases of *letting go*, *letting be* (a key addition to Theory U) and *letting come*. These three phases seemed to unfold naturally in my research process, which might suggest that Moustakas seems to have unknowingly captured the inherent unfolding dynamic in the presencing process.

The heuristic process of data analysis can be seen as a presencing process in itself. After an intensive engagement with data from about four years of first-person and two years of collaborative inquiry (the latter comprising the transcripts of ten recorded sessions of four hours each) - looking at the data from different angles, again and again switching between phenomenological details and the bigger picture – I was moving to the bottom of the U where I had to put the data away and become still, letting the pieces of the puzzle silently settle on the deeper grounds of my presence. In the spirit of *letting go*, *letting be* and *letting come*, accessing heuristic insights requires the researcher to maintain an internal focus:

Validity of the research is established by surrendering to the process that is pushing itself into the consciousness of the researcher, allowing the process to unfold and then noticing results in expansion of self-awareness, deepening of understanding, and of self-transformation... (Sela-Smith, 2002, p. 79)

After many weeks, a coherent picture slowly started to emerge in my consciousness. The following section will describe the key aspects of the emerging picture that directly relate to the questions around what it takes for us to incorporate presencing as a way of being.

III. Archetypical growing pains of apprenticing presencing as a leaderly way of being: The finer aspects of the presencing disposition and process we need to master

Six years of ongoing inquiry with self and others have proven to be an intense period of transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991) and offered a powerful opportunity to explore the developmental aspects of a presencing practice and disposition: how it is

affected by or affects our habitual ways of knowing and sense-making over time and which challenges we might need to master to turn it from a situational tool into an embodied way of being. This section will summarize the key findings related to the presencing mastery-based inquiry questions:

1. *What finer aspects of the presencing process and disposition do we need to master to make presencing a second nature in our leadership, life, and work?*
2. *And which potential lies in incorporating presencing as a way of being?*

As the inquiry has revealed, in the presencing mastery quest to incorporate presencing as a way of being we are likely to encounter a number of challenges, or growing pains, in accessing and navigating with primary knowing, especially if we have been socialized in conventional action logics (Torbert et al., 2004; Rooke & Torbert, 2005; Cook-Greuter, 2002). In ongoing cycles of action and reflection our inquiry group developed specific practices that help master these growing pains. In the first part of this section, I will lay out each particular *challenge* in accessing and navigating with presencing and introduce the specific *practice* that may facilitate the transition from pain to growth. In the second part I will address the question that suggests itself: What makes it worth facing and mastering those growing pains? In other words, what specific potential lies in incorporating presencing as a way of being?

III.1. Growing pains in accessing and navigating with primary knowing we need to master to make presencing a second nature in our leadership and life.

To ground us in a disposition of presencing and make primary knowing available to us beyond a dedicated presencing session, we need to incorporate the presencing process in or day-to-day life. Stepping out of our habitual thought patterns, redirecting our attention to our senses and letting the new arise from our connection to source is a whole different level of challenge if we aim to embody it as an orienting way of being in our leadership and life. Our long-term action research suggests that this endeavour is not necessarily a smooth ride and tends to come at a price. The process is likely to challenge our habitual ways of knowing and sense-making, and stepping out of conventional epistemologies and into post-conventional ones seems to come with a number of growing pains. These growing pains relate to the three mayor movements of primary knowing as discussed in Dynamic Presencing (Gunlaugson, 2020) *letting go*, *letting be* (an addition to Scharmer's original model that emphasises the importance of apprenticing with the four depths of presence in the unknown), and *letting come*. And they might continue as we aim to navigate presencing insight over time.

III. 1a) Challenges in letting go: Getting out of action mode, acknowledging the

unknown and facing what stands in the way

Six years of action research have revealed several ways in which the disposition of presencing poses a challenge to the conventional action logics (Torbert et al., 2004; Rooke & Torbert, 2005; Cook-Greuter, 2002) many players in organisational life are rooted in. As executive leaders in the corporate world, our inquiry group recognised in themselves conventional sense-making patterns that seek to gain increasing skill and control in the outer and inner world in order to accomplish our goals and be effective in our wider surroundings. This operating mode stands in opposition to what the presencing process requires us to do: to pause, step out of our habitual patterns of thinking, judging, and acting and instead inquire into the current moment. *Letting go* requires us to de-emphasize the left hemisphere with its tendency to keep recurring to what it already knows and its inability to grasp what is present as a whole. To activate the holistic capacity of the right hemisphere we need to slow down, so that it can fulfil its task “to carry the left beyond, to something new, something ‘Other’ than itself” (McGilchrist, 2018, p. 164). Letting go is often experienced as a form of surrender into a more permeable sense of self, which is able to encounter more fully the depth of experience. This act of slowing down in itself turned out to cause discomfort for some leaders in our group. Peter³, an experienced strategy executive, acknowledged that in times of challenge it felt safer to “hack your way through” than to slow down, which he initially experienced as deeply anxiety-provoking. Avoiding feeling this anxiety by staying busy seems to hold us in the comfort zone of “being on it” but limit our capacity to access the deeper truths of holistic ways of knowing. This *discomfort in switching from doing mode to inquiry mode* seems like an internal itching that wants to push us forward. In moments of complex challenge, slowing down often requires us to acknowledge that we actually *don’t* know, that any further attempt of rational-analytic deliberation or forceful action won’t lead to an answer, or that we are stuck in clinging to an idea of how things should work out. Many of our leaders realised how situations of uncertainty activated their engrained operating mode to fix or bypass the situation as quickly as possible and move on into a comfort zone of perceived order and control. From the rootedness in action-mode, slowing down can bump up against the hidden assumption of being unproductive and feed into our immunity to change (Kegan & Lahey, 2009). For our leaders, it took critical self-awareness and discipline to recognise

³ The identity of group members has been disguised and names have been changed.

and resist that impulse – and instead to *face the discomfort of the unknown*.

One specific practice has particularly helped our leaders to overcome moments of discomfort and the impulse to download mental models (Scharmer, 2016) that seemed to promise a quick fix. *The practice of bodily grounding* has proven to be an enabler for our inner resources to hold the discomfort and stay with not knowing. As I focus on my bodily presence, inquire where and how my body is connected to the earth, intentionally root myself in the ground and breathe into the arising sensations, I might find that the feeling of discomfort slowly eases and starts to give way to more resourceful sensations, like a slight relaxation, a sense of space in the mind or a feeling of inner calm. Several of our leaders found that through engaging in a regular grounding practice, they were not only more able to hold the discomfort of the current leadership challenge, but they reached new and wider perspectives on the situation that yielded more generative choice. Through bodily grounding, we seem to be capable of priming our nervous system for the movements of *letting go* and *letting be* at a much deeper level than through mental intention alone. The so-far scarce research on grounding practices (Chevalier, 2015; Chevalier & Sinatra, 2011) supports the calming effect on the mind and emotional stress from a medical perspective but stops short of suggesting a possible contribution to the process of coming to know.-

Once we manage to slow down and become aware of what is, the presencing process often first *reveals what stands in the way* of a more generative way of knowing and being. One of our leaders, Andrew, a former partner in a major consultancy firm who had recently stepped out and founded a new firm, had been going through a painful process of analysing the “right” approach to make his new business flourish. In a collective presencing session (using a form of systemic constellation, the “seed dance”), he realised how analytic thinking was cutting him off from an emergent exploration of possibilities. The representative of the analytic part of him reported how they felt completely paralysed, stuck in brooding mode, unable to lift the gaze to what was around. Only when we invited the whole system (which included his intuitive and playful parts) to become aware of itself and allow for movement, an organic unfolding revealed a generative way forward. Andrew was initially quite shocked seeing his analytic part crouched down on the chair, head down, held by his hands, staring on the floor (*Oh my, is it really that bad?*). As uncomfortable as it was to face that current inner reality, as much needed it was to make him realise that this was not an approach that promised a generative way forward.

The way a presencing inquiry brings to light aspects of our inner reality that we

might have suppressed from consciousness makes it a catalyst for *being real* – the first movement of primary presence in Dynamic Presencing (Gunnlaugson, 2020) - and helps us recognise and engage with the obstacles to wider and more holistic ways of knowing. Whilst the bias for rational-analytic thinking and swift action has been an asset for many leaders in their professional journeys so far, it seems that this paradigm reaches its limits in a reality of complexity and uncertainty. We became aware how in situations of increased complexity *the rational-analytic, left-hemisphere approach tend to keep us stuck*. And yet, in times of pressure we seemed to automatically revert to the default approaches that aim to turn the inherently uncertain into certainty. These dynamics bear the demands of an adaptive challenge (Heifetz, 1998): The challenge of navigating the unknown in a complex world cannot be successfully addressed by technical problem-solving methods but call for entirely new approaches.

Our inquiry experiences suggest that the first step in addressing this adaptive challenge – recognizing that we are stuck in a dysfunctional habit – can be facilitated by *embodied inquiry practices*: whilst holding a state of embodied presence we critically inquire into our sense-making patterns and assumptions. Particularly when we noticed in ourselves a resistance to slow down and to restrain from (re-)acting, it proved very useful to *critically inquire into our competing assumptions*. This might be a deeply rooted belief that under pressure we don't have time to slow down, or that slowing down equals being unproductive. Unearthing and facing those competing assumptions enabled our leaders to make a conscious choice as to which route to take and helped ignite a process of attuning their mental models to a presencing approach. As our leaders became more conscious of their habitual impulses and used embodied inquiry and critical reflexivity (Schön, 1983) to intervene, they were able to recognise the moments of slipping back more quickly and instead access new ways of understanding and responding.

III. 1b) Challenges in letting be: Entering a liminal space and being with the unknown

In the Dynamic Presencing transition from *letting go* to *letting be*, we often seem to encounter aspects of the reality that might not be easy to acknowledge – ways in which we have contributed to a current problem or strong emotions we hold about it. It might be tempting then to swiftly shift the attention to the emerging future and focus on the *letting come* disposition of Theory U-based presencing. Following the impulse to bypass discomfort and get on with presencing will most likely disconnect us from travelling into the deeper realms of presence and thus from tapping into the wisdom that primary knowing might hold for our issue.

A specific practice helped our inquiry group face potentially uncomfortable aspects of our reality. Again, an embodied, phenomenological approach, this practice can transform the emotional charge of the inner reality: When facing a negative emotion in the context of a challenge, *the practice of moving towards and inside the felt experience* of negativity can help not just transform these emotions but also yield new insights. A common concern about inquiring into a negatively perceived state is that by paying more attention we amplify the sensation. However, our disposition in inquiry makes the crucial difference: The willingness to *own and stay with* the sensation itself (“this is how I experience my frustration in my body right now”), rather than identifying with the story around it (“everything is so awful”), appears to be the enabler for a gradual transformation into a more resourceful state, like peace, acceptance or clarity. The practice of *embodied owning* has a kinship with *focusing* (Gendlin, 1969, 2003), where grasping and staying with the felt sense of an inner state causes a shift that “carries us forward” into a more relaxed and clearer state. This practice can be an initial challenge for leaders who have learned to operate under the assumption that the quicker an obstacle can be removed, the more effective we can be. However, our leaders found inquiring into their felt sense to have a significant effect on their ability to *be with what-is* (Gunnlaugson, 2020) and eventually tap into more generative responses to the challenges they were facing.

The readiness to *be with what is* (letting be) appears even more relevant as we cannot deliberately produce primary knowing. There is no guarantee that a presencing process either individually or collectively will directly lead to actionable insights. The wisdom move is therefore to bring ourselves into an open, receptive state – and *be with what is*. I see this particular kind of intentional indwelling in non-action as an active discipline of holding a state of not knowing, containing any discomfort, and being in a receptive state of attentiveness to any internal felt-shift or felt-movement. In order to learn to see the unexpected, we have to practice a kind of feeling that gives rise to seeing in a way that keeps the broad openness of the right hemisphere active enough not to be shut down by the narrow focus of the left hemisphere. This “wise passivity”, as McGilchrist calls it, enables primary knowing to emerge less by what is done than by what is *not* done and “opens up possibility where activity closes it down” (McGilchrist, 2018, p. 174). Depending on the nature of our question, we have found that this practice of *being with the unknown* can transpire over a period of minutes, weeks and even years.

Whilst insight can’t be deliberately produced, the negative capability of *being*

with can be intentionally practiced. If we focus on mentally and physically arriving in the state of not knowing and inquire into any slight sensations and movements of our embodied presence in this moment, we become interested in *what-is*, here and now, instead of striving to ignore or fix our reality. As an integral process of Dynamic Presencing, by *being real* with the unknown, we can shift into the slightly calmer and less attached state of *being witness* of the experience for as long as it might take. This allows us to detach ourselves from the urge to make progress towards a tangible solution and instead *surrender into the liminal space* between not knowing (in a rational-analytic way) and knowing (in a holistic, embodied way). It appears that only in the liminal space we can enter portals to new ways of perceiving and knowing, and in order to reap those fruits we have to willingly enter the “realm of anti-structure, uncertainty, imagination, and possibility” (Slater & Coyle, 2017, p. 385).

Dora, a CEO in a non-profit organisation, went through a period of significant distress and uncertainty in her life during our time together. After several weeks of increased embodied awareness - using a simple daily grounding practice of shifting the attention to her legs - she discovered in herself a pattern of running away from situations of emotional discomfort. This realisation enabled her to *question her patterns of sense-making and acting* and to choose to pause and inquire deeper into the reality of this time in life. She consciously chose to not give in to her impulse but to stay with ambiguity and discomfort as long as a knowing from inside would emerge. In that process, she realised how she was able to dim down anxiety and discomfort by being present and in her body. By committing to being in a liminal space, she eventually contacted an emerging knowing which led her to make changes that allowed her to thrive in a completely new way. Having gone through this experience led to a profound appreciation of the creative potential inherent in being with not knowing. As the leaders in our inquiry group increasingly allowed themselves to not know and become fully present in the liminal realm, they realised that *being with what-is* can be more than a situational practice; it can be a general disposition of welcoming an ever-changing, inherently uncertain world with our embodied and holistic awareness.

III. 1c) Challenges in letting come: Practising discernment of the arising new

I consider an awareness of the kind of quality of the arising knowing to be a helpful clue because in order to learn to navigate with the knowing arising from presencing we need a critical discernment as to what constitutes genuine presencing insights and what distinguishes them from other impulses and sensations rooted in

engrained habits or subconscious defence mechanisms trying to keep us in familiar territory. Intuition is scientifically understood as rooting in previous experience and learning (Salas, Rosen & DiazGranados, 2010; Kahneman & Klein, 2009; Sadler-Smith & Shefy, 2004) or in habits of mind (Simon, 1987, p. 63) – the very mental models that presencing is aiming to get us out of. Therefore, I am not advocating an undifferentiated call to trust your feelings but rather a refined process of critical discernment. Our numerous cycles of action and reflection suggest that impulses which seek to keep us in familiar territory rather than provide genuine presencing insight tend to narrow down our scope of awareness and seem to suggest that this is the only reasonable choice. They often have a fiery, impatient, and hurried energy and call us to act fast, not to look for alternatives, push through and swiftly move on. We can feel a sense of contraction in our body, as if we are positioned in a starting block, all concentration focused on the sprint ahead, can't afford to look left or right. This tension can be an important clue because it stands in opposition to the optimal receptive state which indicates our being at the bottom of the U: the arising of primary knowing seems to come with a bodily shift into a particular sense of relaxed presence, open and receptive to what is around and within. The voice of fear and control typically retreat into the background, and we feel a degree of permeable expansion and confidence. Most noticeable, moments of primary knowing seem to come with a *particular felt sense of stillness*. This stillness feels different to that of the quiet mind, which we can deliberately practice. Whilst the quiet mind signals the *absence* of something (the mental chatter), the stillness carries the *living presence* of something, which I conceive of as the underlying wholeness to which we are now connected, the ultimate ground from which creation emerges. Peter, the already mentioned strategy executive, had a powerful encounter with this type of stillness one morning as he resumed his daily grounding practice of standing barefoot on the grass of his backyard, at the break of a day which held a make-or-break business conversation. Allowing the freshness of the cold grass to enter his system, sensing the earth below and the soft movement of a myriad of leaves above, he suddenly found himself in an intimate encounter with the aesthetic power of the moment. His whole system relaxed into a realisation that this is the real world here, taking him into a realm that held the knowing and resources to make the upcoming conversation a generative one. And so it did, leading to a result that he hadn't thought possible. I see these visceral qualities of stillness and relaxation as an embodied indicator for being grounded in the source level of presence, connecting us to the realm of wholeness and generative knowing from being. When we are connected sufficiently to this realm, it invites us into its living

silence and helps us remember what deep down we might have always known—a timeless wisdom as it were.

The *discernment practice* we developed from realising the specific sensual qualities of primary knowing committed us to hold an *ongoing awareness of our embodied state in the moment*. Once we recognise that hurried, contracted energy as an indicator of the movement of our conditioned mind, we can intervene, pause, bring ourselves into a state of embodied presence, for example by a grounding practice, and engage in a fresh presencing process through which an alternative route might emerge. Once we tap into that sense of deeper presence and living stillness, we can surrender even more deeply into the presencing process and welcome what Gunnlaugson (2020) describes as “the arising new.”

III. 1d) Challenges in navigating with primary knowing over time: Stepping out of conventional epistemologies and learning to navigate in the liminal space

The numerous cycles of action and reflection in our inquiry group revealed the fact that the challenges of making presencing a second nature in our leadership don't stop with accessing primary knowing but continue in the process of learning to navigate with and from it. One major reason for this appears to be that *presencing insights are seldomly crystal clear* but typically come with a sense of vagueness that might not be actionable directly. In the mentioned collective presencing session, our leader Andrew discovered an explorative, emerging approach to run his new business, co-created by the subtle movements of all parts of the system in a state of utmost presence. This insight didn't point to a direct solution, tangible instruction, or outer manifestation, but to the critical *how* of navigating the current uncertainty in service of a most generative development. This was a major insight – and yet, its meaning was beyond the left hemisphere's drive to turn it into actionable knowledge. If we are operating under the left-hemisphere dominance and haven't yet learned to navigate with the right hemisphere's holistic understanding, we risk discounting the significance of a presencing insight once our rational-analytic thinking has taken over again. Three months after the mentioned presencing session, despite his deep inspiration and excitement at the time, Andrew reported how he had fallen back in the trap of his old analytic approach, suffering from the pressure and frustration of being stuck. This was one of many moments where we realised that a profound presencing insight might require us to *keep its felt qualities alive over time*, so they can serve as a guiding quality, a compass in the crucial time of bringing the insight to life in the world. If presencing remains a

situational practice where we connect with the holistic right hemisphere knowing only momentarily and subsequently return to our habitual patterns of sense-making and acting, we risk disconnecting from the presencing insight and lose the generative potential it holds.

The practice we developed out of this insight was a simple but important one: A routine of *repeatedly re-connecting to the felt sense* of the presencing insight (our embodied right hemisphere's holistic understanding of it) and taming our left-hemisphere desire to pin it down to a concept or action item. The left-hemisphere abstraction of the insight (e.g., "you just need to stay open to what possibilities arise") is vulnerable to attacks from our analytical mind (e.g., "isn't that just fatalistic waiting and doing nothing?"), but the aliveness of our embodied reality in the moment of presencing (the sense of utter aliveness, possibility and expansion that Andrew experienced) is beyond rationality and able to grasp the holistic meaning. When Andrew started to repeatedly re-connect to the felt sense of playful, emergent exploration of the wider system and to allow for unplanned co-creation, his presencing insight became more than a one-off revelation and turned into a crucial guiding quality for his professional future.

The gift of presencing mastery in our leadership, life and work appears to be less about providing us with tangible, actionable knowing, but rather about *pointing us to some form of truth* – personal or perhaps interpersonal from deeper regions of our being. Heidegger (1999) saw truth as a process of un-concealing, a progress *towards* something which is in sight, but never fully seen. Understanding presencing as a process of un-concealing truth in Heidegger's sense corresponds to the disposition of the right hemisphere which yields an evolving, interconnected, implicit and embodied world (McGilchrist, 2018). This world, it seems, links us to the realm of source - we can glimpse it through presencing but by nature this world is never fully graspable, never fully known.

In addition to the ineffable nature of the knowing to navigate with, the process of living with presencing as a second nature yields another challenge. Because the process asks us to step out of our habitual ways of knowing and sense-making, the way we have constructed our entire *personal or professional identity is likely to be shaken up*. A good part of Andrew's struggles with the uncertainty of his newly founded business involved a severe sense of guilt for imposing financial uncertainty on his family. Committing to an emergent, iterative unfolding (and thus to a longer period of not knowing and trusting the ongoing presencing process) shook up his former identity as provider of stability and financial security to those dependent on him.

Stepping into new frames of knowing and letting go of former identifications *can feel like losing our former sense of self* before we have fully embodied a new one. In the process of questioning and recalibrating our sense of identity, a phenomenon we often encountered is that of paradox. Dora, the non-profit executive who had committed to staying in the discomfort of the liminal space at a time of significant crisis, experienced the falling apart of one area in her life as paradoxically constituting her thriving in another part. Whilst Carol, another of our leaders, struggled with a profoundly unsettling sense of loss of control in her life, she unexpectedly tapped into a feeling of deep gratitude for the meta-consequences of having to step into something much bigger, which she related to an existential trust in the deeper wisdom of life to which she was forced to surrender. The transition to post-conventional epistemologies and ways of being seems to require our *ability to hold paradox and ambiguity* as inevitable aspects. In giving up old identities and holding paradox and ambiguity in the process we are again dealing with an adaptive challenge. Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky (2009, p. 66) argue that mastering adaptive challenges involves “orchestrating the inevitable conflict, chaos, and confusion of change so that the disturbance is productive” - rather than tipping us into fight, flight or freeze mode of coping.

What practices might help support working constructively with this sense of conflict, chaos, and confusion? Our inquiry has yielded three specific practices to complement the rather general advice of taking care of yourself both physically and emotionally (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009, p. 69). First, our various experiences with *physical grounding* in the face of anxiety provided a down-to-earth approach to master the emotional charge in the moment. Second, our bonding journey of mutual support and challenge suggests that some form of *social and developmental support*, such as collaborative inquiry groups, can help transform the sense of inner conflict or confusion into a process of (un-)learning and growth. We realised that our group meetings offered an invaluable platform to open up to our vulnerabilities and struggles, encounter different perspectives, reflect and recharge in the process of unlearning, and embrace new paradigms. The shared field of consciousness softened the grip of our patterns and gave us more freedom to actively choose our ways of being and navigating. Third, we realised that without our *active commitment to face, own and grapple with the challenges of the journey*, even long-term projects like our inquiry group would not be enough to catalyse lasting shifts in our ways of knowing and being in the world. As Peter said, “you can’t be wishy washy on this stuff”, or in Dora’s words, “the work is not possible... without making that commitment to step into your power.” The process of transition appears to

be continuous work which again and again requires conscious choices to hang in the liminality and protect the new that we only vaguely sense arising.

III. 2. What makes it worth facing those growing pains? Which potential lies in incorporating presencing as a way of being?

Considering the number of challenges and growing pains in the process, the question suggests itself what makes it worth facing and working through the tough parts of the journey. What exactly is the potential that lies in embodying presencing as a way of being? The following section will illuminate how the journey of incorporating presencing mastery in our life has transformed our sense of self, our being in the world.

III. 2a) Felt reality – not mental concept - of being part of a larger whole

The previously discussed challenges make the process of incorporating presencing as a way of being a demanding journey. And yet, we realised that by committing ourselves to going through experiences of ambiguity, confusion, or anxiety and by nurturing our capacity for primary knowing from being, we slowly became familiar with a different ontological realm: In this realm, we experience *coming to know as a co-creative act between our embodied presence and the cosmos* around us. In all deep presencing moments, we encountered our interconnectedness with the world as a visceral reality. It made us realise that we are part of a living cosmos in which knowing can arise in manifold ways.

In Charles Taylor's notion of the modern "buffered self" (2007, p. 27) we recognised the way of being in which many of us have been socialised, perceivable as a sense of disenchantment in a mechanical universe that is made of analytic structure and rational thinking. *Relating to the complexity of life in a presencing way has re-enchanted our world.* It made us overcome our internal divide between mind, body and world and allowed us to participate in a more-than-human world (Abram, 1996). We understood the moments where our capacity to go on as usual broke apart as the dark phase of liminality operating in the interest of making whole (Shorter, 1988, p. 79) our sense of self and being in the world. In the realm of this more organismic, participative sense of self, the holistic knowing or truth in presencing is less something we receive or acquire than something that we are a vessel for to emerge. Through our sensory response, it affects us in deeply personal ways, but at the same time it feels as if not merely belonging to ourselves. We are part of a bigger process that our analytic mind is quite incapable of grasping. In the terminology of presencing, we may call this bigger process the realm of

source. Our ongoing practice of *staying connected to and moving in sync with this source energy* allowed our sense of self to become permeable and merge with the world; the experience of oneness points to something bigger than ourselves and at the same time makes us feel we have never been more ourselves.

III. 2b) Presencing as a way of being – a personal ecosystem restoration

This profound inquiry process over many years has made us realise that in deep, dynamic presencing, the dimensions of knowing and being are not separate from each other, but rather interwoven. The way of knowing that emerges is connected to particular embodied ways of being presence, which we may call *being essence* and *being source*, using the terminology of Dynamic Presencing (Gunnlaugson, 2020). These realms form the necessary ground from which presencing knowing emerges. Very often, deep presencing realisations have *connected us more profoundly to our way of being*. They have directed our attention to the ways we related to life and to ourselves and inquiring into them in a presencing way pointed towards more wholesome ways of being. Our leaders felt “naturally uplifted” by sensing into and caring for their way of being, which they perceived as a reassuring, beautifully simple and warming quality in the heart.

An overarching quality that connects to presencing mastery as a way of being is the *quality of generativity*. Presencing insights appears to carry a sense of *resourcefulness, confidence or calm*, like in Peter’s expanded sense of reality standing barefoot in the grass or in Dora’s period of liminality, facilitated by grounding herself in her legs. These qualities might also highlight central aspects related to important life questions - they seem to *point towards more wholesome ways of being*, of relating to ourselves and to our work. Hence, it appears that the journey towards presencing mastery tends to touch upon our sense of self and might give us a sense of a generative way of being, connect us to the meaning of wholeness. As Anderson suggests, “the body has a kind of intrinsic teleology always pointing in the direction of wholeness and healing” (2001, p. 98). The trouble appears to be that we seem to have largely disempowered, forgotten or devalued that inherent embodied ability because it doesn’t seem compatible with the doctrines of rationality. However, we have experienced presencing as a way of being to be “more in touch with reality” (McGilchrist, 2018, p. 195) than rational- analytic thinking of the left hemisphere, enabling us to embrace more perspectives, opening up generative choices and therefore allowing us to meet the world as a place of growth and development rather than one that needs to be managed.

This generative quality seems to have the capacity to ignite and catalyse a

personal process of ecosystem restoration: we are restoring the right-hemisphere perspective with its focus on the holistic qualities of being and interconnectedness. We are also restoring “a self that is drawn into and inextricably bound up with the world in a relation... suggesting involvement of the whole experiential being, not just the process of cognition” (McGilchrist, 2018, p. 153). Through entering the realm of holistic sensing, the whole experiential being can experience truth in the Heideggerian sense of un-concealing. This viscerally felt truth has a living power (McGilchrist, 2018, p. 172) and un-conceals our path of unfolding presencing mastery in service of a much more profound sense of wholeness.

IV. Key practices in support of a presencing mastery apprenticeship

As the previous section has illuminated, the presencing mastery journey of embracing presencing as a way of being is not necessarily just one of moving toward, but also a more or less challenging one of moving away from what was once holding and reassuring. The following section summarizes the key practices that facilitate turning the growing pains into developmental catalysts to help make presencing a second nature in our life and work.

Practices for letting go:

- In order to incorporate presencing as a more adept response to complexity and uncertainty, we need to *be real* and become aware of how our habitual patterns of sense-making and problem-solving might disconnect us from a more generative way of knowing and engaging with our reality. This can be facilitated by *embodied inquiry practices*: Whilst intentionally grounding ourselves physically into this moment, we critically inquire into our sense-making patterns and assumptions. Particularly when we notice in ourselves a resistance to letting go, it proved very useful to *inquire into our competing assumptions* (e.g., of not having the time to slow down or to be unproductive) that hold us in loyalty to an unconscious but dysfunctional belief. Unearthing those assumptions enables us to make conscious choices and helps ignite a process of adapting our mental models to a presencing disposition.
- To facilitate the potential discomfort in slowing down and facing the unknown, *the practice of bodily grounding* appears to activate our inner resources to hold the discomfort and stay with not knowing. Grounding may have many forms, e.g., consciously connecting our feet to the ground and breathing into this connection for a while; simply becoming aware of our legs and how they are connected to the ground at any given time; or standing barefoot on the earth for a few moments, consciously noticing the sensations rising into the body.

Practices for letting be:

- As the presencing process often first reveals our emotional reality around the issue - feelings that might not be easy to acknowledge - we need a practice that makes sure we don't bypass the inherent discomfort but stay present with it. The practice of moving towards and inside the felt experience of negativity can help not just transform these emotions but also yield new insights. This practice of *embodied owning* has a kinship with Gendlin's *focusing* (1969, 2003), where grasping and staying with the felt sense of an inner state causes a shift that carries us forward into a more relaxed and clearer state.
- Navigating with presencing as our second nature requires our active commitment to stay in a liminal space. The negative capability of *being with can be intentionally practiced*. As we focus on arriving in the state of not knowing and inquire into any slight sensations and movements of our embodied presence, we become interested in what *is*, here and now, instead of striving to ignore or fix our reality. In the terms of Dynamic Presencing, this shifts our presence from *being real* to the calmer and more detached state of *being witness* and carries us in the state of *letting be*, from where the new eventually arises.

Practices for letting come:

- Mastery in presencing as a way of being requires our ability to discern what constitutes a genuine presencing insight and what distinguishes it from an impulse or experience-based intuition that keep us in habitual mental models. Whereas impulses that hold us in familiar territory tend to come with a hurried, contracted quality, presencing insights carry with them a sense of expansion and alive stillness. Practising an *ongoing awareness of our embodied state in the moment* serves as a useful discernment of the arising knowing.

Practises for navigating with presencing insights over time:

Incorporating presencing more firmly into our day-to-day life appears to require active commitment. The challenges of being in a liminal space don't end with the emergence of a presencing insight but continue on the journey towards truly living presencing as a way of being.

- As most of us will have developed a dominance of the left-hemisphere's rational-analytic approach, keeping subtle but transformative presencing insights alive doesn't happen by itself. In order for us to navigate with them over time and bring their

potential forth into the world, we need to practice an ongoing connection with the subtler experiential qualities of the primary knowing we tapped into. A helpful practice can be a routine of *repeatedly re-connecting to the felt sense* (not the rational interpretation) of the presencing insight and taming our left-hemisphere tendency to discount its value due to its subtle and ineffable nature. This requires our conscious choice to protect the new that we only vaguely sense arising and to use it as a compass.

- As we continue to step out of former action logics in incorporating presencing more deeply, we might encounter a potentially painful threshold between our former identity and a new, not yet fully embodied one. Ambiguity and paradox might be inevitable aspects to hold in this liminality. Three practices have helped our leaders in this transition: First, *physical grounding* in the face of anxiety provided a down-to-earth approach to master the emotional charge in the moment. Second, our bonding journey of mutual support and challenge suggests that some form of *social and developmental support*, such as collaborative inquiry groups, can help transform the sense of inner conflict or confusion into a process of learning and growth. Third, our *active commitment to face, own and grapple with the challenges of the journey* is required from us to make lasting shifts towards embodying presencing as a way of being in the world.

These presencing mastery practices suggest the described archetypal journey as an emerging presencing approach that embraces Gunnlaugson's recent call for the full development and realization of the presencing self by integrating the embodied, phenomenological and ontological dimensions.

V. Presencing mastery as a timely leadership path

Years of “living life as inquiry” (Marshall, 1999) have revealed the process of deeply incorporating presencing as a way of being to be a challenging and disruptive process. It required from our leaders the discipline of a critical reflexivity, continuous practice to step out of patterns and into new habits of seeing and making sense, and the commitment to face discomfort, uncertainty and ambiguity as natural consequences of learning to effectively orient oneself in and through liminal spaces.

As demanding as it may be, the journey towards presencing mastery can be seen as a catalyst for transitioning from the stuckness in the conventional leadership paradigms of predict and control to a generative way of being in and navigating a complex and uncertain world. The encounter with new, possibly more adept paradigms

emerging from the unknown have supported our leaders in appreciating liminal spaces as necessary realms for the emergence of practical insights, deeper levels of meaning or personal truths that open up entirely new paths. Having travelled the road towards presencing mastery, our leaders were able to create ripple effects as role models for generative ways of being in a reality of complexity and uncertainty: by holding space for discomfort, by resisting the impulse for busy action and instead cultivating the deeper realms of presence from where fundamentally new solutions might emerge, and thus by encouraging others to access profound levels of insight and meaning.

Through activating and integrating the right hemisphere's capability to contact and know reality more comprehensively, the presencing mastery journey helps restore the balance between left and right hemisphere, enabling us to embrace more perspectives and open up generative choices. As a result, the apprenticeship in presencing mastery is likely to bring us closer to experience the world through a participative paradigm and to feel an "ever more conscious sense of belongingness and unity with the ground" of the realm of source (Cook-Greuter, 2002, p. 4), so that we overcome the ontological divide between mind, body and world. The journey builds a bridge into a reality that allows for more profound levels of meaning, deeper experiences of flourishing, and that points us towards our "ecosystem restoration" as human beings.

Embarking on a presencing mastery journey appears to be a timely endeavour as it seizes the potential of the perceived sense of urgency to find sustainable and generative ways to navigate our complex and volatile world. With its ability to cooperate with, rather than bypass, complexity and uncertainty, presencing mastery illuminates the creative potential that lies in widening our mental models and integrating dormant capacities of knowing and being that so far didn't have much space in organizational life. In this sense, presencing mastery might contribute to reimagining the foundations of leadership practice where they are limited by "the absence of belief in anything except the most diminished version of the world and our selves" (McGilchrist, 2018, p. 460). These new foundations will invite wider dimensions of consciousness into organizational life and inspire leaders to become "artists of the invisible realm" (Seeley, 2011, p. 97) by creating transformative spaces for themselves and others. From a higher perspective, living and leading in an increasingly uncertain, complex and ambiguous world could be seen as an invitation to move beyond the limits of conventional paradigms and embrace forgotten realms of knowing and being that breathe a fresh sense of what it means to be alive. If we commit to the growing pains of the process,

the path of presencing mastery grounds us in the generative realms of presence, enables us to cooperate with emergence, and allows us to meet the world as an exciting place of growth. Essentially, it catalyses the highest form of leadership by pointing us towards profound forms of human flourishing.

VI. References

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DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The author confirms that there are no financial interests or benefits arising from the direct applications of her research.



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