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## RETHINKING VARELA'S PRESENCING IDEAL: *Introducing a Three-Stage Method for Cultivating Presencing Mastery*

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**Abstract:** This article addresses Francisco Varela's epistemological ideal of presencing mastery. For some time, further clarification has been needed to explore its feasibility, the methodological means to it as well as its cultivation in contexts of practice. As a response, drawing from the work of Dynamic Presencing (Gunnlaugson 2020, 2021, 2023; Gunnlaugson and Brendel, 2019, 2020, 2021), I introduce a three-stage ontological process-method for cultivating presencing mastery by developing one's *presencing self* from the *ground of presence* in the *presencing field*. In contrast to Varela's ideal, this ontological method serves as an internal, subtle yet robust scaffolding structure, that when applied as a transformative method, introduces a new form of presencing mastery as a generative way of being in leadership and coaching contexts.

**Keywords:** Dynamic Presencing, presencing, presencing awareness, presencing mastery, ontological

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### I. Introductory Remarks

In interviews with Francisco Varela a little over two decades ago, he briefly touched on his epistemological ideal of presencing, “a fully developed human is presencing constantly,” (Senge et al., 2004, p.101), where he suggests that presencing mastery follows naturally as a by-product from more advanced stages of human development. Though Varela did not share his views of presencing mastery in his

published writings while alive, it is important to note that Scharmer (2016) applied his structural dynamics model (Depraz et al., 2003) with the three phenomenological gestures of becoming aware, *suspension*, *redirection*, *letting go* and its corollary *letting come* as the main presencing method of Theory U. Given how central Varela's approach is to Theory U-based presencing, his presencing mastery ideal merits further inquiry and research. To reach a level of presencing that flows forth as a continuous, effortless way of being as Varela alludes to, there has been a longstanding need to clarify what is involved ontologically at the level of our experience and how such a mastery level can be supported and sustained methodologically. Towards this end, in this article I offer a shorthand re-framing of the five foundational journeys in Dynamic Presencing (Gunnlaugson, 2020, 2021, 2023) as a three-zone ontological method for developing presencing mastery (figure 1).

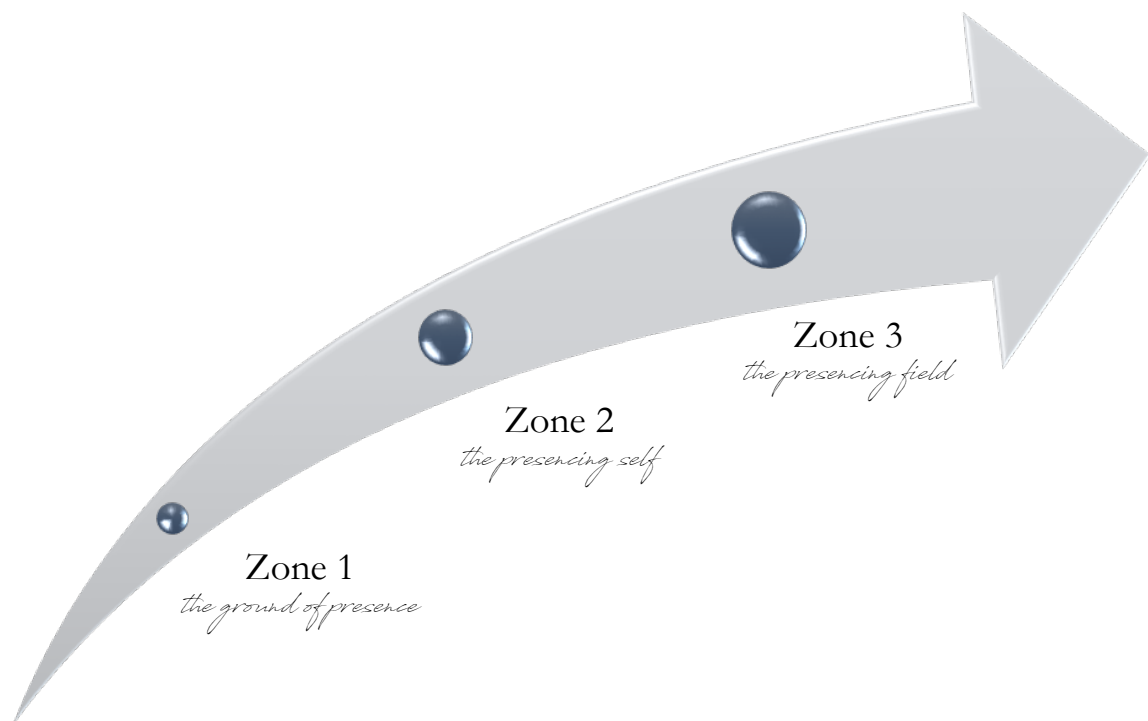


Figure 1. The three-zone ontological method for cultivating presencing mastery (Gunnlaugson, 2020)

Once awakened and sufficiently developed, this singular inner presencing movement supports the fluid embodiment of our *presencing self* from the *ground of presence* in the *presencing field*. As practitioners learn to activate their presencing nature from this ground of presence, a more in-depth presencing embodiment gradually becomes second nature as a generative way of being, which is the core mastery aim of Dynamic Presencing.

This mastery method outlines the three main zones that our *presencing awareness* develops through in a sequential way. Beginning from the dynamic ground of presence initially, to enfolding presence inside the inner body of one's presencing nature and finally, connecting our presencing self into the presencing field through one's still point. As each zone is uncovered, activated and lived into, there is an awakening of our presencing nature in the presencing field through the inner scaffolding provided by each zone that supports and guides the embodied emergence of our presencing awareness from the ground up. With practice, the three zones support practitioners in uncovering and embodying new forms of presencing mastery, with *presencing as a way of being* foremost among them. From the first zone where we explore enfolding our awareness into the ground of presence, this work is critical for stabilizing our presence at depth. In the second zone, we connect with our inner body as a means to anchoring our presencing nature from the five level-depths of presence. And in the third zone, we work with the still point of our presencing self from inside the presencing field as the nexus route for developing the capacities of our overall presencing awareness.

## II. A Process-View of the Three Zone Ontological Method

Collectively, each point of connection with the ground of presence via the inner body of our presencing self in the presencing field serves as an internal nexus bridge in establishing interior linkages within and between each of the three zones. Supporting *continuous* forms of presencing as a flowing movement as well as *discontinuous* forms of presencing that involve *indwelling*, *resting* and *letting be* from stillness, the three zones serve as a reference and internal guide for self-managing and self-directing the presencing process from the ground up of our experience. As a process model, the three zones are interconnected and nested. Each subsequent zone emerges from the groundwork and activation of the previous zone. In this way, the three zones can be depicted as a three-staged path that is accessed interiorly as a presenced way of being:

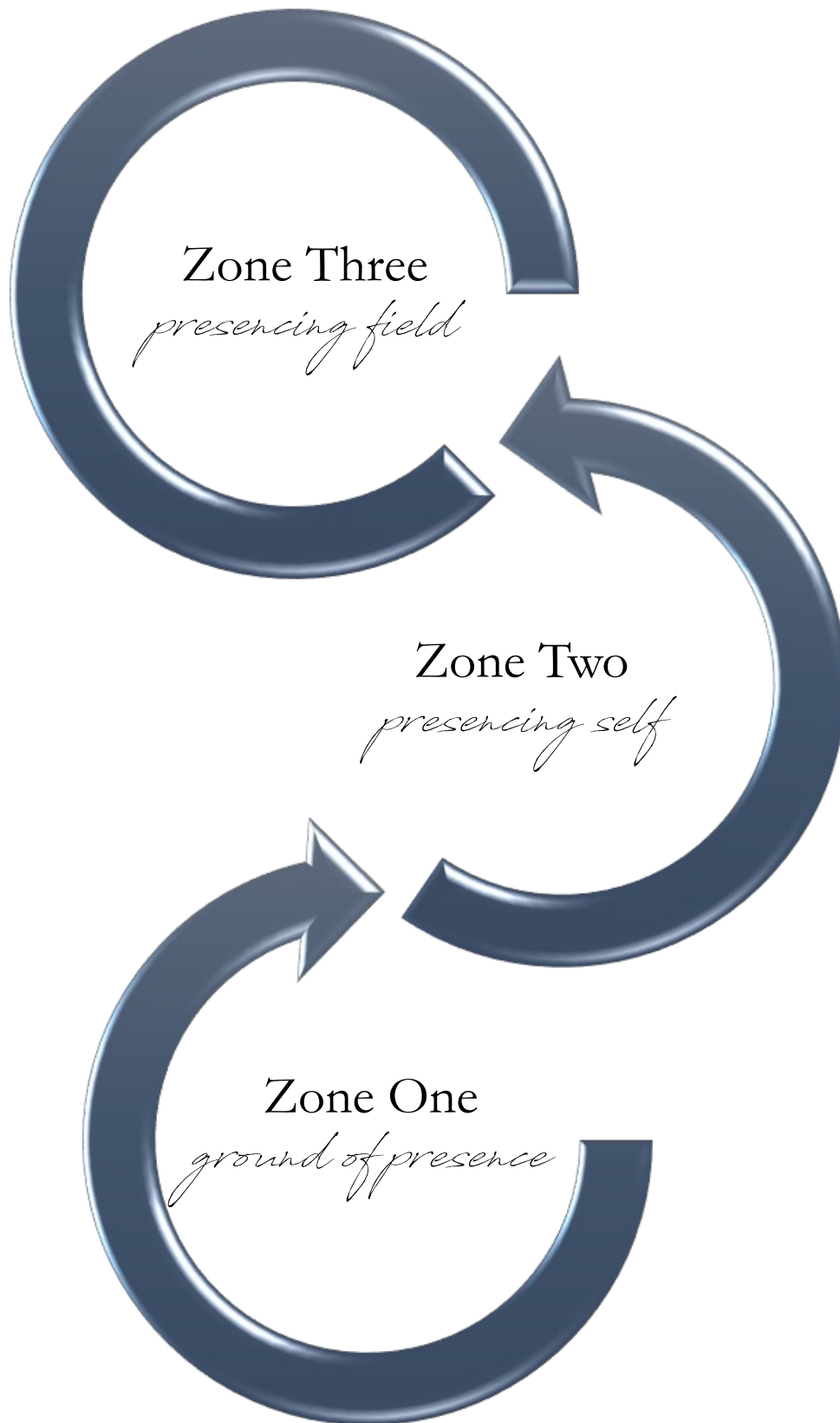


Figure 2. A process view of the three mastery zones of Dynamic Presencing (Gunnlaugson, 2020)

In this process view, there is an initial contact and activation of zone one, the ground of presence. This first zone is the deep foundation from which the whole presencing movement is sourced out of and plays a crucial role in resourcing the presencing self, which becomes active in zone two. As our presencing self becomes active and resourced, we then move interiorly through the nexus threshold between zone two and finally zone three to establish contact with the presencing field. This embodied route ensures our presencing self is well-resourced before contacting the presencing field, whether individually in one's *i-space*, or collectively into the *you-space*, *we-space* or *all-space* (i.e., the four presencing field locations in Dynamic Presencing). Regardless of which of the four spaces one connects with in the presencing field, the three zones provide an essential scaffolding means for accessing the inner territory that supports a robust and deeply embodied presencing awareness directly through the integration of our presencing self. Enfolding into presence in zone one ensures we are sufficiently contacting the ground of presence as our initial step. From here, in establishing subtle contact with our inner body in zone two, we continue the interior movement into zone three, where our presencing self connects with the presencing field.

In this enfoldment process, we explore learning how to uncover, access and engage the ground of our presence more subtly as the active source of our presencing self. This ensures our presencing awareness is well rooted from the ground of presence, a step that is needed to sustain presencing. Enfoldment is typically, directionally speaking, *down* and *in*. Enfolding into presence ensures that our listening, speaking and sensemaking are sufficiently grounded inside these regions of our deeper presencing nature. This activates a vertical shift in the depth of our state of being and presencing awareness as we immerse into activating the core grounds and forms of presence that constitute this experience in Dynamic Presencing. When we connect with being presence in zone one, each ground of presence serves as an embodied interface that we access and then transmit in our presenced way of being. This makes it possible to become resourced at the deepest level of our being while engaging presencing. From here, we continue the embodiment process of developing our presencing self by deepening our capacity to integrate and actualize presence at the core of who we are. This creates conditions for being our presencing self inside the presencing field in zone three. In Zone three, we work with accessing our still point from within our presencing self, which is resourced from the ground of presence.

To develop towards new stages of mastery, Dynamic Presencing works with

developing our presencing self through the transformation of our conventional self-identity. For Varela, a fully developed human being draws from his notion of a virtual self, which he characterized as distributed, creative, groundless, fragile, and enacted (Varela, 1999). From the point of view of Dynamic Presencing, our presencing self is characterized by embodied presence at the level of our physiology, sourced via one's inner body from each ontological depth of presence (Gunnlaugson, 2020). Where Varela works with an awareness-based modality of self that is epistemological in nature, Dynamic Presencing focuses on developing an embodied, consciousness based, presencing self that is ontological in nature.

In this way, presencing awareness becomes active from the ground of presence, ensuring that our presence is well anchored in the phenomenological dimensions of our physiology and being. This approach stands in contrast to both Varela's and Scharmer's conception which leave this underlying ontological territory largely unaddressed. Following from this point, Varela's notions of a *fully developed human being* and *presencing constantly* lean towards being idealizations of peak experience that like an asymptote, one approaches but never really completely realizes or embodies. Unlike a mathematical line or curve, human nature, and behavior in the actual existential everyday sense are not well accounted for within this ideal of presencing mastery. Because the domain of mastery for presencing originates out of the very living imperfect fabric of everyday experience, further thought needs to be given to what considerations are needed to make different forms and approaches to presencing mastery viable in both theory and more importantly, practice. In the sections that follow, I will give an overview of the condensed three-zone method that establishes a process-method and path for presencing mastery that is related with, yet also advances Varela's initial ideal.

### III. Zone 1: *Deepening into the Ontological Ground of Presence*

To date, there has been a longstanding need to develop upon the initial role and function of presence in presencing. The ground of presence has been described in different ways within the contemplative world wisdom traditions (Hart, T. 2014). As the *groundless ground* in Buddhist traditions (Radier, C. 2018), as a site of still rootedness within the Zen traditions (Abe, M. 1997), as an ontological orientation towards presence with Heidegger (Braver, L. 2012), as a site of spiritual wellbeing, deeper anchoring and indwelling in mindfulness meditation (Stanley, S. 2013) among others.

In contexts of advanced practice, presence extends beyond the Theory U framing as a by-product of simply being present. In Dynamic Presencing, presence is a foundational ontological ground that plays a central role in developing a more advanced

presencing capacity and mastery. Here, our ground of presence serves as a holding environment for developing depth and stillness through which our presencing self, inside the presencing field, can orient itself in a more dimensional and embodied manner. Within zone one, this foundational ground is needed to discover, uncover, attune to, and become entrained with presence as a fundamental dimension and experience of who we are. From this inner depth location, it becomes possible to rediscover the unfamiliar as well as unknown dimensions of our presencing nature. In exploring this immersive ground of presence in an embodied, relational, and subtle consciousness-attuned way, it becomes possible to learn how to *root, be* and *ultimately orient* our presencing practice from the depths of our ground of presence. By making subtle inner adjustments, there is an attunement to the *figure* of what is emerging from this generative *ground* as it emerges, via presence. Our ground of presence comes alive when re-routed through our deeper being. When we source presence without this foundational ground, the quality of our presencing awareness is less embodied and tends to be comparatively thin. To become thickly and dimensionally present, practitioners need a re-immersion with the very ground of presence itself as the underlying foundation of our presencing nature and primary driver of the presencing process, again, *as a way of being*.

By learning how to work with each ground of presence as a phenomenological site of discovery and revelation, we open into a process of coming-to-be-presence via an ontological movement of becoming embodied *in*, and *from*, the ground of presence itself. From this place of re-inhabiting the full depths of presence, the journey into growing and developing our presencing self follows forth. Why is this important? Unless there is a deeper ground of presence through which our presencing awareness can be sourced from, embodying presencing as a way of being is less feasible in that the ground of presence phenomenologically supports the presencing field and presencing self, a connection that has yet to be explored within the presencing literature to date. Without the activation of this connection, it becomes challenging to sustain the presencing process as a singular undivided flowing movement.

Zone one, when fully active, helps us anchor our deepest presencing nature in *what-is*, in the essential tangible, felt, experiential ground of reality itself. As an ontological ground, presence provides a promising alternative to one's ego and separate sense of self, offering an active reference for cohering our being as the deeper home of our presencing self. As a tangible embodiment site, region or place that is accessible in any moment, even in sleep, when we learn to resource ourselves in and from presence,

zone one generates key conditions for being presence. In the work of Dynamic Presencing, there are five deeper archetypal ground levels of presence awaiting our discovery and integration beneath our ordinary, everyday self-sense. Learning to engage presencing from each ground of presence opens up a new path for deeper wisdom-based modalities of presencing. By immersing into being presence, practitioners develop a foundation from which to engage each form of presence as it gradually awakens our presencing self in zone one.

#### IV. Zone Two: *Embodying the Ontological nature of our Presencing Self*

In apprenticing with the ground of presence, presencing practitioners connect to their presencing nature in zone two through an embodied felt-sensing and sensemaking process via their inner body. As we have been exploring, our presencing self is cultivated phenomenologically by a process of embodied immersion with each ground of presence. Through the training journey of primary presence, practitioners work at identifying as well as bridging the *ontological gaps* that potentially exist between our familiar, everyday sense of self and our presencing nature. In zone two, we connect to our presencing self with its distinct self-sense and way of being authentic, offering a depth-attuned inner compass of presence to guide our presencing self from as an instrument of presencing.

Letting go of our ordinary sense of self connects us to the presencing self that begins to emerge as we anchor our presencing awareness in the ground of presence as a site of regeneration, as a place that we can re-orient our presencing sense of self from. The next inner turn is to experience the wisdom transmission from the ground of presence through our inner body. Doing this is more a *being this*. As we open into each form of presence, this fills out different level-depths of our presencing experience. The quality of *being-ness*, of rootedness literally grounds us inside the liminal experience of presence. As our presencing self takes root in this ground of presence, this fosters a deeper equanimity from finding our foundation in this ground of presence directly.

While the experience of presence varies as we connect into each lifeworld (i.e., *immediate, expansive, core, originating and dynamic*), the archetypal process of enfolding into presence can be accessed directly with immediacy and practice, as our presencing self becomes active in zone two. Each lifeworld unveils a distinct form of presence that deepens our quality of inner connection, resting and interconnection. By learning to establish ontological rooting from our ground of presence, an inner structure gradually develops and grows with time much like an inner shell or armature. With practice, this inner form of support becomes active in a subtly embodied way as an emerging



presencing structure. What might be experienced as a kind of self-sense, this presencing dimension of who we are serves as a resting ground from which to acclimate to a deeper sense of identity and being-ness. As a kind of subtle structure of being, our ground of presence develops through our deeper awareness and receptivity to presence as a constituting and re-constituting medium.

From this inner depth of being presence, deeper somatic qualities open us into different dimensions and ground-levels of presencing awareness. The first is more corporeal and existential via *the real*. The next is numinous and outwardly transcendent via *the witness*. Followed by an immanent quality from our core via *essence*, inwardly transcendent via *source* and finally in an encompassing sense with *dynamic*. Enfolding into each of these five grounds of presence provides distinct subtle armatures of being and a presencing sense of self-hood that can be presenced from. By connecting into the immediacy of our felt-body (*being real*) only to dissolve up through to witnessing it (*being witness*), then re-descending into a deeper layer of what is essential (*being essence*), releasing into source (*being source*) finally opens us to a presence-guided pathway into our presencing self (*being presence*). This journey into being presence draws us from our immanent depths as well as our transcendent heights, creating optimizing conditions for embodying the full range and depth of our presencing nature. When presence develops into a foundational support in zone one, it strengthens our overall ability to resource our inner body from presence. From here, we learn to reside inside our presencing self in zone two and engage presencing in a more stable manner as we transition to zone three.

## V. Zone Three: *Engaging the Four Presencing Field Locations*

In zone three we connect with the presencing field through our *still point*. Our still point serves as a deeper nexus or core interface for accessing presencing awareness from within our presencing self via our inner body. Once we are connected at a felt level of our experience with our presencing self in zone two, we then connect into the presencing field via our still point in zone three. As an embodied nexus, our still point ensures that we are 1) adequately enfolded into presence (i.e., our presencing nature/self is active) and 2) we are adequately imbedded into and connected with the presencing field. Both conditions are essential to give rise to a more continuous presencing. Enfolding into the ground of presence through the inner body of our presencing nature in zone two provides an inner GPS for supporting our presencing self in the presencing field in zone three.

The presencing self and field can be thought as supportive interfaces that are necessary for the full engagement of presencing. Enfolding into presence (zone one) establishes the preconditions for embodying our presencing self via our inner body (zone two), which in turn makes it possible to connect into the presencing field (zone three). As a fluid movement, each interface is important in ensuring that *the quality, form, and ground* of our presence are congruent and coherent. Grounding in our seat of presence with our inner body inside our presencing self in zone two, we then move to connecting into the presencing field in zone three, which keeps us in touch with what-is from a place of inner stillness. As I continue to narrate this movement conceptually, the intent here is to introduce subtle distinctions in order to arrive at a richer understanding of the model.

In Dynamic Presencing, presencing is no longer depicted as a single social field as in Theory U. Instead, it expands to include four distinct yet interconnected field locations or generative spaces for presencing engagement. Each presencing space represents a phenomenological location and specific geography within the greater presencing field. Experientially, each location helps us engage the field dynamics of presencing at the subtle felt-sense-making level of our experience. Within this new presencing field geography (figure 3), we are introduced to a new individual field location or *i-space* and three new collective field locations of presencing: *you-space*, *we-space* and *all-space*. With a grasp and understanding of how to work with these four new locations, practitioners can engage a more situational-precise mode of presencing in their day-to-day work and lives. This gives rise to more differentiated presencing field dynamics and a new presencing field awareness that can be explored in different ways and contexts where presencing is being applied.

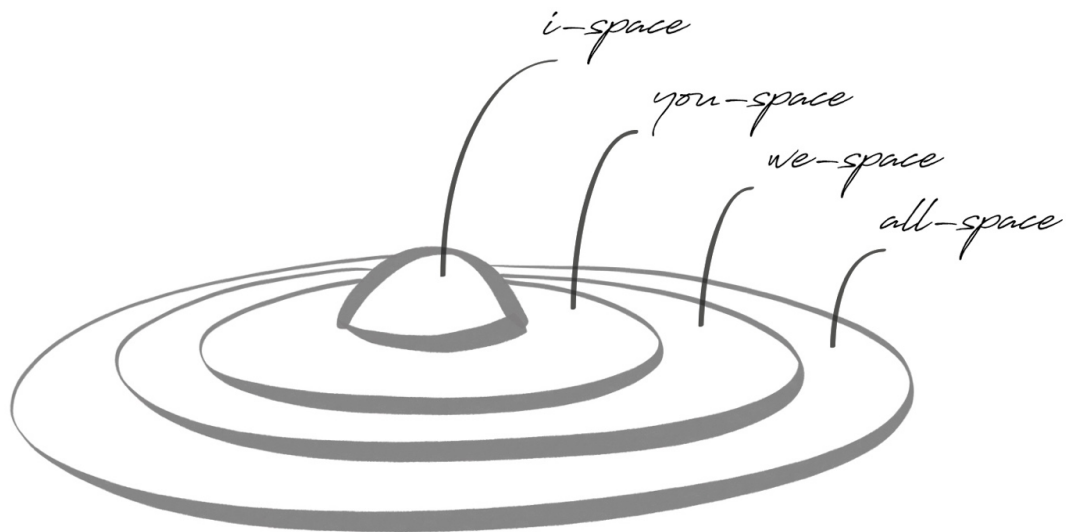


Figure 3. The four field locations of *Dynamic Presencing* (Gunnlaugson, 2020).

Each presencing field location connects us to a region in the presencing field where we can develop a more relationally precise and contextually aligned presencing process. As practitioners learn to engage presencing in unique and varied ways across each field horizon, this increases our overall awareness and capacity for a fluid engagement of presencing inside and across various workplace and life situations. Because organizational life in the twenty-first century increasingly asks for our participation and leadership from these four locations, there is a growing need to develop our presencing field mastery in this new way.

As an encompassing map of the presencing field, each field location contains a set of spatial and relational reference points for engaging presencing in context, developing an increased field acuity and capacity for working with presencing in different situations. Overall, the four fields help Theory U practitioners foster greater awareness of how our emerging presencing self interfaces through the particular presencing field we are engaging.

## VI. Bridging the Gaps within Each Zone

A core focus of the three-zone method is to help bridge the gaps that may exist for presencing practitioners. In the first zone, there is a possible ontological gap between our current level of presence and the underlying grounds of presence. In the second zone, there is a potential embodied gap between our inner body and our presencing self, and in the third zone, a phenomenological distance or sense of disconnect between our presencing self and presencing field.

In the first zone, bridging the possible gap between our current level of presence and the deeper underlying ground of presence extends our capacity for presence, deepening its quality, duration and range of depth. By deepening our access to the underlying ontological grounds of presence, in the first zone we apprentice with presence directly as a new depth frontier of being. Not actively being present to these ontological depths leaves us disconnected from our presencing nature. When these level-depths of presence are bypassed, presence risks becoming instrumentalized as a leverage point for learning from the emerging future. In contacting the level-depths of presence, a coherent embodied sense of presence begins to take root and grow within. The emotional power of being absent to these depths is comparatively speaking akin to a felt disconnect from within, something presencing practitioners can feel and that others feel when we are out of touch with these depths of presence. As such the imperative of the first zone from a presencing mastery perspective is to learn how to enfold into each depth of presence as a direct path to awakening and embodying our presencing nature.

In the second zone, closing the embodied gap between our inner body and our presencing nature involves training our presencing awareness to develop our interoception and to learn to experience presence from within by anchoring these grounds of presence in the subtle terrain of our felt, embodied experience. Developing the ability to sense into the inner body of our presencing nature and to sense the co-extensive outer body of the presencing field opens an embodied path to reclaiming the felt-sense of our presencing self. Developing our presencing awareness through our inner body connects us also with a deeper soul sovereignty and freedom from within by rooting down into our deeper essence and presencing nature. Here any gap between our inner body and presencing nature begins to close as we become receptive to resonance and feeling from within to our own experience in solitude and relation. By reintegrating our inner body as an inner GPS, this uncovers the generative source of our presencing self that is rooted in our deeper being and ground of presence, returning presencing to being sourced from our presencing nature within.

In the third zone, a possible phenomenological gap exists between our presencing self and the presencing field. As we begin to develop our awareness of how our presencing self is sourced from within, there are at least four realizations to consider. One, as our presencing self becomes as an embodied reference point, there is a distinct and discernable self-sense we can attend to. Unlike the social field, this helps ground our presencing awareness in our immediate experience. Two, the

phenomenological presencing self in Dynamic Presencing provides a more seamless means to connect with the presencing field. With the Theory U focus of accessing source in the social field, there has been a collective blindspot in the role our presencing self plays in accessing the presencing field. Alternatively, when the focus shifts to the place where our presencing self and field connect and synchronize, we can begin to enact conditions that help us sustain the presencing process alone in our i-space and with others depending on which collective presencing field we are working with: you-space, we-space or all-space. Three, this synchrony offers a nexus point through which we can align, adjust and optimally unfold our presencing awareness into. Having activated our ground of presence and presencing nature inside the presencing field, we are ensuring that each dimension of the presencing process is accessed and fully connected with in a relational manner.

Four, in placing presence as the foundation from which the presencing self and presencing field arise out of, this ensures a filling out of both the interiority of our presencing self and field are taking place in a way that supports relational mutuality and individual empowerment. In doing this, we open into service of a more complex and nuanced movement of presencing collectively that at more subtle levels is still in contact with our agency, voice and individual location. This empowers presencing practitioners to shift into a more choiceful way of engaging ourselves, others, and each of the four field locations in both a sovereign and relational manner. In this third zone, our presencing self assists us in becoming a transparent instrument in discerning the arising new through felt-shifts and felt-openings in the space of each presencing field. Through our presencing self, our inner body merges and becomes co-extensive with each field-space. From this nexus point, there is no longer a gap between our inner body and the space of each presencing field location. The two simply merge and begin to synchronize through our still point.

## VII. Building from Varela's ideal of presencing

Dynamic Presencing builds from Varela's ideal of presencing constantly as a fluid form of *presencing awareness* that we embody and become present to through an in-depth immersion into the three zones depicted above. Phenomenologically-speaking, presencing has both a continuous and a discontinuous expression. In Theory U, presencing is applied as an epistemological a way of knowing with a tendency to frame presencing as a peak instant that one approaches or contacts at the bottom of the U. Alternatively, in Dynamic Presencing embodying the ground of presence inside our presencing nature opens up a deep ontological pathway for supporting, holding and

being with both the continuous and discontinuous movements of presencing awareness as a mastery aim.

With Varela's epistemological mastery ideal, the aim of continuous presencing needs further unpacking. In practice, it is critical to recognize the more subtle ways that presencing may be present in our awareness. In cultivating presencing awareness through the three zones, a mastery space opens for practitioners to relate to the presencing process in a more immersive and embodied manner: lingering, waiting, resting and in essence, being-with the in-between transitional stages of presencing where it may appear that nothing much is happening. These liminal in-between phases of presencing are among the more passive, inner varieties that can go unacknowledged. Their value is revealed through a more subtle embodied way of experiencing, as part of a slower movement that can be attuned to and felt via the inner body of our presencing nature. In becoming receptive to qualities of stillness, indwelling, waiting, resting, ruminating, what is understood in Dynamic Presencing as the *letting be* stage of presencing, one works with acclimating to the fullness of what is emerging—not only persistently or worse, fixating on the emerging future, which inadvertently diminishes abiding in the deep present as the source ground for the emerging future.

Fostering an immersive rather than continuous presencing awareness as Varela advocated develops an inner receptivity to one's presencing as a felt-guided way of being versus aspiring to either the mastery ideal of a continuous presencing awareness or a peak series of moments. In Dynamic Presencing, there is a paradigmatic shift underway as practitioners connect to presence as their inhabitable ontological ground that becomes the place from which our presencing nature and its way of knowing unfold from moment to moment. When our embodiment of the depths of presence develop to the stage of becoming an inner abode for our *presencing self*, our presencing-awareness begins to arise effortlessly as a deeper continuous expression of who we are.

In the early accounts of presencing, Senge et. al (2004), Scharmer (2008) Jaworski (2012) and others tended to elevate presencing as a rare pristine state of profound breakthrough. Such moments required special performative retreat conditions, deeply held containers of solitude, nature-based vision quests, among other conditions where practitioners were invited to attune to deeper synchronicities with the land, natural elements, or wildlife, and so forth to access presencing. Interestingly, during this period, the focus was more on the transcendent variations of presencing entering into our awareness through contacting source in the presencing field. In focusing on the epistemological dimensions of presencing as a way of knowing, the deeper ontological

dimensions that sustain presencing as a way of being were not addressed (Gunnlaugson, 2023).

To this end, Dynamic Presencing was designed to foster presencing mastery at the level of our way of being. At this level, it becomes possible for our lives and identity to shift into becoming a creative emergent process when these grounds of presence are sufficiently active and embodied. *Creative being* was David Bohm's (Bohm, 2004) language for what a person whose creative nature has eclipsed their identified nature, what is referred to as the *ordinary, familiar, or old self* in Theory U (Scharmer, 2016). Bohm's notion of creative being reflects the deeper dynamism of presencing as a way of being in the work of Dynamic Presencing. In aspiring to a dynamically presenced way of engaging our professional practice, it is less about a continuous letting go into letting come, which presumes a flowing continuity.

Instead, with Dynamic Presencing, the emphasis is in making the depth transition into letting be, of nurturing a more fluid presencing identity and way of orienting one's receptivity to emergence between the spaces of letting go and letting come. In this way, the ontological emphasis of Dynamic Presencing shifts to occupying one's presence and deeper ground of being as an instrument for presencing discernment and disclosure. To uncover a presenced way of experiencing in Dynamic Presencing as embodied creative being, one needs to learn how to integrate their presence and sensemaking faculties in a nuanced, integrated, and embodied manner. This takes place at different depths of one's presence, supported by our inner body, physiology and presencing self as a means of engaging the presencing process inside the presencing field. Through an embodied activation of the three zones, presencing awareness is distilled and lived into as an anchorable state and persistent way of being with sufficient practice.

## IX. Dynamic Presencing as an apprenticeship into presencing mastery

A guiding aim of Dynamic Presencing is to provide an in-depth journey into transforming the deeper capacity, function, and purpose of our existing presencing practice. By opening up new interior pathways to cultivating a more embodied and lived-into presencing awareness that grows to become an orienting way of being, Dynamic Presencing offers an apprenticeship into presencing mastery by setting out from the *near shore* of one's existing presencing practice as depicted by the dark line in the foreground of the image in figure 4 below. From here, the work delves into a series

of five transformative journeys that offer a path, set of core movements and overall vision for the *far shore* milestone of presencing mastery as an experiential accolade.



Figure 4. Artistic rendering of the far shore of presencing mastery in *Dynamic Presencing*

As a whole, Dynamic Presencing introduces a new language and overall approach for developing advanced presencing mastery in our work and lives. As noted above, for the purposes of this article, the above three zone method has been distilled from these five practitioner journeys. The intent here is to make a case for building the energetic and attentional capacities for an ontologically-sustained presencing. Learning to flexibly source presencing awareness from these three zones builds capacity for our mastery of presencing as a generative way of being and experiencing in our work and lives. There are a number of milestones here, including a more agile ability to access presencing in our day to day functioning at work and an increased awareness of the core conditions that are needed to sustain presencing in different contexts of engagement. From this ability comes a more in-depth embodiment and capacity to resource from the ground of presence, our presencing self and the presencing field.

As our presencing awareness is developed and strengthened through the three-zone model, practitioners are supported in transforming previous memory-, psychological-, and content-based structures of our identified and limited selves. When we are rooted in the ground of presence in zone one, our attention is well resourced there. This builds our capacity to rest well in the presencing process as it reveals itself through each subsequent stage. When we are discerning *what-is* in our presencing self in zone two and discerning *what-is-emerging* in the presencing field in zone three, it is possible to become resourced at the level of our embodied perception. Here we explore



an embodied presencing way of seeing. In zone three, when this is expanded into the four fields of presencing, we move into a more precise relationship with the different contexts that presencing unfolds in, optimally serving the creative process as it unfolds in the moment. Being with the presencing process in this multi-faceted and dynamic way keeps our presencing self-sense supple by being less identified with emergence or the future in psychologically attached or identified ways, re-opening the path to new advanced forms of presencing mastery.

## X. Closing Remarks

In outlining Francisco Varela's epistemological mastery ideal of presencing, this article has clarified its importance and value, pointing out ways to build from it. Distilled from the work of Dynamic Presencing (Gunnlaugson, 2020, 2021, 2023), I introduce the three-zone method for developing our presencing self through a fluidly embodied presencing awareness. Given that presencing mastery has not been a focus of Theory U (Scharmer, 2016) and as Varela's brief articulation didn't elaborate methodologically on what is involved when he was alive or in his published work, my intent in introducing a three-zone ontological process-ideal is to continue the larger work of uncovering and advancing paths of presencing mastery in leadership and coaching contexts.

As an apprenticeship model, this three-zone method helps presencing practitioners cultivate a way of becoming subtly embodied instruments of presencing, where the practice is integrated as a core inner movement and orienting way of being, relating and communicating. Instead of focusing on a constant mode of presencing as Varela suggests, our attention expands inwardly and somatically on subtle levels to include a felt reconnection with the nested depth locations of our presence, and presencing nature in the presencing field. In integrating our presencing nature as a stable inner foundation from which to draw our presencing from, only then does it become possible to access a dynamic way of presenced knowing from this inner place of deeper dynamic presence and being that encompasses both continuous and discontinuous varieties of presencing.

Overall, the three zone path discloses itself moment to moment as a living revelatory process. By immersing in our presencing nature as the locus and medium of our presencing awareness, new orders of presencing generativity become accessible to us both individually and collectively. As an ontological mastery ideal, the three-zone method builds from Varela's initial contribution by supporting a deepening of our

ground of presence, as well as learning how to integrate our presencing self within the presencing field by outlining a mastery path where advanced forms of presencing can with sufficient dedication and practice, take root as a generative way of being in our lives and work.

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