



Appropriate Technology as a mindset

BERATEN – BEGLEITEN - BEGEISTERN

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Overview

Reflecting about '30 Years of AT' this very personal investigation is looking behind the surface of Appropriate Technology outlining three root causes or specific mindsets for the approach of AT – so to say basic attitudes, which allow building sustainable landing strips for the future on a personnel, organizational and a global level. The investigation also is a reflection on Albert Einstein's statement: "We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them", which led to the Russel-Einstein Manifesto (1955) and the Potsdam Manifesto (2005).

My assumption is that the mere (and unlimited) resource for a prospering and flourishing future is our capacity of relationship building, mindfulness and the level of deeper understanding of the threefold human nature and especially the nature and character of the heart. The outlook will be the question how to cope with the challenge of digital technology and autonomous machines.

Method

The approach to inquire into the mindset of AT is the social technology of presencing. This method was developed by C. Otto Scharmer in a more than ten years work at the MIT Sloan School of Management, based in Cambridge, Massachusetts. In collaboration with his colleagues, Scharmer introduced the concept of "presencing" – which includes presence and sensing in one word – in his book Theory U (2007). His book Leading From the Emerging Future: From Ego-system to Eco-system Economies (coauthored with K. Kaufer), applies the concept of mindfulness to the trans-

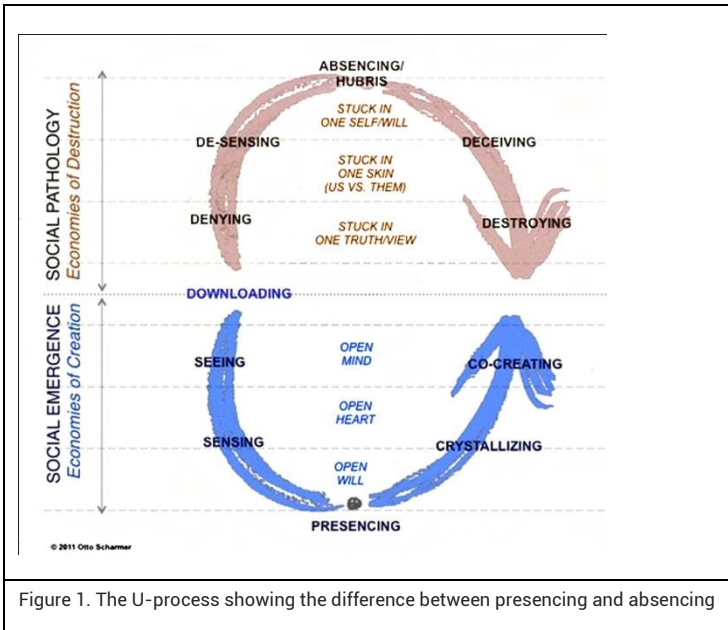


Figure 1. The U-process showing the difference between presencing and absencing

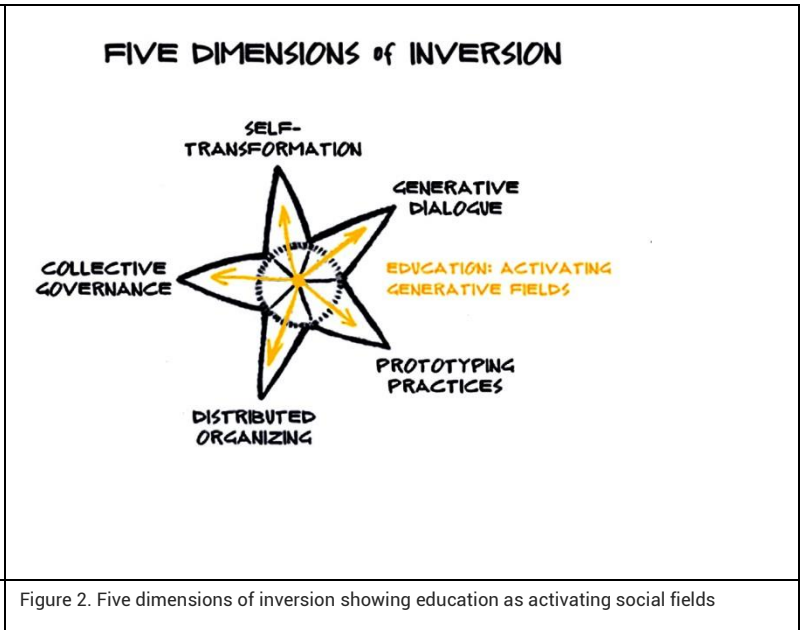


Figure 2. Five dimensions of inversion showing education as activating social fields

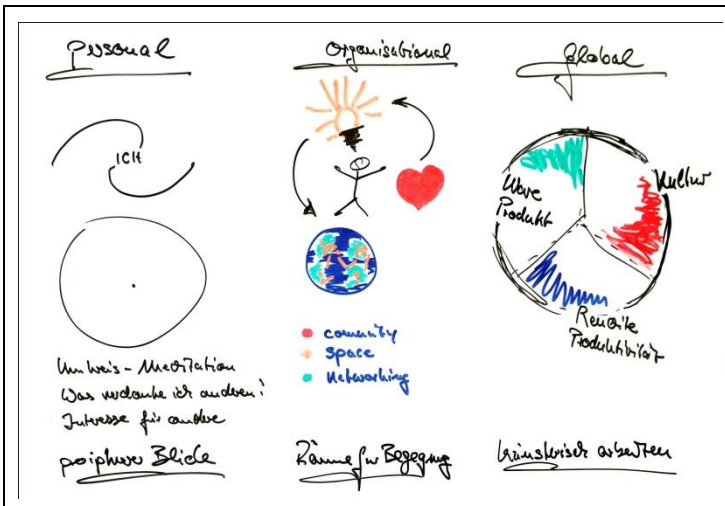


Figure 3. From Ego to Eco – Transformation on three levels: personal, organizational, global

Figure 4. rethinking economics: try to see different perspectives in one picture – the new and the old

formation of capitalism. The author joined the three Presencing Global Forums of the Presencing Institute, gathering change makers from across the globe, in Oct 2011 in Boston, Jun 2012 in Berlin and Feb 2014 in Boston.

The U-method is a social technology which describes a way of how to avoid solving problems by downloading old thinking. The U process suggests to observe much more carefully, as we normally are doing and share observations in a group of interdisciplinary educated and very divers group of people. With this intense sharing of observations combined with a focus on sensing and observing ones own thinking, feeling and acting the U process leads to an opening of mind, heart and will. Following this path the process leads at the bottom of the U to a window of opportunity where it is likely that a future, we really want, emerges.

Results

My inspiration and motivation for tuning into AT 30 years ago was the feeling, that it is crucial – when dealing with future problems – to widen the horizon based on interdisciplinary dialogues. In the beginning of the 1980ies we could not find spaces for such dialogues within the curricula of the faculties at our Technical University in Munich. So we started to invite guest lecturers from other places and we connected in Munich with liberal arts students who had the same interest. Retrospective “being proactive” is the first attitude of AT. The mindset behind “being proactive” is simply: “be the change you want in the world”. It is a radical rejection of being not responsible because of a bundle of influences delivering excuses not to act. And it’s a radical shift to acknowledge that the energy of the heart, our enthusiasm, which is the trigger for our will-energy, not the brain. Our initiative led to inspiring conversations and our first forum »appropriate technology« in Feb 1985 and in

1987 to our second forum »interdisciplinary technics«.

Since then I started a research journey called “life” and found out that the next basic principle of AT turned out to be a hard one for me: “being patient”. Over the years I observed that many – also my own – projects failed, because of a lack of patience. I also found, that there is an interdependence of patience and trust: trust in oneself, trust in your own intuition, trust in the idea you follow, trust in others and the power of collaboration. To keep up in trust leads to the third Principle of AT: stay with friends. It is the mindset, that everything that really matters starts again with the heart, with love, and that love is something, that has to be taken care of. In order to find friends it is essential to have generative dialogues and to learn listening and at the same time it is a way to overcome hierarchy. During the gatherings at MIT I also learned, that the three AT-mindsets are correlated with opening our mind, heart and will.

The process of opening is the beginning of self-awareness and self-transformation. We shift from ego to eco getting a new perspective within the old just by focusing our awareness (see and try the cube). Focusing our awareness, learn to listen to our heart, learn to listen to others and refreshing our senses will – in an age we deal more and more with “intelligent” machines – become as natural and essential as daily gymnastics for our body. This growing consciousness will lead us to a totally new dimension of thinking.

Conclusions

My major conclusion is, that we are living in a period of time in which the individual human being is about to awake for its potential and ability to take responsibility for the whole. It’s waking up for the fact that we are connected world wide as human beings without technical means and that we can shape our future together with others. For me AT is part of this

global movement and is a manifestation of a new spirit of caring. AT is bringing together people with a pragmatic approach, helping to solve everyday problems e.g. energy, water and food supply, mobility and health. Education in the dimensions of head, heart and hand is a crucial part of AT itself, activating social fields.

The more people become aware, that they are more than just particles of dust in the universe, the more people feel that they are seeds for the future, the stronger the movement of AT is getting.

References

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