ADVANCES IN PRESENCING

Volume III: Collective Approaches in Theory U

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A timely anthology showcasing Theory U and presencing perspectives from the latest research of practitioners in the field
Chapter 2
Social Presencing Theater (SPT)
How do we listen to our body-knowing to access the wisdom that lives in us?¹

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Introduction

I invite you to consider a possibility … that wisdom lives in each of us. And, perhaps that wisdom also lives in all of us collectively. By wisdom, I mean a knowing that is not defined or fettered by, not filtered through, the conceptual frameworks of this small, separate unit that we call “me.” This wisdom is a fresh way of looking, a big perspective, an awareness that comes from openness, from spaciousness, from non-concept, from direct experience. It is a “knowing”—knowing how to care for this planet and all the beings living here. And this knowing is desperately needed now.

Human beings are not short on wisdom. However, we are short on how to awaken this sleeping wisdom within us, individually and collectively. This wisdom is in each of our body-mind systems. And throughout time, women and men have been able to access this knowing—this wisdom that is inherent in being human. Social Presencing Theater (SPT) has its roots in mindful-
ness-awareness, in embodiment, in the performing arts, and in a conviction that the nonverbal experience of “feeling” can be a gateway to accessing wisdom. This simple and organic sense of feeling can be the basis for cultivating a good human society.

My journey of interest in this body-oriented knowing began many years ago. I was trained in dance from childhood and have spent my entire career as a dancer, dance teacher, improviser, and choreographer. For thirty years I studied with a Japanese master of Bugaku, an ancient Japanese court dance. I also worked with professional performers, and with people who don’t call themselves dancers, and also with children—in the theater, in workshops, in communities, and in schools.

For decades I have also studied the teachings of Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche, a Tibetan Buddhist master, teacher, and artist. He taught Dharma art, or the art of non-aggression. He taught on perception, on something coming from nothing, on art in everyday life as a way to create an enlightened society.

In 2003, I met Otto Scharmer. He invited me to bring my work to the network of change makers at Presencing Institute. With Theory U, he articulates an approach to social change that includes the body’s intelligence as well as practices to cultivate open-mindedness and open-heartedness. Within the Presencing Institute I have collaborated with him and other colleagues to create the series of practices called Social Presencing Theater. These practices are designed to make “social presencing,” or social awareness, visible to us. The root of the word theater comes from the Latin root, theatrum, which means, “a place for viewing, for seeing.” With SPT we are invited to see and sense the inherent healthiness and sanity in a team, or an organization, or a social system.

Embodiment: Feeling the Body

Practicing SPT brings us into the body. Through the practice we are able to connect with our body and our senses—and not feel constantly pulled into thinking, conceptualizing, and projecting. The language of the body is feeling. By that, I do not mean
emotions, but instead, sensation—a feeling sense, a tuning-in to the body: its posture, its qualities, its sense of being. The feeling of the body is present in our experience. We know how it feels to live in the body, connected to and grounded on this planet, this good earth.

We often experience a kind of war between the body and the mind. The mind wants the body to be, to look, to feel different from how it actually does. The mind’s voice is louder than the body’s voice. Many of us need practices that allow our thinking mind to “step back” and our body’s feeling to come forward. We need to feel our body to maintain physical and mental health and to experience coherence and well-being.

To support this sense of presence in SPT, we encourage practitioners to do a “20-Minute Dance” each day. It may sound complicated, but it could not be simpler. The instructions:

- Lie down on the floor.
- Take 20 minutes to alternate between moving and stillness, doing whatever the body feels like doing, for example, moving from stretching the body along the floor, to rising into a sitting position, to standing, while paying attention to the feeling of the body when it is resting and when it is moving.
- Apply mindfulness by resting your attention on the feeling in your shoulder or the feeling in your lower back, or the feeling in your hand … wherever there is sensation in the body. Let go of thoughts. No agenda, no judgment.

From a sense of unconditional appreciation, we notice that our body/mind system naturally moves toward synchronization or coherence. We feel the balance between the groundedness of the earth and the openness of the sky. We feel a sense of basic healthiness, even if our life has stress and difficulty. We have a sense of who we are, and we have a deep sense of knowing that who we are is basically healthy and good.

When the body and mind are synchronized, our system feels basic wellbeing, even a sense of unconditional confidence. We do not have to worry and self-centralize. Instead, we naturally tend
to extend outward—to feel curious and connected to others and to our surroundings. We feel more available to others. We experience a “social field.” The social field is the interior condition or quality of relationships in a social system, the felt quality of the organization, the environment, the quality of the culture and the people. There is a saying attributed to the thirteenth-century Zen Buddhist master Dogen Zen-ji, “to know oneself is to forget oneself. And to forget oneself is to become enlightened by all things.”

One way of knowing oneself is to develop the habit of feeling present, living in this human body without complaint or judgment, and being always curious about this body-mind system. An accessible sense of what we mean by “enlightened by all things” could be that our awareness extends out to all aspects of our everyday life—that all people, things, and circumstances are speaking to us, teaching us what it is to be a human being with others on this planet. At this particular time, we need to uncover this wisdom in ourselves and we need to see it and acknowledge it in others. Relying solely on conceptual thought uses only a part of our natural intelligence.

The Earth Body

These days, many of us are caught up in speed, demands, and goal-orientation, which seem pervasive in our society. We are seduced by the speed and convenience that technological advancements now allow. We sit at desks. We look at screens. We forget about our lower body, about our organic connection to Mother Earth. We forget the feeling of grass under our bare feet. We forget the smell of the forest and the sound of waves on the beach. Many children and adults in cities never have the opportunity to be immersed in a natural environment, to plant seeds, to walk in fields. This is why in SPT we always spend some time each day lying on the floor.

We stretch out on the floor and let our thoughts sink down into the body, and we let our body sink into the floor, and we let our connection with the floor sink into the bigger body of planet Earth. We feel the resources, the wealth, and the reliability of the
Earth. We feel how the Earth body is holding us close, otherwise we would float off into space. We feel how this Earth body is our support and our ground. We feel our place in this very moment on the planet. Each of us, right now, has a place on the planet. We can feel in that place a deep sense of belonging on Earth.

Social Body and Social Field

We are always a part of a social body. The family or household is a primary social body. Teams at work are social bodies. A school, company, organization, or community—each is a social body within the larger social body of humanity. Do we feel this? When you are on an airplane, do you feel this as the flight #277 social body? In the subway car, do you feel that for this short ride uptown, this is one of your social bodies? We share the same space. We co-create an environment. Do we feel ourselves as an interdependent part of all the social bodies we live in? Do we experience the social fabric that we co-create moment by moment with others?

In SPT we have several practices for sensing the social body. The primary one is called the Village, in which everyone in the group engages in simple everyday movements and practices for sensing the whole. As we engage with others, we notice under what conditions we feel more open or more closed. “Open” and “closed” are not moral judgments. They are experiences that we all have from moment to moment. Each moment we have louder or quieter experiences of opening up or of closing down; of letting go of hesitations and judgments, or of hanging on to our familiar stories and opinions.

We can open to both what we feel and what is happening around us. That might be pleasant or unpleasant, but we can be curious, we can wonder. We move forward, we take a chance. Closing has a different feeling. We notice our edges turning in, our walls going up, our judgments, opinions, beliefs, and assumptions arising with their accompanying feelings of wanting to hide, push away, run from, strike out against, complain about, seduce, or ignore. The feelings themselves are quite innocent. They arise
from habit. However, if we solidify them, defend them, out of a lack of awareness, then they become experiences that we call “absencing,” the opposite of “presencing.”

Presencing in the language of Theory U is a combination of two words: presence and sensing. In the Theory U process, we engage our sense perceptions, sensing “out” into our world or context, and sensing “in” to our own experience. I have heard Otto Scharmer describe this as, “our attention is 100% out and 100% in.” We practice paying attention to our own attending, to what in Theory U is called the “Four Fields of Attention.” We can attend by filtering our experience through our own conceptual frameworks, our own psychological habits. We can pay attention to facts; we can pay attention in an empathic way. And we can also attend from a larger sense of the whole open awareness. The term presencing describes this open awareness and open-heartedness that is the basis for creativity and compassionate action in the world. Social presencing describes collective awareness.

Social Presencing Theater makes social systems visible, tangible. Because we are engaged physically, the choices we make—where we go, what we do—and the resulting patterns we create, are visible to everyone. We can clearly see and experience the moment-to-moment co-creation of a social reality, the making of social fabric and connectivity.

The invitation is to notice both personally and on a collective level the elements of society building. We notice feelings of connection and disconnection, inclusion and exclusion, initiating activity and following, supporting or building on others’ offerings, joining, contrasting. We notice center, and periphery; power building and dissolving. We notice activity and rest; coherence and chaos. We are co-creating social reality in a self-organizing system. Are we creating the society that we want to live in? Is wisdom creating this Village? Are presence, curiosity, and compassion creating this Village? It is our capacity to feel our humanness that knows how to create social reality.

“Village practice” began for me in about 1975, when I was teaching movement improvisation at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. I had no idea what I was doing, so the class consisted of a room full of students making up movements and
trying to connect with others’ movements in a freeform and random way.

Perhaps because of the absence of direction or instruction, the students seemed to exhibit qualities such as connectedness and inventiveness, but without coherence or structure. For the most part, the dancers enjoyed the freedom of the experience, but despite that I had a longing for spatial clarity and some sense of spontaneous composition in time—some clear shaping of time and space. I was interested in improvisation as performance, and also in performance that did not depend on the dance technique, or on the personality or attractiveness of the dancer. My experience as a participant, a viewer, and as the instructor, was that the work was too rambling and self-indulgent, and it lacked the power of underlying coherence and beauty that one experiences, for example, in great jazz, another improvised art form. I began to notice that the quality of the experience—the depth of it—depended largely on how I and the others paid attention to the moment-by-moment unfolding of our collective experience.

A friend suggested that I find a structure in which to investigate the essential elements of the process. This made sense to me, so I began with paring down the dancers’ “movement vocabulary” to simple, ordinary, everyday movements such as standing, sitting, lying down, walking, turning, and bowing without arm or hand gestures. The attention was placed on doing simple things as fully and as well as possible, and on paying attention to the whole of the space. Rather than getting caught in an activity with one other person or a small group, we were allowing our attention to include the whole of the space or the village. I was influenced by a phrase that was popular in the 1970s: “In Bali we have no art. We do everything as well as possible.”

The initial Village instruction remains the same today: everyday movements, mindfulness of body, extending out awareness antennae to include a sense of others in the space as being participants with oneself in one social body. Participants learn how they co-create with others in groups. They do the Village practice, then they are invited into a conversation about what they noticed, what they created together, and how they participated. They notice their own patterns and habits, as well as those of others.
They can reflect on how, in their daily life, they are engaging in their teams, organizations, and families. A few themes we notice are Inside-Outside, Projection, Same-Different.

Inside-Outside and Group Skin

To begin the practice, I ask people to gather in groups of five. After doing so, groups immediately form a group skin. They start off immediately with a sense of what “inside” means to them and what is outside their group boundary. Some groups have a more tightly woven “sense of skin” than others. For example, in some groups, if one person moves too far from what others perceive as “the group,” then someone might worry that they are no longer with the group. Or if a person faces out from what others perceive as “inside,” this can also trigger a sense of alarm for some.

Meanwhile, other individuals or groups doing the same practice may have no such sense of threat or problem with group members moving out or turning away from the group. Folks might even wander off (even join other groups!) and the skin stretches to include them. There is no right or wrong. This is another way that SPT reflects the patterns that we collectively enact as we create the social fabric of our teams and organizations. Each practice is followed by a dialog conversation. One topic that tends to arise in these dialogs is that of inclusion and exclusion.

Projection and Sense-Making

The Village provides a window for noticing how much we tend to project our own interpretations on to others and on to situations. Each person in the group speaks from the “I” voice only. We can easily observe that it is difficult to describe a moment of non-verbal experience in words. We tend to immediately jump to interpret our experience rather than stay with the fresh sensing-feeling. We tend to quickly try to put our experience into a category, into a box that might contain the voice of judgment or
a psychological explanation. And, we tend to think that others are interpreting their experience in the same way that we are interpreting ours.

For instance, say one person in the group sits with her head down. Another thinks, “oh, that person is not connecting. I need to go near so I can support her.” This could be a kind thought and gesture, or it might be a limiting habit. The sitter might describe how lovely it felt to be sitting alone, and how she felt the other person as an intrusion into her space. We invite everyone to suspend sense-making in order to stay with the actual feeling quality of each moment of experience. In this way, we can relax our ideas and let choices arise from the whole.

Same-Different

Another theme that arises in Village practice is our preference for sameness or contrast. It might be revealed in the process that the whole group—or some members in the group—values harmony, balance, closeness, and connection. They might choose movements or positions in the space that express this value. They might choose a level (sitting or standing) or movement that is the same as others. Groups often form into a circle, sitting relatively close together, all facing inward. This inward-focused circle is almost an archetypal pattern that expresses balance and belonging for some—and claustrophobia and over-control for others.

Other groups or individuals might value freedom, a sense of space, or individual autonomy. Their Village might look completely disconnected to an outside observer, but the members might feel happy to have wide awareness and a looser sense of being tuned in to the group. They might value difference, contrast, and innovation. Again, this could be another kind of archetype. And, of course, there are many variations and manifestations of patterns between these two. SPT provides a way of engaging in physically creating something with others that allows the body-knowing to come into the reflection on social fields. A social field might be described as the “interiority,” the feeling quality, of a social system. In the SPT work, we are not looking for a specific
goal or optimal “solution.” There is not a “right” way as opposed to a “wrong” way. Instead, we are using SPT as a way to have a shared, embodied experience that leads to a collective reflection. SPT is a way of getting a deeper sense of how we co-create our social situations together.

Turning Toward Stuck

The work of Social Presencing Theater at the Presencing Institute has focused on applying embodied presence and social body awareness to societal acupuncture points—leverage points for change. Two primary practices are the Stuck exercise and 4-D Mapping. We bring the body-knowing from the 20-Minute Dance, and the awareness of the social space from the Village experience, and we apply the resulting insight and awareness to specific issues—stuck areas that can be personal, organizational, or societal.

We invite participants to bring an issue that feels stuck for them. This is not psychotherapy or psychodrama. It is a work-related issue. For example, someone is trying to create or innovate but their effort is not going forward. This could be due to external obstacles (conflict with a coworker or lack of funding) or inner obstacles (lack of confidence). Our experience with Social Presencing Theater tells us that being “stuck” is a gold mine. Embedded in “stuck” are insight, clarity, and wisdom. We turn toward the “stuck” to listen and to feel. We learn nothing if we push it away. We ask people to embody their feeling of “stuck” in a body shape or sculpture. We call that “sculpture 1,” an aspect of our current reality. There is an obstacle to what we are trying to create or accomplish. Then through a Theory U process, we sense into the body sculpture and let the body move in whatever way it feels like moving, until it stops in a second shape or posture. We call this “sculpture 2.” We say one sentence from our sculpture 2. Then we reflect on the difference between the first sculpture and the second one. What was the journey from sculpture 1 to sculpture 2? What was the initial impetus for changing? What was the difference between the two postures? How and
when did the feeling quality shift? What surprised you? And how could this inform the particular situation you are experiencing in your life or work?

This is not a problem-solution method. It is an opportunity to invite the body’s wisdom into the reflection to gain a deeper understanding and insight into how to engage and move forward in a fresh and invigorated way.

It may seem counter-intuitive, but we are suggesting that people move into a body shape that engages, clarifies, and enhances a feeling of discomfort. There is some aspect of the current reality that holds some discomfort that can be labeled as “a place where I feel stuck.” That feeling could be called uncertainty, irritation, boredom, confusion—it makes no difference what it is because the method is always the same. What is important is developing the capacity to feel whatever we feel, without labeling it good or bad, without immediately categorizing it in terms of past experience, be it psychological or historical, and without immediately trying to get rid of the experience.

This can be done individually or in teams, where each person embodies a “force” that is keeping the person “stuck.” “Stucks” are body shapes that might feel weighed down or curled inward, or when arms and legs are stretched in different directions. There are many possibilities that might reveal archetypal patterns of stuckness. The “stuck” person builds a social sculpture with a few others who help the person feel the forces that are preventing her from moving. It becomes clear that nobody is stuck alone, but that each of us is embedded into personal, organizational, and societal systems that need to move and change.

The four people in the social sculpture form a social being that wants to move. One of our SPT practitioners used the “Stuck” exercise with two organizations that were having difficulties working with each other. Each of the organizations performed a “Stuck” that embodied their experience. Each organization’s team witnessed the other’s “Stuck.” They were able to identify with each other, to see familiar patterns and to better understand both their differences and their common ground. Because this experience was co-created and felt in the body, they had greater collective understanding than would have been possible with
only talking about the issues.

Another recent example was a “Stuck” in which the stuck person felt that he was pulled in two directions. His body was twisted. His legs and feet were pointing in one direction, and his head and eyes were oriented in the opposite direction.

He began the process by asking one person in the group to sit in the place his feet were pointing toward, to face him, and to pull gently on his vest. He then asked the second person to stand with her arms extending toward him, in the place toward which his eyes and arms were oriented. He then asked the third person to put her hands in front of his heart.

So, Person One pulled him down in the direction that his feet were pointing. Person Two met his gaze and extended her hands toward him. Person Three sat in front of his chest with her hand on his heart. This was sculpture 1, an embodiment of how the stuck person was experiencing his current situation.

After the people in the sculpture had remained still for quite a long time to clarify and sense into the sculpture they had made, the movement began. They let go of any ideas about what “should” happen, and they followed their physical sensations and their respective senses of where and how the social sculpture wanted to move. That movement continued until the stuck person’s entire body came out of its twisted shape and oriented itself to face the direction that his eyes were looking toward.

Person One, who had been pulling down on his vest, came to stand beside him. Person Two remained steady in her position and joined hands with the stuck person. Person Three moved closer and knelt down to add support. This was sculpture 2. From their places in sculpture 2, each person shared one sentence that described their journey from sculpture 1 to sculpture 2.

In the practice, the stuck person does not tell the others about their situation before they begin the process of moving from sculpture 1 to sculpture 2. The less they know, the fresher and less contrived their movements can be.

So, in this case, there was no discussion about the situation the stuck person wanted to explore before the practice began. After the team had completed the process, there was a team reflection. In the reflection, the stuck person revealed that the
direction of his feet felt like the weight of his current obligations. The direction of his gaze and head orientation was indicating his wish to go in a new direction with his work.

An insight that arose from this particular “Stuck” was that the forces keeping the stuck person feeling stuck, also had the potential to be supportive. The team reflected on how this might inform the stuck person about his real-life situation.

Reflection on the process revealed that a conversation could be possible between Person One (pulling him down) and Person Two, who was reaching out to him. They both become supportive in sculpture 2. Maybe they share a common goal, despite seeming to go in different directions? They felt potential there. The stuck person shared that he experienced a surprising sense of warmth in the physical connection with the third person. He described the feeling in his body as a reminder that warmth could be the ground for taking the next steps. The team then had a few minutes to journal about their reflection.

One hypothesis in this work is that the body-mind system will naturally go toward health. It does not want to be sick or stuck. Perhaps the social body-mind system, whether a family, a team, or an organization, also wants to go toward health? Our work is to enable these systems to sense themselves, to bring awareness to the situation. Once we become aware of our stuck patterns by feeling them in our body, without judgment, we can tune in to the shift, or movement, that the system yearns for. We are not looking for a solution, per se. We are open to seeing and feeling what might come next if we suspend our ideas and judgments, and trust that our sense perception experiences will reveal insights and wisdom.

When we attend to the moment-to-moment unfolding of experience with tremendous awareness we can collectively move freely ahead toward creative outcomes.

4-D Systems Mapping

This approach to “leaning into” the current situation, sensing more deeply into it to experience what IT wants to do, where IT
wants to move, is applied to systems change in 4-D Mapping. This allows complex stakeholder groups like those in education, health care, or banking, to see and sense themselves as a whole. Out of this deep “knowing oneself,” there is a sense that the system can learn, the system can notice its own inherent wisdom and move toward this knowing.

SPT is a practice of seeing, sensing, and knowing oneself. That “oneself” can be a person, as in a spiritual practice, but it can also be a collective. In the 4-D Mapping practice, each of the stakeholders in a system is embodied. Someone in the group chooses to embody a particular stakeholder (if we are sensing into the school system, let’s say it is a primary school teacher) by creating a body shape or posture that expresses the stakeholder. In SPT, these body shapes are full of communicative information. They contain keys to truth. The person enters the “playing space,” creates their body shape, and offers a few words that arise spontaneously from the body shape. We are using the body shape to boycott the tendency to “think something up.” We are encouraging the synchronization between the body and the mind.

One by one, participants enter the “playing space,” by embodying other stakeholder roles (in an education setting this might be a student, a principal, a parent) and offering their words. They embody their experience of a current reality—how it feels to be part of this current system. In 4-D Mapping we always include three stakeholders whose voices are not often heard. The Earth is a stakeholder role. The Marginalized, those who suffer the most on this planet, is a stakeholder role, and the Highest Potential of the system is also always present as a stakeholder role in 4-D Mapping. Those who are marginalized and suffer most on the planet always have a place in the sculpture.

When all the stakeholders are settled into their “social sculpture,” feeling the whole sculpture as a living being that might be called, for example, “the school system as we now experience it,” they are ready for the next step. Next, they go through a process of attending, sensing, and letting go of ideas of what they “should” be doing. They begin to move, directed by their own body-knowing and their awareness of the whole. They do not think or plan or manipulate their experience. They rely on a simple moment-
to-moment attending to what this being, this social body, wants to do and where it wants to go. They allow the singularity of their individual stakeholder roles to soften, so that they can feel the sense of the whole system. They shift from ego-system orientation to eco-system awareness—from silo-consciousness to presencing.

After a few minutes they settle into a second “social sculpture.” From their positions in the new sculpture, they will again offer a sentence or phrase. This is followed by a dialog process that allows the group members to hear each others’ experience. At this point, we begin to see deep patterns in the system that were not previously apparent: patterns that were keeping the system stuck, and also patterns that were generative and full of potential. We are surprised to see two unlikely stakeholders moving close to one another and notice that there might be a seed of possibility there. We see that we have made choices that exclude parts of the system. We notice that we have all gathered close together, leaving no breathing room. We share using simple words: “I saw,” “I felt,” “I did.” We try not to interpret or project, but instead to evoke the direct experience.

We see how power works in that system and how those who are marginalized also play a role in that dynamic. Sometimes we see inversions. Those who are in the center move to the periphery. Those who are standing, sit down. We see how the system yearns to organize itself into coherence—sometimes successfully and sometimes not so. But the process is designed not to “get it right.” The process is designed to make the system see and sense itself. The method is awareness—being aware of the whole and making choices from the open space. We bring this physical art-based method to serve in enabling generative social fields.

One of our observations is how frequently the second sculpture is more tangled and more estranged than the first sculpture. From a conventional point of view, there might be a tendency to feel that this was not a “good” outcome. Often, we want to see a quick fix, a positive shift immediately. But hidden in many systems is real stuckness, deep under the iceberg of symptoms. As the people in the group experience this, they also feel the sadness of being stuck. There is a gap between where we currently are and where we want to be. And the habits that got us to this cur-
rent reality are not going to change overnight. In SPT we consider this sense of collective sadness to be a very positive step forward. We can know the facts, but until we feel the depth of our shared humanity and the deep longing to create a good society, we will continually be pulled to complacency because the challenges feel overwhelming. This shared grief that can arise from 4-D Mapping is a powerful motivating force for us to collectively commit to working together to find ways to move forward.

Closing Reflections

Circling back to the invitation I offered at the beginning of this chapter, please consider how wisdom lives in each of us both individually and collectively. In what ways do we have the capacity for “eco-system awareness,” as Otto Scharmer describes it? Assuming we have the collective capacity to relax out of our “ego-system” tendency to think small, to think in silos, to make choices based on self-protection, how can we grow beyond these ingrained societal tendencies? What do we need to open up to a more tangible eco-system awareness that will bring us closer to our inherent wisdom and to knowing how to care for this planet and all beings who inhabit it?

Social Presencing Theater is an embodied practice. Practice is something we do, and do repeatedly. We engage over and over again to deepen our experience and our understanding. Being in our physical body, firmly planted on the Earth body and in our various social bodies is something we do day after day, year after year. Mindfulness of body, embodied presence, awareness of our social bodies and of the open space of creativity are all innate and we can cultivate these qualities and practices. SPT practices are a way of life—a way of integrating ourselves and our world. The practices reveal our limiting habitual patterns as well as our vast, open mind and heart. We need to practice because we tend to forget about our inherent wisdom. We forget who we are. We forget our interdependence with all living things. We forget that it is our job to help out this world. We practice to remember our true human nature.
We can celebrate the innate healthiness of our own body-mind system. We do not need to worry so much about ourselves. We can open up and feel our natural capacity to connect and communicate with others as social bodies. We can recognize patterns that lead to unwanted outcomes, and we can rejoice in our collective longing to make this world a better place. We know that we co-create social reality, social fabric, in every move we make. Every conversation, every e-mail, every action creates either a non-aggressive open possibility or a cut-off, disconnected experience. We know that we have incredible power to influence, shape, and benefit this society.

Social Presencing Theater is used for self-reflection, as an intervention method in social systems, and as an arts-based research methodology. It is held by the Presencing Institute and is an integral part of applying Theory U in organizations, communities, and large systems. All of the practice instructions are open-sourced, part of the collective commons. Trainings are offered in Europe, North and South America, Asia, and Australia. These practices arise from a deep conviction in our ability to listen to the body knowing, and an unwavering conviction in the basic goodness, wisdom, kindness, and courage of all beings and all collections of beings. It is available for everyone.

It gives us great joy to know that a high school student can facilitate these practices. Our work going forward is to both deepen our experience and also to make the work more accessible to everyone. We continue to deepen our capacity to pay attention to the moment-by-moment unfolding, or emerging, of experience, and to attend to this experience we call a social field shift. We continuously work to refine how we describe our basically non-verbal moments. And we aspire to make the work accessible and supportive of change agents. Our world needs all of us and needs this body-sensing-knowing intelligence in order to bring our world and all its beings back into balance.