

Transformation Processes: Getting through the U

A practical Map for Facilitators, Change Agents and Trim Tabs

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Transformation processes can range from simply changing a habit (for an individual) to changing personal realities or shifting paradigm (for individuals and groups). The U-shape is understood to be an archetypal universal movement that each individual or group has to follow for transformations from one reality to another, whether it be small or large scale. Otto Scharmer describes it beautifully in his book, "Theory U" (2009).

The following slides reflect the practical difficulties many change agents and practitioners face when dealing with coaching individuals or groups through transformational processes, such as the U-Process.

In any cases, external structures have to be provided to foster the success of the process. Also, coachees will face normal, process-imminent stages of resistance, fear, confusion and so on, and try to find short-cuts or escapes to bypass authentic transformation. It is vital for a practitioner to be able to spot and diagnose these, place them in the right context and have the means at his or her disposal to help the coachee(s) to get back on track. The good news is: there are plenty of tools available for specific stages and escape mechanisms.

Transformation Process 1.0

Below you will find worksheet slides showing structures (external frameworks) that can help foster a successful transformation process with regard to the internal blocks and saboteurs one tends to encounter during such a process. In addition, I list the most common lateral movements, pseudo-shortcuts and escape mechanisms that seem to occur when one is encountering resistance and shadow material that proves difficult and painful to own. I also list some of the respective tools that have proven immensely helpful and effective (if used with expertise, of course) to get the coachee(s) back on the U- track. None of these lists are meant to be comprehensive and will be constantly refined. Feedback is welcome.

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Practical Overview

Working with these maps, practitioners may more easily diagnose and map out where people are on their journey through the U, and what can be done to secure and foster their advancement. Also, on many occasions, we have used this „reading key“ to assess the degree of a person’s or a groups readiness, willingness or resistance to go further. Recognizing some of the pitfalls and internal attitudes has proven very helpful for allocating the means, resources and efforts to correct quickly – or to not waste resources on individuals or groups that are firmly identified in locked positions along the U and are likely to sabotage themselves and the larger group.

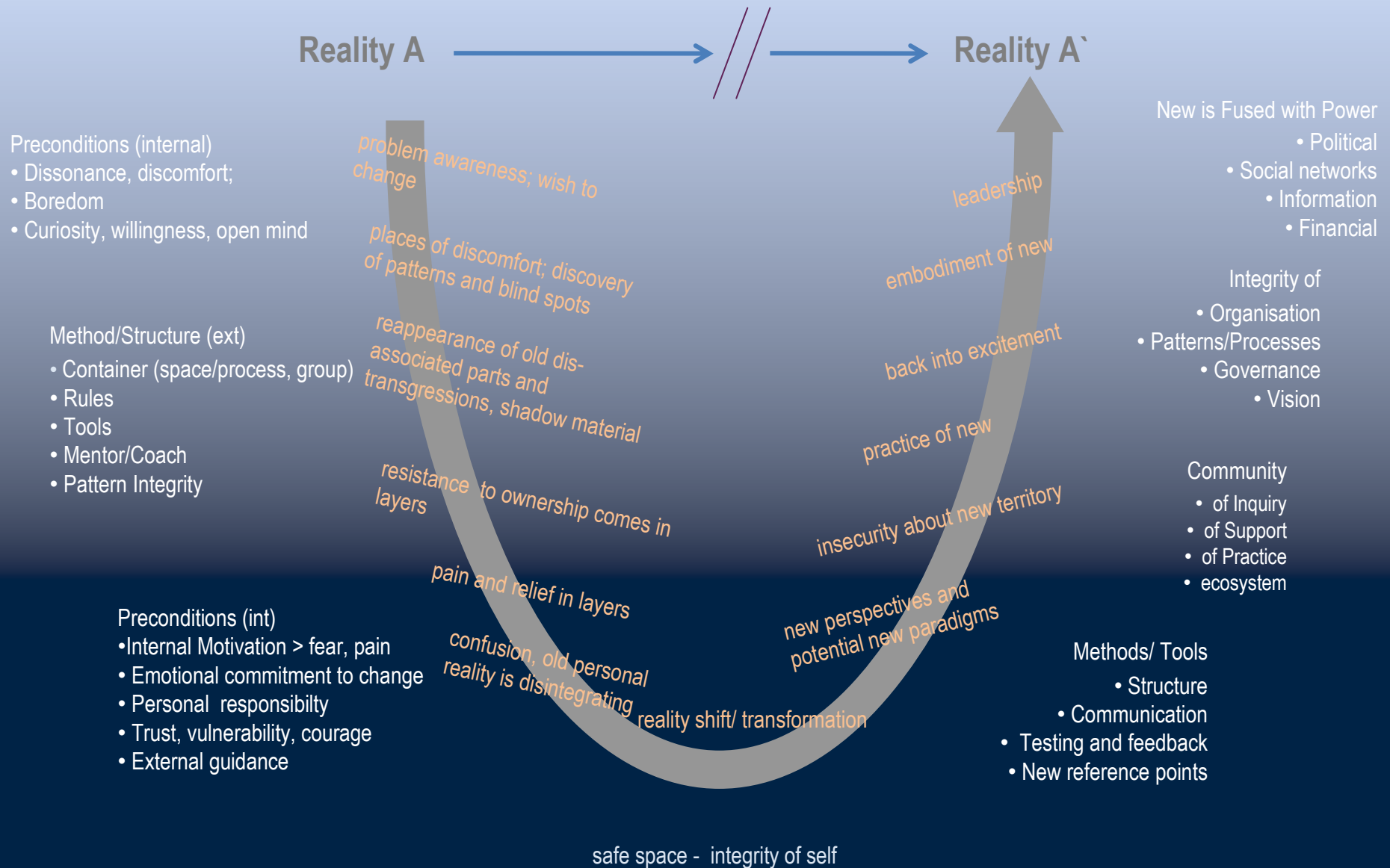
It also has proven helpful in the more efficient application of tools, e.g. presenting tools that foster the right hand, ascending part of the U (e.g. Holacracy structures, Futures workshops and rigorous visioning, creation exercises etc.) at a too early stage, when the ascending part is not yet complete and people are still projecting their „home paradigm“ does not prove such a good idea.

The slides may be useful for promoting the necessity to change view point and shift paradigm *before* coming up with a solution to a complex problem. The famous Einstein quote "Problems cannot be solved by the same level of thinking that created them" indicates precisely this need for a real shift. This is especially important for advanced systems thinkers and movers in the global change arena who are increasingly frustrated that the solutions they offer are not being listened to. The worksheets can help to make the Einstein quote accessible in showing how the apparently counter-logic movement through the U can provide that broader, higher perspective that only a real transformation with a realty shift can offer.

*These worksheets are meant to provide a “your coachee is here in the process and needs **this** kick or **that** tool to get through” kind of map. These maps have crystallized in observing imminent patterns over a decade of personal coaching and working with groups in transformational processes. It is meant as work in progress and input is welcome.*

Framework of Structures (external) and Conditions (internal) for a successful Transformation

- in response to the usually occurring stages in the U-shaped process

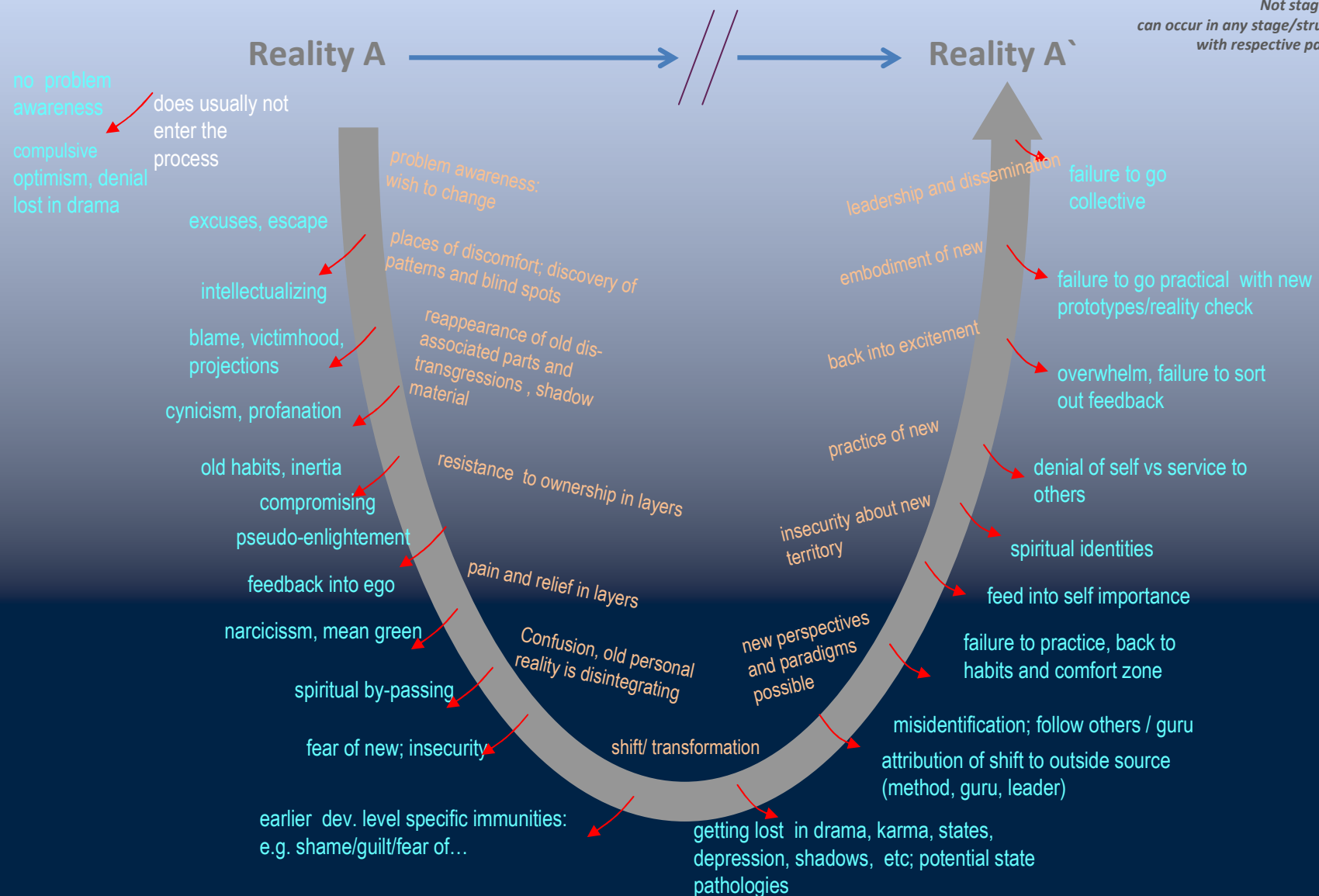


Escape mechanisms and Immunities to Change in the Transformation Process

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in response to the usually occurring stages in the U-shaped process

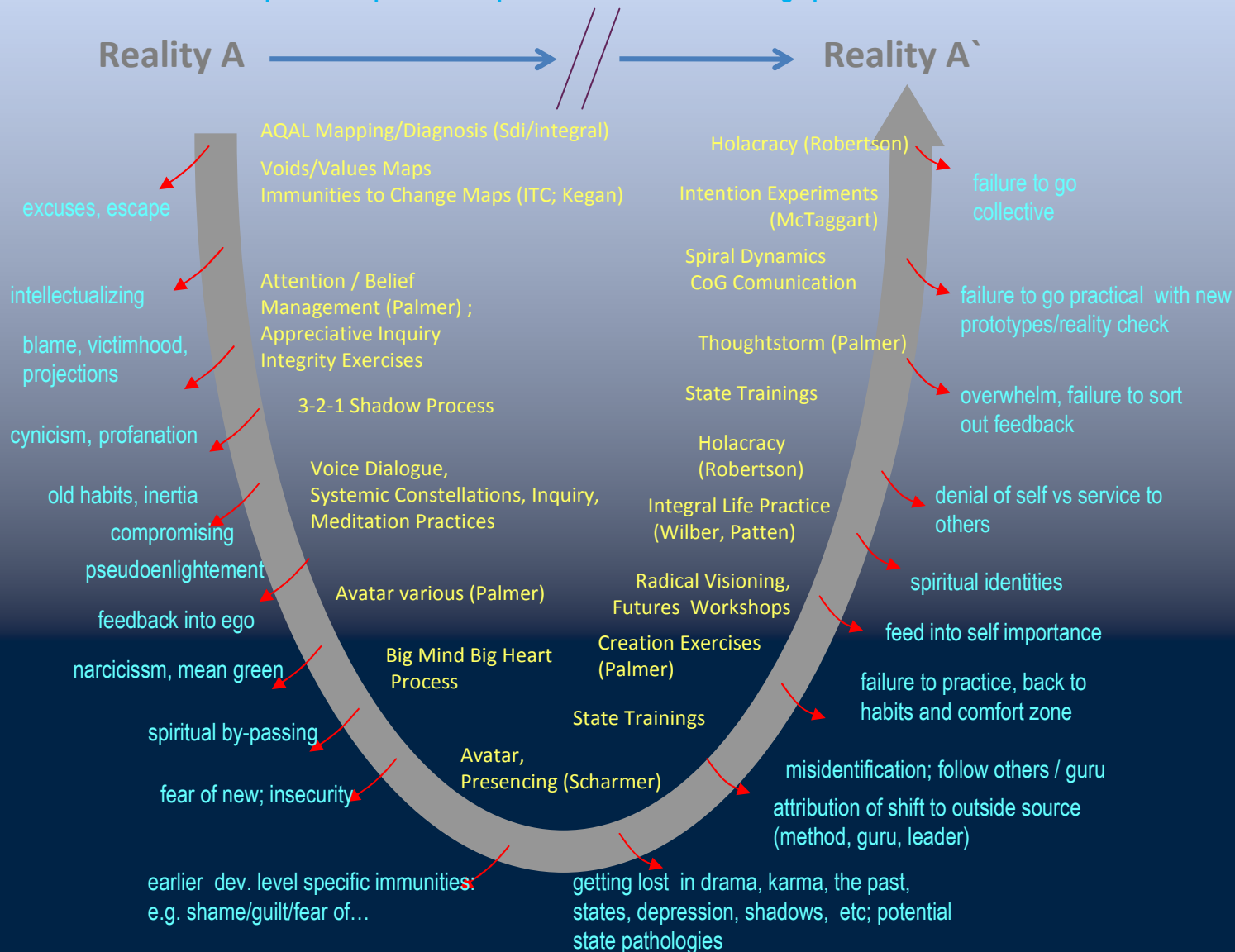
Not stage specific;
can occur in any stage/structure but
with respective pathologies



Tools for Course Correction

(selection)

- in response to specific escape mechanisms in the change process



Process oriented Overview of Transformation Process

Structures, Conditions, Mechanisms, Tools

