



# WORKBOOK 4

## Conscious Collaboration and Inquiry

Welcome to the workbook for Module 4 of the Agents of Conscious Business course, with Bill Torbert!

The aim of this fourth class was to practice conscious ways of collaboration, based upon the extensive experience of Bill Torbert. His research into different stages of development and key leadership topics and practices, ranging from communication to power structures, to feedback and inquiry for mutual gain, provides an ideal starting point in practicing Conscious collaboration.

The points that were covered:

- Understanding the Action Logic worldviews, and how to recognize their different needs and motivations
- Understanding and communicating with different worldviews
- The Four Modes of Communication – how to utilize and identify them in your own work relationships
- Learning practices for individual and collaborative inquiry. Attending to the 4 territories of experience
- Understanding 'liberating disciplines/structures' and how are they helpful for the team and the organization

This workbook is going to make most sense if you have listened to the recording of the class for module 4.

You can either listen to the whole thing and then dive into this workbook, or do it in parallel, pausing the recording to work on an exercise, and then listening to the next bit.

### The Five Big Ideas from the Class

Here are the five main things that we took from this class with Bill Torbert:



## 1 – People develop from dependent to independent to inter-independent stages

Bill has boiled down the action logic developmental psychology model to 3 stages: Dependent, independent, and interdependent. These stages have very different worldviews, and as an example they see power in the following ways.

In the dependent stage, power is coercive. You either use it, or are the victim of it (for example Syria). In the independent stage you can use 'soft power', for example in diplomacy, or building powerful systems to get things done. Finally, in the interdependent stage, the use of power shifts again. You realize that if you want people to transform rather than conform, you cannot force it with power.

## 2 – You can be aware of 4 territories of experience

There's the obvious one (that we think is the whole territory often), which is the outside world. In a business context, this could be observable results or behaviors. But there's more! The second territory Bill identifies is your own embodied sense of yourself – what it feels like to be present. In a business situation this could be your sense of your own performance or actions.

The third territory is your thoughts about the other territories. Have you ever noticed that if you sit quietly enough, you seem to have a lot of things going on in your head? That's the third territory, and in business it's what helps us get strategic and plan things.

The fourth territory is the thing that can be aware of all of the other territories. What enables you to notice all of that? It is the source of attention. And in business, this is what enables us to be present to our vision and intuitions. It is the source of attention, and perhaps intension too.

## 3 – The four modes of communication

Bill's work describes four modes of communication:

**Framing:** Explicitly stating the motivating surprise or purpose of the present occasion, the dilemma we are trying to resolve. And/or shared assumptions.

**Advocating:** Asserting a perception, feeling, or action proposal in relatively abstract terms

**Illustrating:** Offering a visualizable story that you believe supports your sense of the situation

**Inquiring:** Questioning others to elicit single, double, or triple loop feedback that confirms or disconfirms one's current sense of the situation.

According to Bill, practicing integrating these four modes of communication in creating your message really improves the quality of communication successfully with different worldviews.



#### **4 – Conscious Organizations need liberating structures**

To create conscious organization you need liberating structures that allow action and inquiry to happen between people. Building on Brian Robertson’s work on Holacracy there are some suggested heart-beats for meeting practices (with accompanying modes of communication).

- a) Daily tactical meetings, - 15-min stand-up (advocating/inquiring),
- b) Monthly strategic meetings, 75-min strategic (framing, advocating, illustrating, inquiring)
- c) Quarterly, visioning, day-long with whole company, or at least all-divisional senior teams (visioning, strategizing, executing/performing, assessing)

#### **5 – Transformation requires vulnerability!**

To be able to work inter-independently, and create transformation, you have to be vulnerable to transforming yourself if you want to help others transform. For example, during an argument, if you’re open to the view point of the other person, you make yourself vulnerable to change, and probably make everyone more willing to listen to one another.

### **Four territories of experience**

As we explored during the class and in Big Idea number 2, there are four territories of experience. An important skill for an agent of conscious business is to become more and more sensitive to these territories. For most people, one territory is easiest to access and one is the most difficult.

#### **Exercise!**

If you haven’t already, listen to the meditation exercise in the recording (or if you have, do it again to go even deeper). You’ll find it at [25:07] of the recording. When you’re done, follow the instructions and finish the sentence stem below.

What I experienced in the 4 territories is ...



From the break-out groups and the sharing in the class, this appeared to be a pretty powerful exercise. Now let's see if we can deepen it even more. Just read back your answers to the previous question, and then continue with the following sentence stems.

What I experienced in the first territory, ..., is...

What I experienced in the second territory, ..., is...

What I experienced in the third territory is ...

What I experienced in the fourth territory is ...

What territory felt most comfortable to you and why do you think that is?



What territory felt least comfortable to you and why do you think that is?

## Four modes of communication

As we explored during the class and in Big Idea number 4, it can be really helpful to translate your message into the four modes of communication.

### Exercise!

If you haven't already, listen to the journalling exercise on communication. You'll find it at [37:51] of the recording. When you're done, follow the instructions and finish the sentence stem below.

What difficult conversation were you in, or will you be in, in the near future?



Now referring back to the territories of experience that Bill mentioned, let's get some more distinctions in your situation.

What territories did you use in your conversation?

What territories did you not use and how would they have changed the conversation?

At the end of the call, Bill mentioned the importance of role-modelling conversations. So, the next exercise is about role-modeling the difficult conversation you described above. Using the four modes of speech, try re-formulating the conversation the way you would like to have it.

### **Framing**

Let's first Frame the conversation. Explicitly state the purpose of the conversation. What assumptions are you bringing in (if any)?

### **Illustrating**

What's the current situation? Can you describe it accurately without bringing in your own opinions?



**Advocating:**

Now, what do you exactly propose needs to happen?

**Inquiring**

Finally, how would you like to get other's input/feedback? Or what are the questions you have that you would like to explore?

**Bonus:**

As a bonus Bill offered further in-depth study material in two of the main topics of this session.

Firstly, a copy of the second chapter of his book Action Inquiry: Action Inquiry as a manner of speaking. This chapter will provide more in-depth information about the four modes of communication: Framing, Advocation, Illustration and Inquiring.

Secondly, he provided another Chapter, which focuses on Liberating disciplines, including the eight essential qualities of liberating disciplines.

Furthermore, for everyone who hasn't already looked at the preparation resources, we really recommend reading the "Seven Transformations of Leadership" article, which covers the basics



of Bill's work and is an extension of his talk about the development of stages from dependent to independent to inter-independent. The interview is also great for this.

That's it for this class "Conscious Collaboration and Inquiry"! We hope to see you all Module 5 with Fred Kofman. As always, you'll find more info on that class on the [Academy website](#).

If you have any comments or questions, please email us at [mail@wakinguptheworkplace.com](mailto:mail@wakinguptheworkplace.com) or throw a comment on the Academy website page for [Module 4](#).