

# Confer-Sense a learning journey by

## Naturakademin Learning Lab

Learning Naturally – when technology is stretching our minds – for the sustained growth of wisdom awareness and well-being in the global knowledge-based economies.

We aim at creating a joint learning experience that will facilitate cultivation of our capacity for human-Nature based values in the global learning communities. During our three days together we will explore with a focus on the following three aspects:

1. Tracking – Learning journeys: Observe – ”Become one with the world”
2. Retreat and Reflect – ”Tap in to the inner wisdom”
3. Embodying and broadcasting

All three aspects will be coordinated according to the timetable made available. As a theoretical frame we will use the concept of ”presencing emerging futures” (Jaworski & Scharmer, 2000), the five disciplines (Senge et al, 1994, 1999) and the Tracking Project.

### **1. Tracking**

The roots of the English word for learning suggest that it once held a similar meaning. It originated with the Indo-European *leis*, a noun meaning ”track” or ”furrow”. To ”learn” came to mean gaining experience by **following a track** – presumably for a lifetime.

Tracking is used as a metaphor for focusing, observing, and reading patterns and signs that can tell a story. The idea is to open up for and immerse oneself in what is emerging new. Such tracking will give us an opportunity to focus on our own journeys, and to address some core questions that matter in work and life.

#### Practice 1: Tracking – Natural Movements

We prepare mentally and physically, fine-tuning our senses, our ”radar”, with some exercises. Some of these are inspired from eastern philosophy, and some from native ”scouts” from all over the world.

#### Practice 2: On – Tai Chikong mind/body energy cultivation system

By studying nature, the wise Taoists thousands of years ago developed systems for cultivating energy. These energy work and exercises will facilitate you in opening up for ”tracking” on a human-Nature deep ecological level, learning from a cultural system very different from yet accommodating – the local Scandinavian context.

#### Practice 3: Tracking te natura nvinonement and the travelers

-What (who) lives at this ”home”—flowers, grass, birds, insects, people, history & stories etc.

## **2. Retreat and reflect – the power of silence to appreciate the beauty of interrelated wholeness of diversity**

Shared vision will arise if we can focus on the challenges that matter most for us as a group consisting of different individuals (primacy of praxis). This learning process will take place both in an open setting, smaller groups, and solo sitting, facilitated by group energy-field work in plenum sessions.

Practice 1: Open Space – a method create different working groups. We will jointly define smaller groups according to our concerns.

Practice 2: Reflecting and Dialogue – in smaller groups – creating fields for ”generative conversations”. Once a day, training in thinking and reflecting together (dialogue) with the personal inputs from the tracking and retreating. Our task is to be aware of our ability to engage in a generative mode of conversation. The shared group reflection that conclude each ”learning journey” is important in helping us make sense of the knowledge developed.

### Practice 3: Solo Sitting (capacity-building)

To use the gift of nature around the island each participant can have a private spot for solo meditation, reflection, and writing personal notes on questions that matter. These personal retreats will last for about an hour each day as a ”gift” to everyone. Each participants can make their own choice on what they would like to do, examples: soft eyes and deep listening, bathing, take a walk,.....

## **3. Embodying and broadcasting**

As a result of these ”counseling’s”, some thoughts and ideas can be conceptualized. By sharing new tools and the co-creation of reflective spaces for peer-coaching with new and old friends and colleagues. Some will also participate from their homes through the net. This will be a first time ever to make a learning stage that will literally stretch our minds to participants not physically present.

Practice – technology expanding the mind and interact in real time

New insights, reflections, learning points, perhaps also business ideas will be created and embody shared vision. To be shared in a face-to-face forum – but even more exiting, through the web.

All to be shared and broadcasted, in a broader circle via the continually updated, interactive web site, to get fast feedback and new lines of thoughts, and to generate a ”living knowledge”.

The Confer-Sense is a joint learning experience where every participant is encouraged to contribute. The script evolving interactively with the audience through the web, will be a stage for learning in the new economy drama – and still enacted in real time.

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# Learning Naturally

-when technology is stretching our minds –  
for the sustained growth of wisdom awareness and well-being  
in the global knowledge – based economies

The Chinese characters representing the word "learning" are both composed of two parts:

The first character means to study. A symbol that means to "accumulate knowledge" above a symbol for a child in a doorway. The second character means to practice constantly, and it shows a bird developing the ability to leave the nest. The upper symbol represents flying; the lower symbol, youth. For the oriental mind learning is ongoing. "Study" and "practice constantly" together, suggest that learning should mean: "mastery of the way of self-improvement".

The roots of the English word for learning suggest that it once held a similar meaning. It originated with the Indo-European *leis*, a noun meaning "track" or "furrow". To "learn" came to mean gaining experience by **following a track** – presumably for a lifetime (1).

The word "business" in Scandinavian is *näringslivet*, which literally means **nourishment for life**.

The ancient Chinese characters for business, at least 3000 years old, are:

The first of these characters translates as "life" or "live". It can also be translated as "survive" and "birth". The second translates as "**meaning**". (2)

Together we will form the stage for an interactive learning experience. Together with a network of networks from all parts of the world we will explore how living traditions can co-exist and be integrated with different approaches in organizational learning. In an era of globalization we encounter management perspectives, which give fundamental new insights and paradigms. To better understand the diversity of our past is to meet the challenges of our common future destiny.

We will literally travel to the edge of the world, where we track and explore the meaning of learning organizations of tomorrow – a CONFER-SENSE where we will be aligning with the energy of Nature:

**Tracking** senses (meaning)  
**Exploring** semantics and metaphors  
**Learning** from culture systems

(1) Excerpted from *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*, Copyright 1994, Peter Senge, Art Kleiner, Charlotte Roberts, Richard B. Ross, and Bryan J. Smith.

(2) Excerpted from *The Living Company: habits for survival in a turbulent business environment*. Copyright 1997, Arie de Geus with foreword by Peter Senge.

# **Transfer the meaning of Confer-Sense:**

A global SOL arena facilitating the systematic cultivation of human-Nature energy for deep dialogue and profound healing

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(draft, July, 2000)

As part of the design team for the 2<sup>nd</sup> SOL (Society of Organizational Learning) Europe meeting, we participated in the design process in which the concept of Confer-Sense, the title of the meeting, was developed (Design Team, 2000). The meaning of the word Confer-Sense is quite obvious – it means to confer sense, or transfer meaning. However, its potential implications for the global SOL development require more careful, long term exploration. We shall offer some initial reflections here.

## **1. The purpose of Confer-Sense: Deep dialogue and profound healing towards wholeness**

Why do we need to do Confer-Sensing and not the normal Conferencing in the SOL community? We want simply to create a field (environment) that facilitates dialogue (and not one-way "speeches") so that we can better communicate. In order to communicate well, we must first have a clear intention to strive to understand each other as a whole being (and not to sell our own "ideas" – to "window shopping" audiences). This is learning (different from "selling") or experiential mutual understanding that involves two aspects:

Firstly, we need to see our differences, or better yet, to feel our differences. Each individual carries a particular prenatal endowment and postnatal social, cultural, and educational background. We must develop intimate understanding of such individual qualities. To ignore individual differences leads to idealistic and naive egalitarianism. However, to recognize differences is not to fixate on them and insist on isolation or confrontation. On the contrary, to appreciate diversity is the first step towards building empathy, harmony, synergy, and wholeness, which lead to our next point.

Secondly, we need to heal our differences. To heal is to become whole. Differences are often used as excuses for prejudice, pride, stubbornness, close-mindedness, isolation, and confrontation. We need to develop empathy, sympathy, coordination, and harmony in order to produce organic wholeness basing upon recognition of individual differences. This is like the individual parts of the mind/body system – hands and feet, brain and nerves, stomach and intestines, etc. – should be coordinated to function as a healthy whole, seeing/feeling their different qualities working in synergy and coordination, and not isolation and competition.

Wholeness in the deepest ecological sense requires the broadest and most profound and humane purpose: to facilitate all (diverse) sentient beings in their innate (equal) right in fulfilling their deepest potentials for evolutionary "Self-realization", transcend and dissolve attachment to false (opinionated) dichotomies that cause fragmentation, confusion, close-mindedness, non-communication, and isolation – deep-rooted problems facing individuals, organizations, and societies that have been aggravated in modern times by the dominance of the Newtonian-Cartesian worldview (Bohm, 1980, 1993, 1996).

It is therefore for the deep ecological human-Nature purpose that we need to learn to create, in the global SOL community, arenas-human-Nature mind/body energy field – for deep dialogue and profound healing, the goal of Confer-Sense. We hope that such

dialogue and healing can help establish human-Nature based value systems for learning organizations of the new millennium, which will thus transcend concerns in sheer economic terms, but will still make the best and most responsible business sense (Greenleaf, 1977).

## **2. Confer-Sense through integrating systematic cultivation of human-Nature mind/body energy (Three-Element) field**

The wisdom of 20<sup>th</sup> century physical science has established the primary role of energy (field) in the physical world (Bohm, 1980, p. 174). However, the problem of today's educational system and management practice is that "most of us have not seriously cultivated the 'state of being' needed to work with fields" and "there is nothing in our development as professionals that has aided this cultivation." (Senge et al, 1999, p 502)

Therefore, Confer-Sense should facilitate the integration in learning organizations systemic cultivation of human cognitive capacity for "structural coupling" (Maturana and Varela, 1987) of mind/body energy field (Husemoen and Zhang, 1999a). Such cultivation should increase our experiential (tacit) knowledge of (and our ability to work with) the "subtle field of thought and emotions" in order to facilitate the production of empathetic "superconductive" shared energy environment for organizational learning and change (Senge et al, 1999, p. 501; Isaacs, 1993, p. 31).

According to the traditional theory of the Yuanji human-Nature mind/body energy cultivation system, the body's level of Three-Element (3E: Qi, Light, Sound) energy – particularly Element Light energy – is responsible for the level of our immune system's power as well as our creative cognitive power (Zhang, 1992; Zhang, 1999). Therefore, the systematic cultivation of human-Nature Three-Element energy (field) directly sustains the growth of healing force as well as cognitive creativity (Husemoen and Zhang, 1999b). Such sustained growth of mind/body ("enactive", "embodied", experiential; Varela et al, 1991, p. 148) cognitive creativity deepens the process of dialogue and communication through refined and more effective "structural coupling" of the collective 3E field.

Our long term vision for Confer-Sense is the trans-cultural integration of such traditional systemic human-Nature mind/body energy cultivation practice in learning organizations in order to help build experiential understanding of subtle energy fields to produce changes for deep dialogue and profound healing. This integration should result in concrete healing for individual mind/body energy systems, and sustained growth towards psycho-physical, communal, organizational, and, ultimately, social and ecological wholeness.