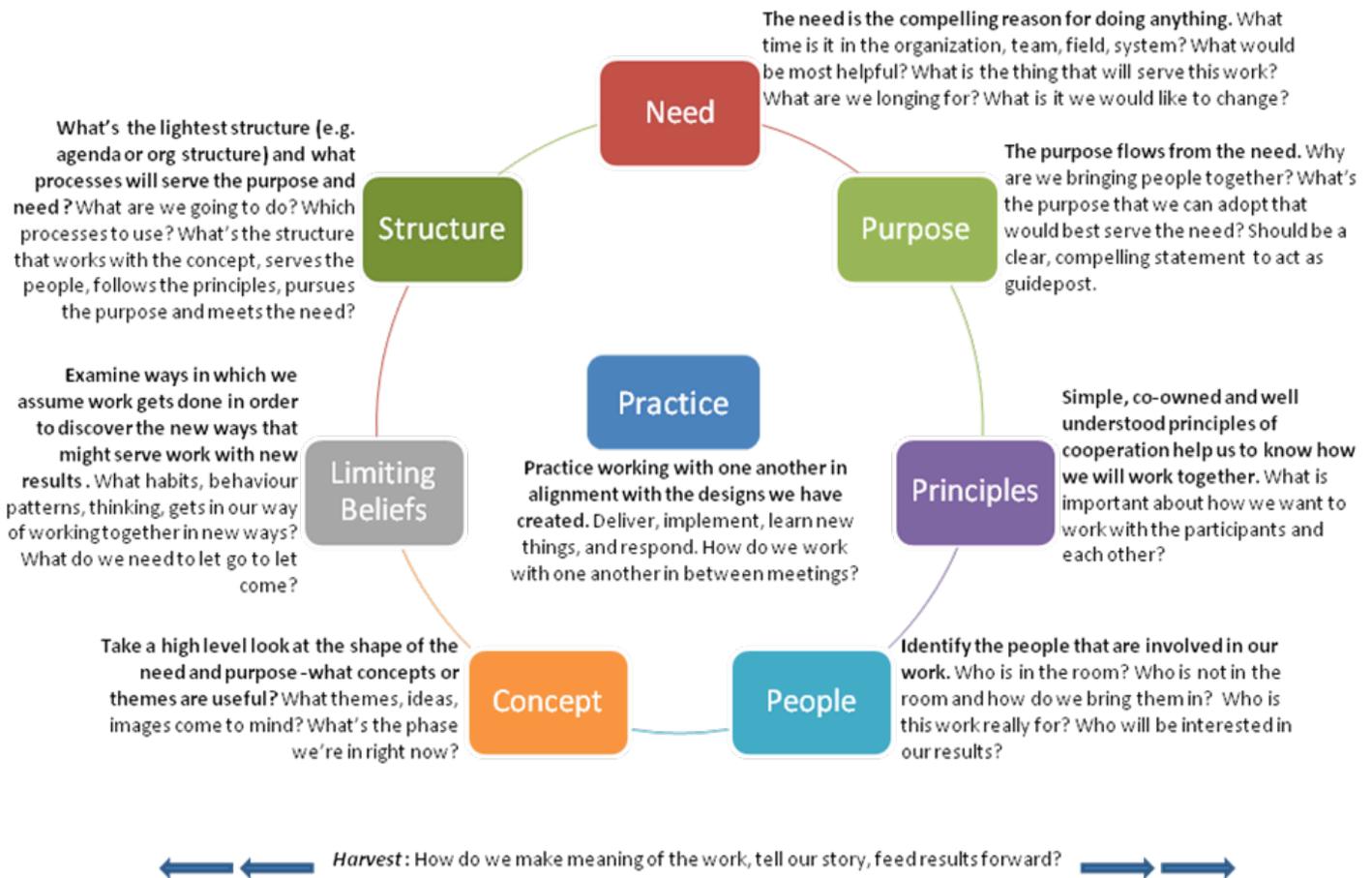


## The *Chaordic* Stepping Stones

When there is a call, and we have understood the need to work in the chaordic space of generative emergence, it helps to have a tool to plan our work together. Over the years many of us have worked with clear strategic steps we take when walking the *Chaordic* path. We call these the chaordic stepping stones. These steps allow us to create conversational processes that are rooted in real need that are sustainable for the community they serve and the people working within them. These steps can be used both as a planning tool and to help understand what you are discovering about an organization, community or initiative. They are all interdependent, although in working with these as a planning tool, it is most common to begin with need.

The stepping stones name the ongoing conversations we need to be in during the evolution of our work. These elements give us the minimum order we need.



## Designing meetings and processes

In designing a meeting or a process, each of these stepping stones is activated by asking key questions. In beginning to design work together we can select from these questions (or create others) to help us explore each stone as we lay it in place. The stepping stones integrate and transcend each other. All are done in relationship to the others.

## Chaordic Stepping Stone

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**Need:** The need is the compelling reason for doing anything. Sensing the need is the first step to designing a meeting, organizational structure or change initiative that is relevant. The need is outside of our work: it is the thing that is served by the work you are doing.

**Purpose:** From the need flows the purpose. Purpose statements are clear and compelling and the guide us in doing our best possible work.

**Principles:** Principles of cooperation help us to know how we will work together. It is very important that these principles be simple, co-owned and well understood. These are not principles that are platitudes or that lie on a page somewhere. They are crisp statements of how we agree to operate together so that over the long term we can sustain the relationships that make this work possible.

**People:** Once the need and the purpose are in the place and we have agreed on our principles of cooperation, we can begin to identify the people that are involved in our work. Mapping the network helps us to see who is in this work for us and who will have an interest in what we are doing.

**Concept:** This is a high level look at the shape of our endeavour. For example, if our need was to design a way to cross a body of water, we could choose a bridge, a causeway or a ferry. The concept gives form to different structures or organization for doing our work. We might explore the structures, such as circles and networks – understand what these are, how they operate, how they are embedded with various contexts and cultures and what implications each has for our work.

## Possible Questions to Ask

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What time is it in the world now ?

What time is it for our initiative now ?

What are the challenges and opportunities we are facing ?

What do I really need to be able to understand and work on in the world?

What is the need that this project can uniquely meet?

What does the world need this conference to be?

If this work should live up to its fullest potential, what do you dream (or vision) is possible?

What is the purpose we can adopt that will best meet the need?

What could this work do/create/inspire?

What is the next level for the for our work? Where should we be heading?

What is the simplest and most powerful question we could keep at the core of our work?

What are the principles we want to enact at for our learning networks?

What is it important to remember about how we want to work with the participants in our initiative?

What do we think is most important to remember as we design to meet the need and purpose?

What unique ways of doing work and being together can we bring to this work.

If our team should live up to its fullest potential - what do you dream (or vision) possible for this team?

Who is in the room?

Who is not in the room and how do we bring them in?

How do we leverage relationships to propagate the ideas generated by our work together?

Who will be interested in the results of our work?

What are the shapes that we might choose for our work?

What is the deeper pattern of our work and what organizational forms are in alignment with that?

How might we activate our principles to best do our work?

## Chaordic Stepping Stone

## Possible Questions to Ask

**Limiting beliefs:** So much of what we do when we organize ourselves is based on unquestioned models of behaviour. These patterns can be helpful but they can also limit us in fulfilling our true potential. We cannot create innovation in the world using old models and approaches. It pays to examine ways in which we assume work gets done in order to discover the new ways that might serve work with new results. Engaging in this work together brings us into a co-creative working relationship, where we can help each other into new and powerful ways of working together, alleviating the fear and anxiety of the unknown.

What makes us tremble, and what do we fear about new ways of working together?

Who would we be without our stories of old ways of working?

What will it take for us to fully enter into working in new and unfamiliar ways?

What is our own learning edge in working together?

What's inside me that is getting in the way of us being collectively successful?

**Structure:** Once the concept has been chosen, it is time to create the structure that will channel our resources. It is in these conversations that we make decisions about the resources of the group: time, money, energy, commitment, and attention. In the case of a meeting or gathering, it is through these conversations that we decide on the agenda for the time together. What's the structure that works with the concept, serves the people, follows the principles, pursues the purpose and meets the need?

Who are we becoming when we meet and work together this way?

How do we support the aspirations of the group?

What is the lightest structure that will serve our purpose and need?

What role might the Core team play when the project is over?

How do we wisely combine the various organizational concepts to support our work and sustain the results?

**Practice:** The ongoing practice within the structures we build is important. This is the world of to do lists, conference calls and email exchanges. The invitation here is to practice working with one another in alignment with the designs we have created. Deliver, implement, learn new things, and respond.

What do we need to do to sustain our work together?

What is our own practice of working in networks?

How do we leverage relationships and support the work that arises from them?

How do we sustain and nourish our relationships and collective aspirations?

What commitments are we willing to make to contribute to the success of our endeavour?

**Harvest:** There is no point in doing work in the world unless we plan to harvest the fruits of our labours. Harvesting includes making meaning of our work, telling the story and feeding forward our results so that they have the desired impacts in the world.

What are the forms of harvest from our work that best serves the need?

What intentional harvest will serve our purpose?

What are the artifacts that will be the most powerful representations of what we have created?

How will we carry the DNA of the our work forward?

What are the feedback loops that we need to design to ensure that learning and change accelerates itself?

How will we stay open to emergent learning?

What are the questions we need to carry about what we are learning by meeting this way?