

AI SUMMIT TOOLBOX *guide*

THE SUMMIT EVENT: SUPPORTING SELF-ORGANIZED GENEROSITY

THE CHANGE LAB
FROM THE MICHELLE MCQUAID GROUP

WHERE TO BEGIN?

Every step of the AI Summit event should maximize the opportunities for people to individually and collectively flourish. It is not enough to simply make this a “positive” experience. In order for transformation to take place it needs to be a generative experience and that means creating a psychologically safe space where people can speak honestly about their hopes and their fears.

It’s also important to recognize and be prepared for the fact that not everyone may feel positive throughout the entire experience, but instead that emotions are likely to ebb and flow and that this is a natural and healthy part of any growth experience. It’s also helpful to know that there are magic mechanisms that can be baked into an AI Summit design that are likely to psychologically, neurologically, socially, and systemically draw out the best in the people participating and enable the alignment, amplification, and magnification of strengths across the system.

So what are these mechanisms and can you embed them into your AI Summit event?

DISCOVERY: HOW CAN YOU SHARE TALES OF STRENGTH?

Once the define phase is complete, and the whole system has gathered to kick off your AI Summit event, it is time for the discovery phase, where your goals is to enable people to share their tales of strengths and uncover the system's positive core. Stories — the written or verbal accounts that link a set of ideas or a series of events into a meaningful storyline – are what enable people to make sense of what is happening in a system. They are at the heart of the system's identity – both personally and collectively – and are the vehicle through which cultural expectations are made meaningful. Thus creating a positive disruption in a system that will support its ability to flourish requires compassionate coaches to amplify the generative stories told about its past and fan the emergence of strength-focused narratives that create a catalyst for change around the AI Summit topic(s).

"Organizational change occurs through language, storytelling, and communication." ***- Diana Whitney***

The truth is that researchers have found systems learn little about excellence by studying failure. However, by enabling the exploration of the consistent life-giving factors that every system possesses – even in its most challenging moments – the positive core of its strengths and the essence of the system at its best emerges, enabling people's confidence in the system and themselves to grow, and feelings of competence and capacity to become enriched. Rather than allowing the past to be romanticized, eulogized, or a static set of events, the exploration of people's stories about the system "at its best," opens up positive possibilities through which the positive disruption can be met.

Typically the discovery phase:

- Begins with an appreciative interviewing process where people were invited to share their tales of strengths by answering a set of predetermined, generative questions from their participant guide about their best experiences in the system, what they valued about their work and the system, exploration of the chosen Summit topic(s), and their hopes for the system's future. Intended to be a "holographic beginning" – in which the scope of the entire AI Summit process and topics were explored – the discovery phase questions are designed to elicit stories, stimulate reflection and learning, and surface the system's strengths people are performing at their best.
- People are then usually invited to introduce their partner's tale of strengths to the rest of their table group. As these stories are shared, a recorder for the group prepares a flip chart to summarize the stories and the strengths (or causes of success) that are being identified. A reporter for the group then prepares to present one story, and the five most common causes of success back to the room.
- The facilitator then invites each group (or a selection of groups if time is limited) to share their stories and the strengths they identified. The strengths are usually captured visually with a graphic scribe or using post-it notes from the groups or a word art picture to form the positive core – the collective strengths the group has to build upon for the AI Summit topic. The goal here is not to find common ground, but higher ground as stories serve to make the exceptional seem plausible. It was an opportunity for shared meaning making, or "sense making" as organizational theorist Karl Weick describes it, as the whole system engages in a deeper level of dialogue, learning, and exploration that starts to open doors to short-term and long-term possibilities.

MAGIC MECHANISM: SPARKING SURPRISING CONNECTIONS

Although the discovery phase may sound like it is all about gathering novel information and data from across the system to nudge it toward the edge of chaos, it would be a gross mistake to underestimate the power of the dynamic connections that are facilitated through this process. Consciously leveraging the opportunities of improbable pairs, mix-matched groups, and stakeholder groups during this phase creates a powerful opportunity for creating new knowledge and strengthening connections across a system. Likewise, the creation of generative questions that are surprising, touch people's hearts and spirits, enable people to build genuine connections, and to see reality a little differently will shape the kind of conversations that unfold. In and of themselves, these conversations became mini-positive disruptions that can spark surprising connections and opportunities to create momentum and energy for change for weeks, months, and sometimes years to come.

MAGIC MECHANISM: LISTEN TO IGNITE AUTHENTIC POSITIVITY

Generative stories are powerful because they grab people's attention, they are memorable, they move people's heads and hearts, and they challenge how people see and understand the world and open them up to action. But people have to be willing to listen. Listening is what cultivates people's sense of the whole by surfacing a system's differences, connections, and shared meaning making.

Researchers suggest that when people listen with sincerity, generosity, and compassion others feel heard and a bond of trust emerges in the relationships. This style of deep listening requires people to listen not simply with their ears, but with their eyes, their hearts, and the nonjudgmental parts of their minds. As a result, the quality of their listening changes the conversation, as meaning is found in places they would never have experienced alone. It opens unexpected doors to elevation, creativity, belonging, and self-control.

By creating opportunities where every person knows they will have the opportunity to speak about what matters to them and that what they share will be valued and appreciated by the people around them, AI Summits encourage people to be more generous in how they listen and more willing to open their hearts and their minds to different points of views and experiences. As a result, people's experience of mutual appreciation and surprise can eclipse the human tendency to be self-focused, and result in the unexpected deepening of bonds between speakers and listeners as they share heightened feelings of authenticity and positivity.

DREAM: CAN YOU CO-CREATE A SHARED PURPOSE?

Researchers have found that creative interactions in which people can fully participate with their heads, hearts, bodies, and spirits are at the heart of engaging emergence because it entices them to explore the familiar and unfamiliar with new eyes or a beginner's mind, as the Buddhists might say. Thus the goal of the dream phase in an AI Summit is to surface the values and aspirations that enliven the system. It is an invitation to align and amplify its positive core – ensuring that the hopes that emerge are practically grounded on the system's strengths — by pushing the creative edges of positive possibilities, wondering about the system's greatest potential and uncovering opportunities for the system to have a more positive impact on its environment.

"When individuals clearly identify what they truly care about (have passion for), and take personal responsibility for what is happening, things start to move."***- Harrison Owen***

Researchers suggest that to maximize generativity during this phase, it's important not to simply surface the similarities in the system's hopes – although this is useful and necessary — but to also encourage people to stand for what they value and to openly explore the differences and diversity of their dreams. Encouraging people to pay attention to what they truly care about challenges them to rise to the best in themselves, and to bring out the best in each other and the system. It is an act of service that supersedes people's egos, enables them to contribute their creative potential and connects them to something more universal that enables win-win outcomes and higher-order coherence to emerge.

The reality is that the most creative, energized, committed results occur when people follow their passions while being of service to others in the system. It is how shared purpose is co-created across a system, so that leaders finally see what people are actually intrinsically motivated to do and what "might be" as the system grows. After all, people excel and learn not because they are told to, but because they want to.

Typically people remain in their mix-max groups for the dream phase and:

- Begin with the facilitator introducing people to the idea that positive and meaningful images of the future tend to pull us into positive actions. For example, Fred Polak who launched a sweeping study of Western civilization found that the rise and fall of images of the future predicted the rise and fall of cultures – including the advancement of art, architecture, music, commerce, science, politics, and education – due to the "activation effect" of positive images. This led him to conclude that meaningful, positive images have the capacity to become self-fulfilling, self-propelling engines for change that determine the future of a system (for more see David's article on Positive Images, Positive Actions). People are encouraged to: build on the positive core uncovered during the discovery phase to ensure their dreams were both practical and grounded in the organization's history and strengths; aim higher and to help each other to be bold as they looked for ways to use their passions and resources to be of service to others around the AI Summit topic; and to think like artists and to use the stories and hopes from the discovery phase like a palette of colors that allowed them to paint vivid, compelling, meaningful images of what the future could look like if their best ideas became a reality.
- Groups then commence a "dream dialogue", where they are asked to imagine waking up in the future and visualize their system as they most want it to be — as if it existed now. Given time to imagine concretely the bigger, braver, bolder organization of their dreams, they are asked to share their hopes, dreams, and sense of opportunities by answering a series of pre-determined questions from their participant guides. As the group listen to each other's dreams, they are asked to look for common and unique elements. What are the bigger, braver, and bolder images? What are the smallest changes that might help them reach something bigger?

- Groups are then asked to choose a creative way to present the envisioned future by preparing a three-minute "portrayal" (i.e. a TV special, drama, a day in the life, a work of art, panel presentation) as if it was happening now and ensure that all group members have a role. They are told that the more playful the portrayals the better, so often art supplies, costumes, instruments, and other props are provided to help people fire up their imaginations and give the guiding image of their future a gripping appeal, while anchoring their hopes and dreams into their bodies and psyches. The creation of these presentations is typically one of the most fondly remembered parts of any AI Summit – even in the most traditional systems who "don't do" creative presentations – because of the levels of energy, excitement, and commitment this activity unleashes in a system for the co-creation of a meaningful purpose. Don't force people into these presentations, but instead offer a genuine invitation and opportunity for individual creative expression and let each table group self-organize to select the medium and content that feels authentic for them.
- The facilitator then invites groups to the front of the room to share their dreams. By the time eight to ten groups have presented, most AI Summits find that the law of diminishing returns often kicks in as people have expended so much emotional energy delivering and watching the presentations that their hearts and minds are full. Common themes often also started being repeated at this point, even though the format of the presentations differs. If every group wants to share their dream and to deprive them of this opportunity – particularly if it was a live act – would leave people feeling disappointed that their hopes would be not heard by the system you can try: breaking into different rooms with simultaneous presentations, splitting presentations over a break period, combining tables (although it was generally suggested that groups were no larger than twelve people), or setting creative tasks that are visual, like a newspaper front page that could be viewed as a gallery of hopes.
- People are often encouraged to take notes throughout the presentations of the elements of the visions they found most exciting (what), and the opportunities and possibilities for action (how) and to share these reflections at the end. The goal is not to come to a consensus as this risks robbing the group of energy, but to surface the guiding images of a meaningful future about which people felt passionate about and were willing to take responsibility for making a reality.

MAGIC MECHANISM: ALIGN AND MAGNIFY STRENGTHS

Peter Drucker – one of the greatest scholars of leadership and management over the last century – suggested that the ageless essence of leadership is to create an alignment of strengths in ways that make a system's weaknesses irrelevant. David agrees, arguing that strengths don't simply allow people to perform, but to transform a system as new combinations and configurations of strengths become activated and elevated.

While this sounds simple enough, researchers have found that the human brain is wired with a negativity bias that means people are more adept at spotting weaknesses and feeling an evolutionary pull to fix them, than they are at being able to identify and build on strengths. Yet every living system works to some degree, and thus has strengths — those things that bring it to life and make it feel strong — that can be built upon when responding to a disruption. In fact, a system cannot excel by simply trying to fix its weaknesses and limiting its failures, it is only by amplifying and magnifying its strengths so that it understands "what is best" and imagines "what is next" that an upward spiral of growth is created.

Nurtured by the appreciative and caring eyes through which people start to see each other and the system during the discovery phase, the dream phase creates a space for the zone of proximal development – the distance between someone's actual development level and their higher level of potential development in collaboration with more capable peers – to occur and strengthen people's learning and capacity. By challenging people to package and present their shared hopes in a creative format that breathes life and energy into their ideas, people start taking responsibility and feeling a sense of ownership for their dreams. After all, it is only by surrounding ourselves with other stars that we are truly able to shine.

MAGIC MECHANISM: BUILD A MEANINGFUL LANGUAGE OF HOPE

Charles Snyder – one of the world's leading researchers on hope – notes that hope springs to life when people understand that the future is fundamentally undetermined and open to human influence. Powered by people's imagination, it is a life sustaining force that connects memories of past success with the potential of tomorrow and determines how they live now. Psychologist Verena Kast explains: "By hoping, we walk toward a light that we do not see but sense somewhere in the darkness of the future."

Researchers explain that hope is generated and sustained when people, facing the mystery of the future, share their highest ideals or "ultimate concerns" that provide them with meaning and purpose – that which Plato calls the good, the true, and the beautiful. Thus, hope prospers when people reach beyond the self and place themselves in the service of others and pursue what matters most to them, providing them with a heightened sense of meaning and purpose.

Hope has also been found to be an essential ingredient in systemic flourishing because it acts as a strange attractor that spawns generative conversations and creates a shared vocabulary that offers a potent "life-giving" force for challenging the status quo and mobilizing the moral, social and relational energies a system needs to translate vision into reality and belief into practice. After all, as influential philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein once explained: "The limits of my language are the limits of my world."

The creative dream presentations often surface key words, phrases, expressions, images, stories, and artefacts that enable a meaningful language of hope to emerge around the AI Summit topic. Where possible, these words and images should immediately be embedded into the rest of the AI Summit experience to help provide a set of compelling values and ideas for generative and systemic action in response to the positive disruption.

DESIGN: WILL YOU PLAY TOGETHER TO UNLOCK POTENTIAL?

The National Institute For Play founder Dr. Stuart Brown notes: "We are built to play and built through play." His research suggests that playing together gives people the freedom to see things in a different way, and as a result they stumble upon new behaviors, thoughts, strategies, and ways of working and being. It allows people to create imaginative new cognitive combinations that enable them to discover what works. Found to be critical not only for people's levels of creativity and innovation, play is a catalyst that energizes people, makes them productive, helps to sustain their social relationships and impacts their ability to flourish.

Thus, the goal of the design phase in an AI Summit is to evoke new thinking, new partnerships, and new ways of working together by playing to surface pathways to realize the system's shared hopes. Without the use of an exhausting or paralyzing search for consensus, people are encouraged to converge and self-organize around the hopes about which they feel so passionate they are willing to take responsibility for designing potential ways forward for the system. Then by embracing a generative design thinking process that is open, engaging, adaptive, and playful the system's magnified strengths help people to produce a blueprint for execution of the system's shared hopes that is so inspiring and functional they want to begin immediately making it happen.

"The opposite of play… is not work, it is vacillation, or worse, it is depression." ***- Brian Sutton-Smith***

In recent years the design phase of AI Summits has undergone significant change as David and his colleagues have introduced the insights of design theory and the practices of design thinking into this phase to help systems flourish. Typically it now includes the following:

- Over lunch, the facilitator usually sits down with members of the steering committee who have been taking notes during the dream phase and identify the ideas that resonated with people and could represent a design opportunity area that would give the system traction to move forward. By comparing their notes and thinking carefully about what they have heard during the dream phase, they try to answer one question: "What are the tangible opportunity areas that we could impact?" While some of these opportunity areas may have been identified as potential hopes by the steering committee prior to the AI Summit event, generally over 50 percent of them are not anticipated until the dreams have been shared. It is worth noting that there is no "right" number of opportunity areas for a system to pursue, there was only what is "right" for each system given the number of people in the AI Summit and the number of self-organized teams that can be resourced and supported after the AI Summit event to take the ideas forward.

- The group then frame these opportunity areas as “How might we?” questions. A design thinking tool used to frame a system’s shared hopes into opportunities for design, “How might we?” questions give people a powerful frame for innovative thinking by suggesting that an answer is possible and offering people the chance to answer it in multiple ways. Neither too broad, nor too narrow, these questions create a launchpad for people to start brainstorming, but also give them enough breadth to explore wild ideas. For example, “How might we embed positive education into our existing curriculum?”
- When people return from lunch, they usually find that a series of design studios comprising large foam core boards have appeared throughout room with the “How might we?” question displayed on the top, piles of sticky notes, and sticker dots for voting. The facilitator shares some of the insights and practices that guide design thinking (for more see the wonderful guide prepared by IDEO) and how to embrace a designer’s mindset as people are encouraged to come together and play with ways to make their shared hopes of making a difference for others a reality for their system. And quickly explains each of the opportunity areas, reminding people of what they heard and saw during the dream presentations, using the shared language of hope that emerged, and the “How might we?” statements to help people embrace a designer mindset.
- People are then given the freedom to vote with their feet and move to the design studio for the opportunity area that they feel passionate enough about to take responsibility for shaping. Once everybody has joined a design studio, the groups begin a brainstorming exercise to answer their “How might we?” question by quickly writing their ideas on sticky notes, explaining them to the other participants, and sticking them on the large foam core boards so that as ideas are added they can be grouped around common themes and built upon. These ideas are then prioritized by inviting people to vote using color sticker dots to vote on the items they most wanted to carry forward and all of this is documented for later reporting.
- Each design studio is then given a design kit to build with (usually a large envelope containing paper, scissors, tape, modeling clay, pipe cleaners, wooden sticks, balloons, string, and other building items – see a suggested shopping list at www.thechangelabs.com), and asked to select just one of their most highly voted ideas to prototype and to start building. Larger design studio teams are generally encouraged to break up into smaller groups to work on discrete elements of the prototype.
- Finally, each design studio team is asked to prepare a three to five minute presentation of the prototype so they can receive feedback.

MAGIC MECHANISM: EMBRACE THE MESSY PROCESS OF CONVERGENCE

By testing competing ideas against each other, design thinking leader and IDEO CEO, Tim Brown has found there is an increased likelihood that the outcomes will be bolder, more creatively disruptive, and more compelling. More choice, however, also means more complexity, which can make the system's shared hopes difficult to execute.

After riding the emotional high during the discovery and dream phase where divergent thinking is openly encouraged, people sometimes struggle during this phase of an AI Summit as it gets harder and messier to converge and collaborate with people. The truth is that inviting people to take responsibility for what they love can be a messy process because most people have not been taught to self-organize and take responsibility for themselves.

Fortunately, researchers note that when invited to do so from a place of caring and wanting to make a meaningful difference for others, people consistently rise to the occasion and discover that both the needs of individuals and the needs of the collective can be served. In fact, this discovery quickly becomes the measure of success as higher-order coherence emerges and people's uniqueness turns into creative contributions for the whole system.

As people are nudged out of their comfort zones, it can be helpful to frame the design exercises as an opportunity for people to practice being comfortably uncomfortable as needed, and to remember that any negative emotions experienced during this process are just their body's way of letting them know that something important to them is on the line and to honor what matters most to them in the conversations they are having in their design studios. It can also be helpful during the design phase to encourage people to embrace a growth mindset as they let go of knowing the answers and begin to play, to test, to fail, and to learn together.

MAGIC MECHANISM: HARNESS POSITIVE URGENCY TO AMPLIFY PROGRESS

Peter Senge's widely acclaimed systems thinking book, The Fifth Discipline, points out that the juxtaposition of a system's vision (what people want) and a clear picture of its current reality (where people are relative to what they want) results in the natural force of "creative tension" as people try to bring their vision and reality together and seek resolution. As the gap between their vision and their reality dawns, he explains people are often left feeling anxious, stressed, or discouraged and this results in "emotional tension," to which people's first response is often to try and lower the vision and thereby lighten their load. However, when people understand the natural force of creative tension and learn to embrace the emotional tension that can accompany it, the gap between a system's vision and current reality can create a positive sense of urgency that generates the energy for designing the new and eclipsing the old.

To be clear, this is not about creating the often recommended "burning platform" that tries to magnify urgency by inciting fear and dissatisfaction – even if it needs to be manufactured – so that staying with the status quo seems more dangerous than launching into the unknown. Rather, it is about drawing on the system's shared sense of purpose to magnify and refract its strengths in the service of others. Once people feel called to be of service to others, researchers have found that they often experience a greater sense of urgency for following the path for which they now feel intended. It is this meaningful beckoning toward activities that are morally, socially and personally significant that liberates and mobilizes the system's courage, commitment and enthusiasm to overcome the constraints of their current reality together.

The rapid prototyping exercise during the design phase gives people the freedom to move beyond dialogue and into action so they can address the creative tension between their shared dreams and their reality. By encouraging people to play and learn together as they rapidly expand, integrate and test their ideas for making a positive difference, these small - and sometimes miraculous – wins ignited a "self-reinforcing progress loop" which researchers suggest enables the system and the people in it to more consistently flourish.

DESTINY: SUPPORT SELF-ORGANIZED GENEROSITY

As compassionate coaches of disruption, researchers urge us to embrace nature's process of emergent change by welcoming the disruptions that break apart the status quo, surfacing innovations, and distinctions among the system's different parts, and allowing a new, more complex coherence to arise. Originally named "delivery," and sometimes called "deploy", David and his colleague Diana Whitney explain that: "What we discovered, quite honestly, was that momentum for change and long-term sustainability increased the more we abandoned 'delivery' ideas of action planning, monitoring progress, and building implementation strategies." Instead, they suggest that the goal in this phase is to introduce plans and processes that encourage and nurture ongoing improvised actions by people across the system to ramp up a collective sense of destiny.

"Of all the creatures on earth … man alone is the architect of his destiny." ***- William James***

For example, in a meta-case analysis of appreciative inquiry applications nearly all of the transformational cases adopted an "improvisational approach" to the destiny phase where new ideas emerged and were widely accepted and the system sanctioned people to do whatever made sense to them to move toward their shared dreams and designs. Rather than relying on traditional change management tactics to try and implement something as did most of the non-transformational cases, leaders looked for where people were innovating and then helped them along when they could, which enabled change to occur more quickly.

While this may sound like a large leap of faith, remember that when a living system is open, rather than closed to the generative possibilities of its environment, it is capable of self-organizing into new relationships that increase its capacity rather than succumbing to disorder. This order is not created by complex controls, but by the presence of the guiding fields of identify, values, and vision for the system that support the exercise of individual freedom and enable its ongoing learning and intelligence. During this phase therefore, you have to trust that the previous Ds have created a generative set of images and ideas that are so compelling people will voluntarily and responsibly find ways to transform their work processes in the service of others.

We believe the best way to achieve this in a one-day AI Summit is by:

- Having everyone participate in a Destiny Marketplace during afternoon tea, where they are encouraged to visit as many design studios as possible to hear the aspiration statements and prototype pitches and noting down their thoughts. Then at the end of afternoon tea inviting them to spend their appreciative votes in the marketplace by giving their offers of support to the design studios they care enough to help take responsibility for.
- Design studios teams are given an opportunity to reflect on this feedback and think about the next steps that would be required to take their ideas forward. They are also asked to indicate how confident and ready they feel to move into action beyond the AI Summit and to share this with the group. This becomes the basis of the post-Summit change plans.
- Finally, people are asked to take a moment a reflect on what they have learned today, their post-Summit hopes, and one thing they can do to make their shared dreams a reality. These are shared with other participants in an open mic reflection with the whole group before the AI Summit event is closed.

MAGIC MECHANISM: PRIORITIZE A CULTURE OF SELF-PROTECTIVE GIVING

Professors Richard Ryan and Edward Deci note that perhaps the most common, and yet overlooked, attribute of human beings is that people are normatively cooperative, social creatures with robust capacities for kindness, compassion, and benevolence. Contrary to the popular view of human nature as inherently selfish and aggressive, they suggest that both evolutionary and cultural developments have instead prepared people to primarily be relationally engaged, norm assimilating, rule following, and generous unless conditions thwart the satisfaction of their needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy.

Other researchers echo these observations, noting that when people are given room to take responsibility for their passions, it awakens a sense of abundance and generosity toward others.

"Effective self-organization in human systems starts with voluntary self-selection in response to a genuine invitation." ***- Harrison Owen***

While this level of caring and generosity sounds ideal to ensure people continue taking responsibility after the AI Summit, researchers have found that there is a genuine risk of collaboration burnout in systems that rely heavily on self-organization. For example, a study of more than three hundred organizations found that the distribution of collaborative work often becomes extremely lopsided with 20-30 percent of value-added collaborations coming from only 3-5 percent of people who become known as 'givers' for being both capable and willing to help. Thus, the increasing demands placed on givers can turn a virtuous cycle into a vicious cycle that creates system bottlenecks and undermines the givers' effectiveness and ability to flourish.

As a result, Professor Adam Grant and his colleagues caution that although givers are the most valuable people in a system, they're also at the greatest risk of burnout. They explain that while "selfless givers" have a high concern for others, they suffer from having a low concern for themselves and consequently their acts of generosity leave them exhausted and paradoxically helping others less. In contrast, "self-protective givers" are generous, but they know their limits so instead of saying "yes" to every request, they look for high-impact, low-cost ways of giving and consequently offer the most direct support, take the most initiative, make the best suggestions and the most sustainable contributions in a system.

During the destiny phase, AI Summits can help to build or reinforce a culture of self-protective giving by ensuring that the invitation for continued participation is genuinely offered, rather than being a veiled command. By providing people with different opportunities (i.e. joining an opportunity team or their individual pledges) to shape how, when, and whom they help, this phase of the AI Summit enables like-minded and motivated people to find each other across the system and make something happen. Of course, a real invitation carries the risk that people may not choose to give, but we believe it is better before the AI Summit event concludes to honestly confront such a lack of willingness or capacity to take responsibility for realizing the shared purpose than to naively push forward.

MAGIC MECHANISM: CELEBRATE AUTHENTIC GRIT

Researchers note that the seeds of most great ideas are often misunderstood, dismissed, and sometimes actively discouraged by others. As a result, beginnings are often laden with self-doubt, false starts, and hard work as the dynamic tension between people's habits and their pioneering spirit enables them to carve a trail of learning, innovation, and adaptation toward something they find so compelling they feel they have no choice but to try and make it happen. In a word, it requires what Professor Angela Duckworth describes as "grit."

Angela and her colleagues explain that: "Grit is the passion and perseverance for long-term goals." Their research suggests that the most successful people in any system rarely succumb to thoughts of giving up and instead of interpreting the inevitable obstacles, setbacks, and plateaus in their progress as signals to quit, they see these as signs to intensify their effort and practice and persist because they believe they have the capacity to learn and grow. Strongly intertwined with the practices of Carol's growth mindsets, grit is what enables people to "fall down seven times, stand up eight.".

Carol cautions, however, that grit and growth mindset practices can backfire when people and systems become so focused on achieving an outcome, they are no longer attuned to the environment around them. Unable to find the pause or stop button to assess the feedback about why their approach is not working, performance coach and researcher Caroline Adams Miller suggests that moments of "stubborn grit" make it difficult for people to step away from a goal that no longer makes sense because of the "sunk costs" of their energy and resources. In order to avoid this risk, she recommends cultivating "authentic grit."

> "Authentic grit is the passionate pursuit of hard goals that awe and inspire others to become better people, flourish emotionally, take positive risks, and live their best lives." ***- Caroline Adams Miller***

Caroline suggests that people with authentic grit have discovered that setbacks, failures and disappointments are part of how they learn, grow, and build resilience. Knowing that they are running a marathon and not a sprint, authentically gritty people practice having a growth-mindset and being a self-protective giver to ensure that their determination is not leading to the harm or neglect of themselves or others and instead provides inspiration and helps a system to flourish. Grounded in purpose and able to fill people with hope, authentic grit gives people the ongoing confidence, humility, and determination to take responsibility for their passions, not to boost themselves up in the eyes of others, but because they want to make a difference

In his book Emotional Success, Professor David DeSteno, also recognizes the gritty power of social emotions – such as gratitude, compassion, and authentic pride – that are evoked when we help others. Pointing out that self-control has evolved from people's need to co-operate with each other, he notes that the experience of social emotions has been found to help people to be more future-orientated in their choices, to willingly acquire new skills, and to persevere in the face of difficulty, so they can achieve outcomes that benefit themselves and others in the long run.

The final paired reflections and open microphone at the end of the destiny phase and the AI Summit event itself, creates a moment for authentic grit to be recognized and celebrated in a system. By savoring their newly awakened shared purpose, the difference they have already started to make for others, and the gratitude they feel for the experience they've just had together, the social emotions of compassion, authentic pride and gratitude can be evoked. Given studies have found that people who habitually experience these social emotions have lower levels of anxiety, a greater desire to help others and are more likely to persevere and achieve their goals, the open microphone reflection is a powerful and effective way to close an AI Summit event so try not to short change your group of this important moment.

NEED MORE HELP?

AI SUMMIT COACHING

Creating change can be hard, which is why we don't want you to struggle through this process alone. If you find you need a little extra help why not draw on the expertise of one of our AI Summit coaches? You can have either:

AI SUMMIT COACHING POWERSHOT

One-hour, one-off, one-on-one coaching session in person or by Skype to ask us all the AI Summit questions you have and get additional advice, insights and resources tailored for your unique needs. We'll review any AI Summit materials you have prior to the call, record the call for you so you can revisit it as many times as you want and provide you with our written recommendations.

AI SUMMIT COACHING PACKAGE

4 x one-hour coaching sessions for you, your sponsors or your entire steering committee to help you plan, deliver and drum in the results of your AI Summit. These sessions are spaced to suit your needs and include any AI Summit training, advice, reviews and resources you may need. We'll be with you at every step of your AI Summit process so you can be the change champion your system needs.

For AI Summit coaching options please contact **chelle@michellemcquid.com** and let us know what you need.