

## SEEING WHAT'S INVINCIBLE PART 2

### *3 Practices I find helpful*

Who knows how life will unfold? The future is always a mystery; however, that's not a reason not to practice being available to that mystery. In fact, because I have done a lot of practice I now realize it has helped me relax and engage in this natural unfolding.

I'll group these into 3 tips for now.

**Become a clear container; nourish my sense of compassion; expand my awareness.**

#### **1. Become a clear container**

How did I do it?

Answer #1: Mindfulness. But how do I do that? Well, daily I meditate. In just 15-30 minutes I do build up a sense of re-connecting body, mind, and soul into a solidified state of inner "clearness."

Answer #2 Before any AL session, I orient myself. I empty my "inner container" using the mnemonic "COACH." Step by step I cultivate these senses that help me consciously open up and shift to fuller presence. I Center myself (C), I Open up (O), I become Aware of (A), entering a space to Co-Create (C) and I Hold space (H).

#### **2. Sense the Field nourishing my sense of compassion**

Advanced coaches all seem to share an active aspiration -- the aspiration to comprehensively sense group dynamics or sense the field. I have encountered several practices (e.g. Theory U, Non-Violent Communication and Gestalt therapy) that have been immensely helpful as I attempt to better understand my own inner states and develop resonance or compassion toward others. I've found it very revealing to set out to become friends with my own interference patterns. How? Consciously setting aside focused time to slow down, journal and reflect whenever I've been "triggered" so that I can slowly

unpack and examine how this process unfolds in me. It's like having a personal reference library full of personal examples that allow me to be present and compassionate when others are triggered. Over time rather than shutting down, I'm increasingly able to remain open, sensing the moment with compassion for others and myself.

### **3. Expand awareness (post-Session Reflection ex. Ladder of Inference)**

After an AL session, there are so many ways to reflect. Through reflection, we can widen our awareness of possible dynamics at play. One model is the Ladder of Inference. I learned this framework from Peter Senge (The FIFTH Discipline, Chapter 35). It's helped me respond with quick amusement to many surprises.

The framework describes how we move from data/perception to action and highlights the filters that affect that process, many of which are not apparent without reflection: For a brief description we believe we are (1) seeing everything going on - all the real data and experience and from that (2) choosing a selected set of data and experience to pay attention to. It's this data that we (3) affix meaning to, from it we (4) develop assumptions on and (5) come to conclusions. From that we develop or adapt (6) beliefs, and these form the basis of our (7) actions, which then create additional real data and experience.

In the story, in part one, I discovered that three separate tracks of thought led to my actions. I had observed (1st) the PP, then (2nd) the situation while orienting as (3rd) my AL coach role.

Here's the "ladder", broken down, we start at the bottom and "climb" to action.

Actions	I invited PP to stand up, turn her back to everyone, and take a moment of silence before sharing her actions from the AL session.
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Beliefs	<p>When facing pressure, one needs to have a space to connect with oneself and find his/her strength to deal with it.</p> <p>The coach can help participants remove any interference to unleashing their potential.</p>
Conclusions	<p>I can generate the space and time helping her connect with herself. After that, if additional support is needed, I can ask the team to do it.</p> <p>(based on my 3 tracks assumptions)</p>
Assumptions	<p>(Track 1) PP felt pressured when facing authority, she might feel judged and be afraid to say the wrong thing. I could support her finding her inner strength. (Includes track 4 “data”)</p> <p>(Track 2) The tension of authority may come from many aspects (e.g., gender, age, seniority, my own sensitivity-Track 4); I need to handle it carefully.</p> <p>(Track 3) Offer space and see its effect.</p>
Added meaning	<p>(Track 1) The problem PP presented generated active discussion and she asked clarifying questions. She seemed to experience many a-ha moments and insights. (Positive behavior in the AL framework)</p> <p>(Track 2) PP raised her voice when answering “I DON’T KNOW!” to the director’s question. It felt like she wanted to escape. She clearly had some ideas but chose not to reveal them. In essence, PP got stuck. (Concerning behavior in the AL framework)</p> <p>(Track 3) The air froze. As an AL coach, I can defrost it.</p> <p>(Track 4) My interior sensors are activated to re-examine the experience for additional insight</p>
Selected Data	<p>(Track 1) The problem PP presented. This generated everyone’s enthusiastic participation and thinking,</p>

	<p>including the PP. (Awareness of the PP past engagement and assertiveness)</p> <p>(Track 2) The director asked PP a question, and PP replied: "I DON'T KNOW! That's why I am asking you guys" (PP raised her voice)</p> <p>(Track 3) According to the process, it is almost time to have PP declare her actions.</p>
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What did I learn from using The Ladder of Inference? Firstly, it helped me see that I have chosen certain facts from a situation, and with this choice comes assumptions and beliefs that lead to my actions. As a result, I realized that I always have choices and options for every situation.

Secondly, this case has taught me that hierarchical power exists, even in the most open and willing organizations. As a coach, I learned to pay high attention to this influence.

Lastly, I realized that different coaches will have different natural interventions when facing the same situation because each coach's experience, assumptions, and interpretations are unique.

### ***Using My Full Self to Sense Group Dynamics***

In summary, perhaps I'm practicing working simply from presence, unpacking layer after layer of possibility in any situation. From this Long Story, I return to a Simple Story, and a final insight.

As a coach, I noticed the PP's voice change and my gut responding to the disturbance. I got curious and started wondering, leading me to the idea that I might be observing a reaction to hierarchical authority. I then tried an invitation to the PP and observed the results. How did I know to do that? I acted on intuition, and then watched, taking one step at a time while knowing

there were many other follow-up actions possible.

My final practice is to reflect on my own emotional disturbances regularly. Whenever I have a disturbing mood shift, I sit quietly and record my own self-dialogue. This helps me build familiarity with my triggers and automatic responses, and from that, I consider possible more effective responses to these disturbances.

As a result, I'm more able to care for myself, and my sensitivity and compassion towards others have increased. This is my current full-circle answer to how I sensed group dynamics and developed an unknown, mysterious ability to relate to them effectively.

As coaches, our presence can influence other people's lives. Over time, I've discovered my three key daily practices, which I focus on, and at times, I'm surprised at how this leads to an authentic and natural response that is surprisingly helpful.

My aspiration for myself, my colleagues, and students is that we lead a conscious life, delighting in increasing our ability to coach in each new moment. Our presence can be like a shining light, transparent and clear, and we can be containers that hold a space enabling the gathered team to shine. In conclusion, I leave you with a quote from the poet Tagore: "Live yourself as a light because you don't know who by thy light may out of darkness come." My parting wish is that all of us live lives as this light, inviting more awareness of this unseen essential beauty. If you have similar stories from your practice, feel free to write to me anytime. My email is [Paulina@wial.org.tw](mailto:Paulina@wial.org.tw)

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