



Soul-Searching Life-Planning: Refreshing Your Professing Pathways to Embedding Professional Resilience

Part 2 of 4: The Unexamined Life is Not Worth Living: Have you (deeply) examined your life lately?

The upcoming CIP 2018 National Conference in Winnipeg, on the theme of *Soul*, is providing an opportunity for revisiting related aspects of the CIP 2017 conference in Calgary, when the theme was *Building Resilience*. As a College of Fellows panelist then I was inspired to explore the connection between ‘life-planning’ and ‘professional-self design’. The overall framing of [my 2017 panel offering](#) reflected an interest in insights from the application of Theory U, an awareness-based social learning technology, dealing with themes such as absencing and presencing (See Part 1 of 4). In this series I am highlighting the ‘life-planning’ foundation via three themes rooted in ‘soul-searching’ – to refresh one’s professing. The current offering, **The Unexamined Life is Not Worth Living**, asks: Have you (deeply) examined your life lately?

It was Socrates, reported in *Plato’s Apology*, who asserted that ‘the unexamined life is not worth living’. In professional-self design terms, we might read this as a call to **reflective practice** (Schon 1983; 1987) of the highest order, aiming for ever-more self-knowledge, and ever-more acute self-awareness.

This may entail noticing what you are noticing, what you are perceiving - from your evolving perspective, from your evolving operative worldview. It may amount to an extraordinary level of life-affirming examination – ongoingly: getting a ‘bead’ on your life; sighting your ‘aim’, and crystallizing your intending. It involves going into your ‘self’ - grasping the ‘in-goings’ that fuel your ‘out-comings’, the ‘in-sightings’ in your ‘ex-citings’.

A deep examination of your life might acknowledge that there are different types of ‘knowledge’ to be mined for in-sights and out-comings. Otto Scharmer (2001) identified three main forms of knowledge – K1, K2, K3: respectively, explicit knowledge, tacit-embodied knowledge; and self-transcending knowledge – each with a different ‘action-reflection ratio’. See Figure 1: Reflective Practice – Expansions of Knowledge (K1/K2/K3).

Figure 1: Reflective Practice – Expansions of Knowledge (K1, K2, K3)

(K1 Reflection **without** action; K2 Reflection-**on**-action; K3 Reflection-**in**-action)
 (Reflection-**in**-action - Performing; **Imagination**-in-action - Redesigning;
Inspiration-in-action - Reframing; **Intuition**-in-action - Regenerating)

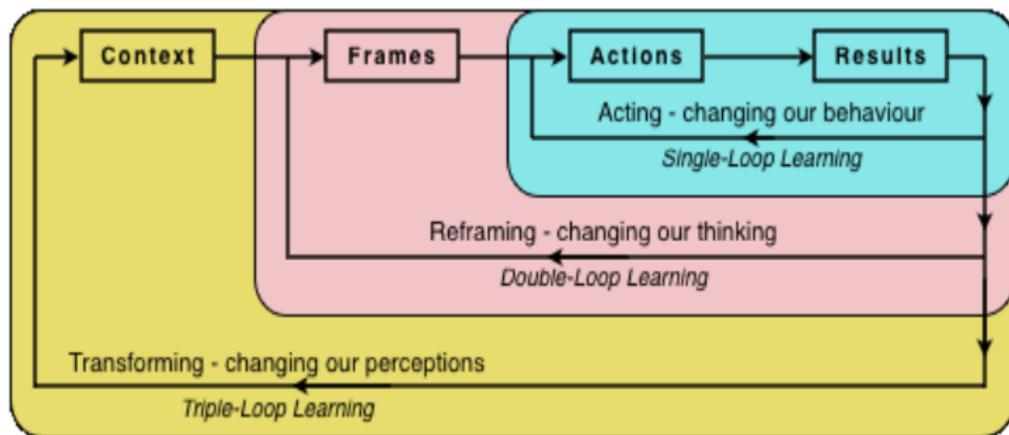
	K1 Explicit Knowledge	K2 Tacit-Embodied Knowledge	K3 Self-Transcending Knowledge
Epistemology			
Type of Knowledge	Knowledge about <i>things</i>	Knowledge about <i>doing</i> things	Knowing about <i>thought-origins</i> for doing things
Data	External reality	Enacted reality	Not-yet-enacted reality
Experience Type	Observation experience	Action experience	Aesthetic experience
Action-Reflection Ratio	Reflection without action	Reflection-on-action	Reflection-in-action
Truth	Matching reality	Producing reality	Presencing reality
Truth Criterion	Can you observe it?	Can you produce it?	Can you presence it?
Perspective	External: View on <i>objective</i> reality	Internal: View on <i>enacted</i> reality	Both internal and external: View on <i>not-yet-enacted</i> reality
Subject-Object Relation	Separation	Unity (after action)	Unity (in action)

Epistemological / Action Type	K1: Explicit Knowledge	K2: Tacit Knowledge	K3: Self-Transcending Knowledge
A1: Performing	Know-what	Knowledge in use	Reflection-in-action
A2: Redesigning	Know-how	Theory in use	Imagination-in-action
A3: Reframing	Know-why	Metaphysics in use	Inspiration-in-action
A4: Regenerating	Know-who	Ethics/Aesthetics in use	Intuition-in-action

[Source: Otto Scharmer, 2001]

The reflection underpinning such in-depth/wide-ranging ‘examination’ may – at its most basic – be mostly ‘after-the-fact’ of an experience or action (‘explicit knowledge’ context) – essentially/comparatively reflection-**without**-action. However, the really rich reflection contexts, for ‘professional resilience’ especially, are more in the realms of K2 and K3. Such more highly-charged ‘reflection’ should ideally always be consciously ‘in operation’ – a default practice: reflection **on** one’s action, that is – ideally - simultaneously ‘reflection-**in**-action’; potentially **re**-making one’s self in the moment, informed by the totality of the ‘reflecting-as-examining’. It is also possible to conceive of such ‘examination’ shading into (intuitive) ‘divination’, and ‘reflection’ deepening into (inspired) ‘contemplation’. This would entail activating deeper levels of your ‘inner reflective practitioner’; the learning in progress could stretch as far as triple-loop-learning in-the-moment (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Single/Double/Triple-Loop Learning – Shallow Deep Profound



http://www.mentoringforchange.co.uk/change/triple_loop_change.php

Modes of learning

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	Shallow What?	Deep How?	Profound Why?
Means	Memorisation	Reflection	Intuition
Outcomes	Information	Knowledge	Wisdom
Evidence	Replication	Understanding	Meaning
Motivation	Extrinsic	Intrinsic	Moral
Attitudes	Compliance	Interpretation	Challenge
Relationships	Dependence	Independence	Interdependence
	Single loop	Double loop	Triple loop

<http://andreastringer.blogspot.ca/2014/09/>

<http://inquiryteachingandlearning.com/professional-development/active-exploration>

<http://www.johnwest-burnham.co.uk/index.php/understanding-deep-learning?showall=&start=1>

‘Examination’ would become deep discernment, and the self-knowledge attained would potentially transcend one’s small ‘s’ **self**, and begin to illuminate one’s large ‘S’ - self-transcending - **Self**. For Scharmer the latter would engage not only **reflection**-in-action, but also **imagination**-in-action, **inspiration**-in-action, and **intuition**-in-action (See lower part of Figure 1).

In terms of the three arenas of professional making/s (See Part 1 of 4), this is mainly personal ‘**praxis**’ territory, featuring considerations around the alignment of ‘s/Self and Service’. The integration under examination is the **presencing** of a meshing of one’s thinking, doing and being – one’s theory studies, practice experiences and personal values/beliefs.

The deeper reaches of reflection referenced above manifest most notably in relation to the latter – one’s personal values/beliefs, which are apt to be ignored, denied or decried (i.e. ‘absenced’) in ‘conventional’ professional reflection contexts. Deep examination of one’s professional life demands that they be part of the mix, and more up-front. They merit active ‘presencing’, for the precious ‘**prof-essence**’ that may be distilled.

References:

Scharmer, C. Otto (2001) “Self-Transcending Knowledge: Sensing and Organizing Around Emerging Opportunities” *Journal of Knowledge Management* 5(2): 137-150

Schon, Donald A. (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. Basic Books.

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