



## MENTAL MODELS

# THE ART OF HOSTING & HARVESTING

GENERATIVE CONVERSATION LEADS TO CLARITY – THE ROOT OF ALL WISE ACTION

## DESCRIPTION AND CORE PRINCIPLES:

**CONVERSATION**, more than any other form of human interaction, is the place where we learn, exchange ideas, offer resources and create innovation. Not every conversation works like this, though. Many people experience meetings that waste time, conversations that feel more like debates, and invitations to input which turn out to be something altogether different. People want to contribute, but they can't see how. Leaders want contribution, but they don't know how to get it.

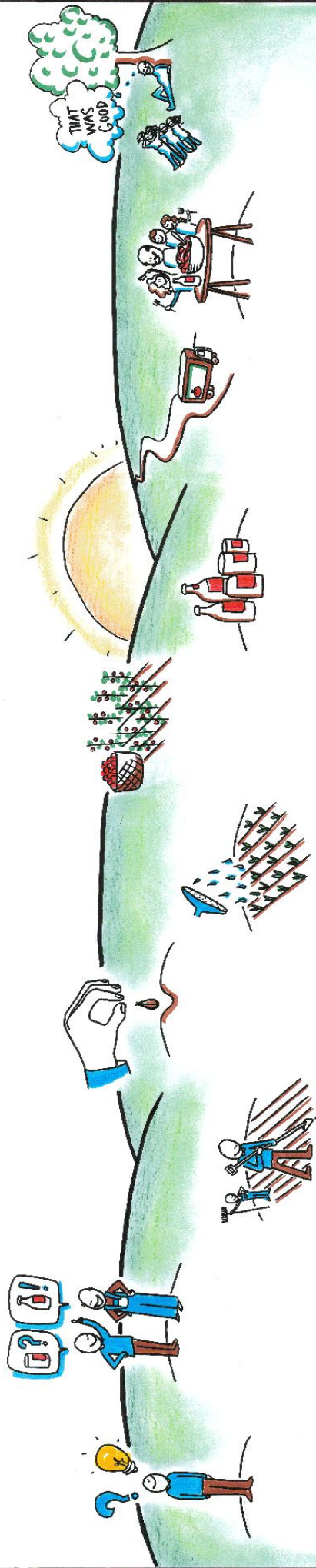
**HOSTING** - We tend to offer our best selves and our best work in spaces where we feel safe, welcomed and valued. By paying attention to a work space and those in it, we can create open and meaningful conversation that leads to commitment and good results. We use the term *hosting*, because we're not talking about a typical facilitated or moderated session. Hosting gives attention and care to all aspects of people's work together, intending to host them in being successful, just as any person welcoming guests will make sure they have everything they need to make their visit fruitful.

As well as being a mindset and a practice, hosting good conversations requires an understanding of structure and form. There are a range of forms or collaborative methods in which we can host our conversations – Circle, World Café, Appreciative Inquiry, Open Space Technology, Pro-Action Café, storytelling and more – with a little experience, practitioners can tailor the approach to their context and purpose.

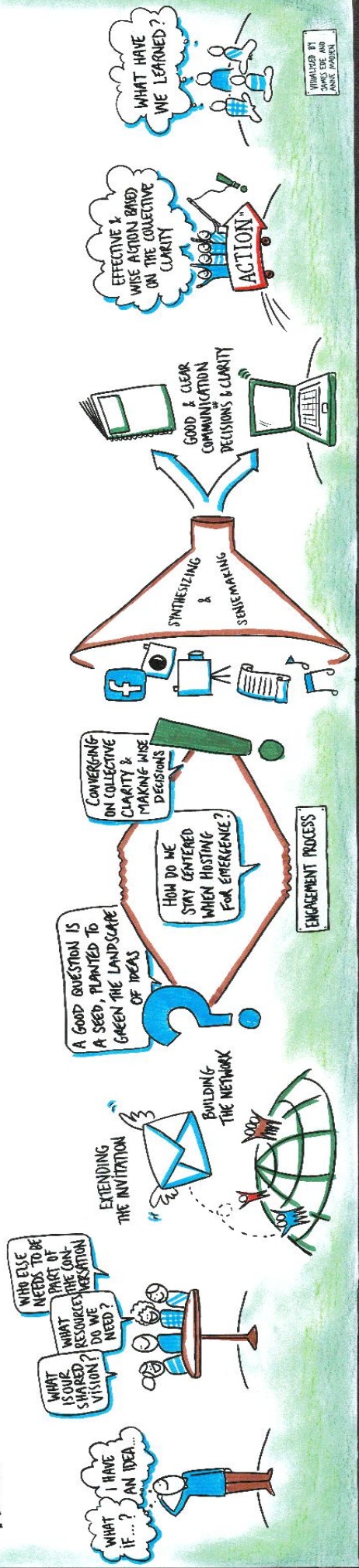
**HARVESTING** - The purpose of harvesting is to support the individual and collective meaning making. The fruits of our most important conversations need to be harvested if they are to have an impact in the world. The harvest of a meaningful conversation can take many forms. It can be tangible (documentation, newsletter, audio or video, etc.) or intangible (new insights, a change of perspective or mindset, a shared clarity, new relationships and contacts). Both are valuable and needed, as both can enhance our collective intelligence and wisdom. Ultimately the harvest can support wise decisions and wise action.

While hosting and harvesting meaningful conversations are aspects of the same thing, the nature of these two "activities" differs. The work of the host is to invite everyone to speak their truth, listen openly, seek to understand differing views and bring their best to the table and work at hand. The harvesters' focus is on capturing the essence, remembering, seeing patterns and making meaning – and then making this meaning visible and accessible to others in the relevant context. At first sight, hosting is predominantly divergent in nature, teasing out the different strands present in the collective, while harvesting is more convergent, weaving different strands together; although, of course, neither is solely one or the other. We could also say that hosting is about animating the discovery and learning process, whereas harvesting is about sense-making, embedding insights and learning back into their context, making them as relevant and useful as possible.

# THE ART OF HARVESTING



SENSING THE NEED      PLANNING THE HARVEST      PREPARING THE FIELD      SOWING THE SEEDS      TENDING THE CROP      PICKING THE FRUIT      PROCESSING THE FRUIT      DISTRIBUTING THE FRUIT      USING THE FRUIT      DIGESTING THE FRUIT



IMAGINATED BY  
WHAT IF... SEE AND  
HAVE PAPER