

# How to Create a World that Works for All

**Good news!** Three social innovations make it possible to 1) achieve breakthrough progress on society's impossible-seeming issues; and 2) safely transform our socio-political-economic system to become sustainable, where we raise our overall level of collective intelligence and well-being.

**The concept is simple.** The three innovations can facilitate all people in a large system to come together as "We the People," where We face these seemingly impossible problems creatively, invent win/win solutions, and provide responsible leadership to government and the marketplace. Using them We can restructure the institutions of our society to something far better than what we have today. Actually, just establishing this new public conversation transforms our system, because We the People assume ultimate responsibility.



## The three social innovations are:

- 1) **"Choice-creating"** ... This is the essential quality of thinking for democracy, where people face impossible-seeming issues creatively and collaboratively and create answers that work for everyone. Choice-creating is distinct from other forms of thinking like dialog, deliberation, or brainstorming.
- 2) **"Dynamic Facilitation"** (DF) ... DF reliably evokes choice-creating in small groups, even when people are conflicted or stuck in their views. It does this by helping people speak authentically from feelings yet safe from judgment. Shifts and breakthroughs are the natural result.
- 3) The **"Wisdom Council"** (WC) ... The WC is a way to generate choice-creating and evoke collective wisdom throughout large systems, like cities, states or nations. The WC uses randomly selected citizens who are dynamically facilitated to address big, impossible-seeming topics and achieve unified conclusions. Then the spirit of this small group conversation is taken to the whole system.

## Two examples

- **Citizen-led:** In the Rogue Valley of OR a group of three citizens organized a Wisdom Council for their county. They randomly selected a group of citizens who chose their own topic and presented their unanimous views. The results of this Wisdom Council are still reverberating in Ashland OR, dramatically affecting the town charter, the makeup of the City Council, and the empowerment of the citizenry.
- **Government-led:** On the afternoon of Oct 14<sup>th</sup> 2011, the Parliament of Vorarlberg, Austria, took the afternoon off to meet around tables in the foyer of their building about one of the hot issues facing the region: economic growth vs. limits of growth. A citizen "Wisdom Council" met earlier in the week for a day and a half, where they were dynamically facilitated to reach a unanimous perspective. They excitedly shared their framing of this issue, their final conclusion, and their story of how they reached this conclusion. This leadership from "the people" to government dramatically shifted the conversation away from the usual partisan wrangling.

# Shift the system to Wise Democracy

**Step 1 ... Tackle particular public issues using the Creative Insight Council.** It's possible to transcend partisan gridlock on difficult issues like health care, government debt, or the distribution of wealth using a particular form of the Wisdom Council, called the Creative Insight Council (CIC). Here an issue is given to the Council of twelve random citizens. The issue can be conflicted and ill-defined like "immigration," "health care," or "government debt." First the citizens hear from experts and stakeholders. Then the door is closed and then the CIC is dynamically facilitated to engage the topic in the spirit of choice-creating and determine a unified perspective.

The CIC presents its shared perspective to elected leaders and all the people and then disbands. This changes the public conversation on this issue because now there is a legitimate voice of "the public interest" as well as the usual special interests. As people consider this new viewpoint in small group meetings, online networks, and informally, they discover overwhelming support for the CIC conclusions. Also, the public conversation benefits from this new attitude of listening and seeking what's best for all.

**Solving problems is not enough.** Our system is causing many of our most pressing public problems because it promotes competition and the pursuit of self-interest more than seeking what's best for all. This competitive design works well when people are independent but breaks down when people are interdependent. Symptoms of this systemic decline are: Destruction of planetary resources, an L-shaped curve for distribution of wealth and power, increasingly bankrupted governments, loss of community, and a collective thinking process that is shallow, partisan and paralyzed. We must transform our system.

**Step #2 ... Use the Wisdom Council process to transform the system.** It's possible to safely add onto our competitive system a new, thoughtful "We the People" public conversation. Here's how: Structure a Wisdom Council Process where every four months 12 citizens are randomly selected. They meet for three days or so on issues they determine. They are dynamically facilitated to create a unified perspective, which they report to the nation. This series of Wisdom Councils sparks a new public conversation where individuals come together as "We the People." We create a widely shared perspective that transcends the usual politics, which provides thoughtful leadership to government and the market.

**This strategy is common sense.** Rather than being mindless subjects of a system taking society where no one wants to go, here's a way to facilitate collective awareness and intelligence. It's just adding the essential heartfelt, creative, collaborative conversation that has long been missing. It's time we understood together what's going on and thought about the changes we want to make.

**Possible next actions:** Understand and experience choice-creating as the essential quality of thinking for wise democracy. See how it is different from other forms of talking and thinking. Learn how Dynamic Facilitation reliably evokes choice-creating. Learn how different forms of Wisdom Council are being used to involve citizens, transform the public conversation, build shared vision, generate a spirit of community, and facilitate collective wisdom. Explore how we can use these social innovations to safely transform local, regional and global systems simply by adding a new conversation to what we already have. Join with us at Center for Wise Democracy to explore, promote and help implement this exciting new future for our families and our society.

## References:

- 1) Center for Wise Democracy ([www.WiseDemocracy.org](http://www.WiseDemocracy.org))
- 2) Society's Breakthrough! Releasing Essential Wisdom and Virtue in All the People by Jim Rough, 2002 ([www.SocietysBreakthrough.com](http://www.SocietysBreakthrough.com))