



The Invitation

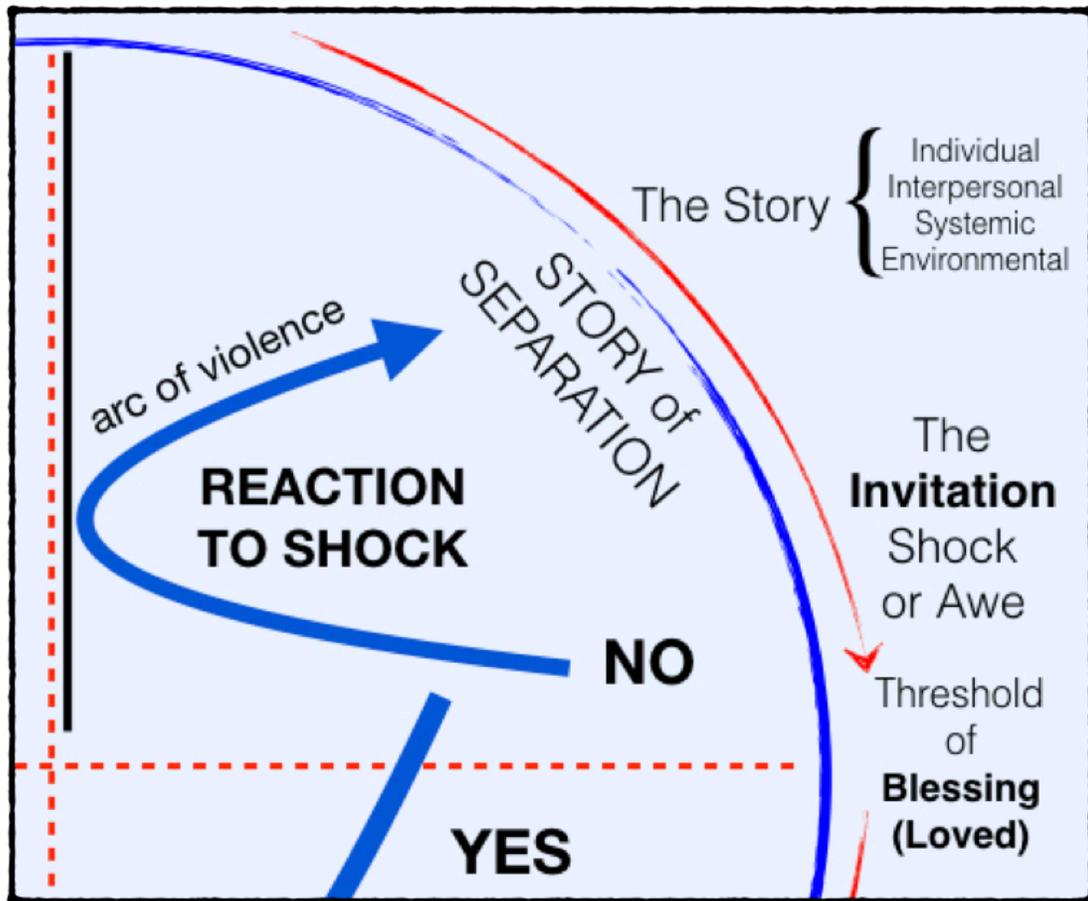
“And suddenly you know: It's time to start something new and trust the magic of beginnings.” Meister Eckhart

There are two ways, it seems, the invitation to grow comes to us: crisis and intention. Usually it takes an unexpected and unwanted jarring of our familiar ways to awaken us to the gifts of Life. Sometimes it is a faint whisper. Other times the urgent pounding at our heart's door is loud enough to wake the dead. The Universe knows that without an invitation strong enough to penetrate the ego or small self, few of us open willingly to the journey of transformation. The plug has to be pulled out from our “game” so we begin to rethink what it is all about. There is a “necessary suffering” to human life, and if we keep putting it off, we remain perpetually stuck in a story that is just too small for our soul.

Waking up to life begins with a crisis of legitimacy. The story that we are living is not big enough. The old rules just aren't helpful anymore.

Often the focus here is on maintaining patterns of the past: familiar emotions, old habits and settled judgments. C. Otto Scharmer, Senior Lecturer at MIT, uses a computer metaphor of... “downloading: reenacting habitual patterns of action, conversation, and thought” to describe the state of being from which the journey of transformation leads. Buddhist teacher Tara Brach calls this way of living “a trance of separation.” Don't take this personally. Living in this place of exile or in a trance is a very normal way of being human. However, it is the degree of exile or the depth of our trance that can lead to suffering, our's and the world's.

React or Respond



Moving from NO! to YES!

We are hard-wired to react when we encounter a SHOCK or DISRUPTION. Reaction, rooted in the survival mechanisms seated in the most primitive part of our brains, often contribute to the disruption or violence. The journey is about moving from the initial reactive “NO” to a wise and generative “YES”.

See: Negativity Bias & Neuroplasticity: The brain's ability to reorganize itself by forming new neural connections throughout life.

REACT

RESPOND



Invitation in Context

The Journey will help you develop a capacity to shift from reacting against a disruption (NO! a natural and appropriate move against shock) to leaning into an emerging future (YES!). This is probably the single most important leadership capacity today.

Use this space to reflect on one disruption in your life and your initial response.

Interior:

Interpersonal:

Systemic:

Environmental:



Exploring Invitation

Questions: What is it that stands between life as I currently experience it and the life I long for? What is the question for which if I had the answer would bring more joy into my life?

Posture: As a disruption stirs me to an awareness of the confines of a life lived in trance what do I feel in my body, my hands and feet?

Conversation: What are we talking about now on the path? What has got my attention?

Language: The invitation might come in a dream or in a chance encounter with a friend. Somehow, someday, along the way, we all stumble upon Grace. How would I describe the essential form of the invitation that has come my way?

Belief: One meaning of the word belief is “that which we give our heart to”. Have I given my heart to a story-line or system of belief that is too small? As I begin to open up, what can I let go of and what can I hold more lightly?

Challenge: It is easy, and natural, to confuse my small story, made up of habits and beliefs, with the BIG story that wants to be lived as my life. What aspect of my story am I reticent to let go of?

Practice: Prayer - *May whatever arises in my life serve the awakening of compassion and wisdom in my life and in the world.* How might “this” (whatever arises in your life) serve to awaken? Practice - Prayer of Examen. Who will be my wise Ally for the Journey?