

Open Mind - Curiosity vs. Judgment
Open Heart - Compassion vs. Cynicism
Open Will - Courage vs. Fear

Three "enemies" or challenges encountered in the field of openness

Why is the deeper territory of listening the road less traveled? Because it requires some intentional inner work to illuminate the blind spot, our interior condition. Connecting to our source of creativity at the bottom of the U requires crossing the three gates, or thresholds, as discussed.

What makes this journey so difficult is that these gates tend to be guarded by three "enemies" (as I would say as an American) or three "inner voices of resistance" (as I would say as an European), each of which blocks the entrance to these deeper domains.

The first enemy blocks the gate to the open mind. Stanford University's Michael Ray calls this the Voice of Judgment (VoJ). Every creativity technique starts with this instruction: Suspend your voice of judgment. It is the critical starting point because without it we shut down the creative power of the open mind.

The second enemy blocks the gate to the open heart. Let us call this the Voice of Cynicism (VoC)—that is, all emotional acts of distancing. What is at stake when we begin to access the open heart? We must be willing to put ourselves in a position of true openness and vulnerability toward another, which is the opposite of distancing.

The third enemy blocks the gate to the open will. This is the Voice of Fear (VoF). It seeks to prevent us from letting go of what we have and who we are. It can show up as a fear of losing things. Or a fear of being ostracized. Or a fear of death. And yet dealing with that voice of fear is at the heart of leadership today: to hold the space for letting go of the old and for letting come, or welcoming, the new.

When you trace the Indo-European root of the word "leadership," you find *leith, meaning "to go forth," "to cross the threshold," or "to die." Think about that: The root of the word leadership means "to die." Sometimes when you need to let go it feels exactly like that: dying. But what we have learned over the past two decades is this: A subtle inner threshold must be crossed before something new can show up, before the "field of the future" can begin to manifest.

Scharmer, Otto. *The Essentials of Theory U: Core Principles and Applications*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers. Kindle Edition.