

Uncovering Hidden Sources of Strength and Resilience: Embodied Knowledge and Generative Workplaces



THE
GENERATIVE
KNOWLEDGE
INSTITUTE

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Initial Research Questions



What do people need in order to become leaders and change agents?

What does leadership and change agency look like for people from different backgrounds and social identities?

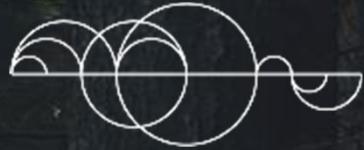
What types of facilitative structures, processes, connections etc. best support people in becoming leaders and change agents?

What is Agency?



- The ability to find one's place in the world, to affect change and to feel connected to something larger than oneself. It has everything to do with:
- Our sense of purpose
 - Our identities - who we believe ourselves to be and what we can do
 - Our resilience - what keeps us feeling curious, purposeful and engaged

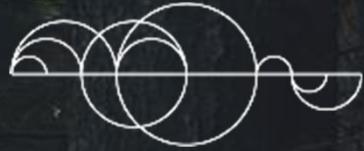
Action Research Phase I



Studying adult learners' experience in an award-winning “transformative” curriculum designed to educate leaders and change agents through:

- Coursework
- Field work
- Reflection
- Close supervision/peer mentorship

Research Phase I



- Observed students
- Interviewed faculty
- Interviewed field instructors
- Collected data re: students' learning

Discovery 1: Fragmented Learners

The “best” students:

- Were depressed
- Did not know what they were learning or why.
- Did not know how formal knowledge connected to the rest of their lives.

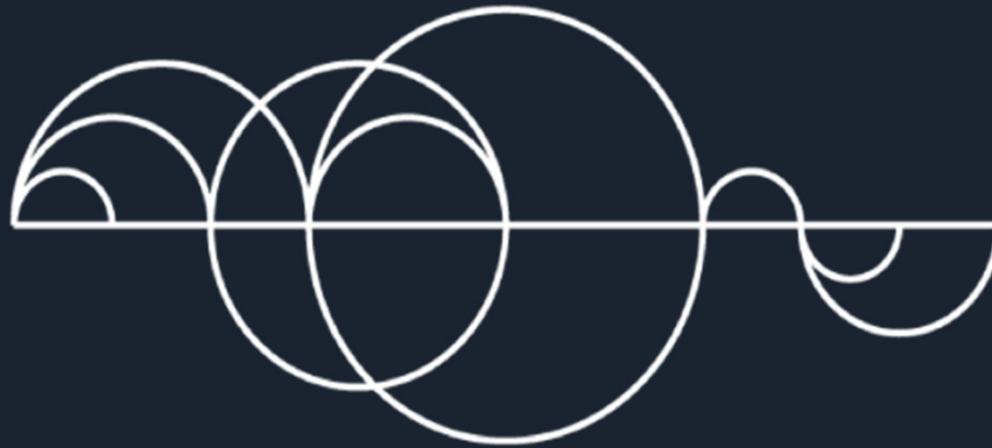


They were undergoing profound changes but could not articulate how they were changing or what it meant in terms of their identities, capacities, or aspirations for the future.



© newsteam

Why was this happening?



Competing Demands

Institutional Needs

Provide evidence that students' are learning content and skills



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Students' Needs

Connect fragmented experiences, integrate learning within their own identities and develop a professional self



Wrong assumption: awareness is NOT
enough to create change

Buying Decisions

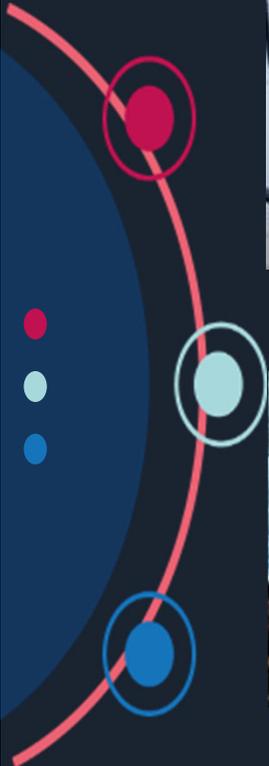
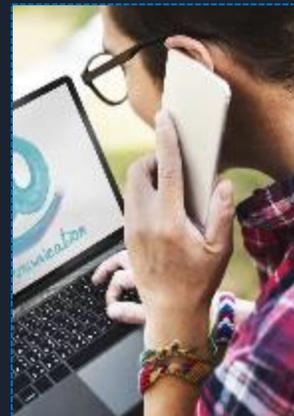
Rational

- Price
- quality
- Feature
- Reliability
- Warrantly

Emotional

- Look
- Feel
- Esteem
- Brand
- Safety
- Fear

Discovery 2: the challenge of knowing locations



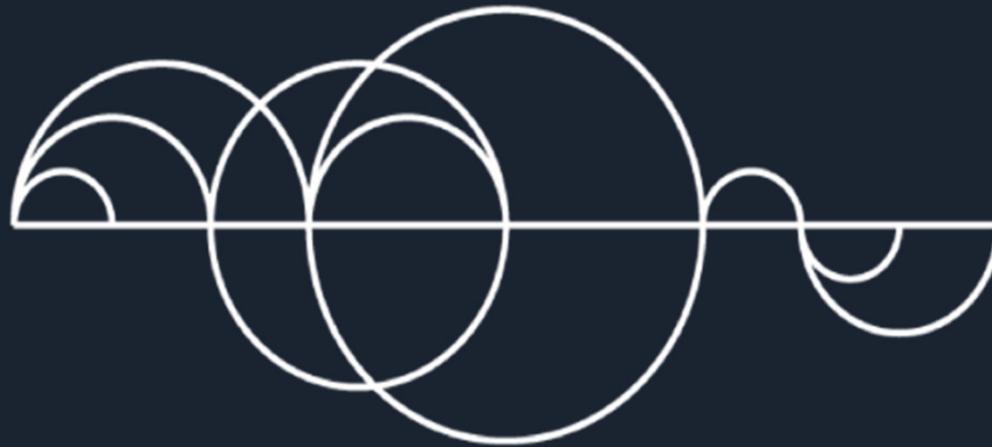
Discovery 3: moments of transformation without integration can lead to fragmentation!



Our traditional approach to learning, resilience and change



What is needed?



Action Research Phase II

What does integration look like?





Designed an Integrative Dialogue Course



Research Phase II



Hmmm...something strange is happening here

The Tale of Two conversations

1. What is your personal definition or understanding of resilience? What does that mean to you?
2. Pick a partner and share your definition
3. Remember a specific time when you were resilient
4. Share your experience with your partner. Make sure to describe the context, the actions taken, why it was regenerative/transformational, and what happened as a result

Debrief

What was the difference between
the two conversations?

What was different as both a
speaker and a listener?

What was the difference?

Disembodied

(definition of resilient)

Engages only cognition in learning

Difficult to remember

Devoid of meaningful contextual details

Can generate fragmentation when definition is incongruent with personal knowledge and experience (which it often is)

Embodied

(an experience of resilience)

Engages cognitive, affective, physical and social dimensions in learning

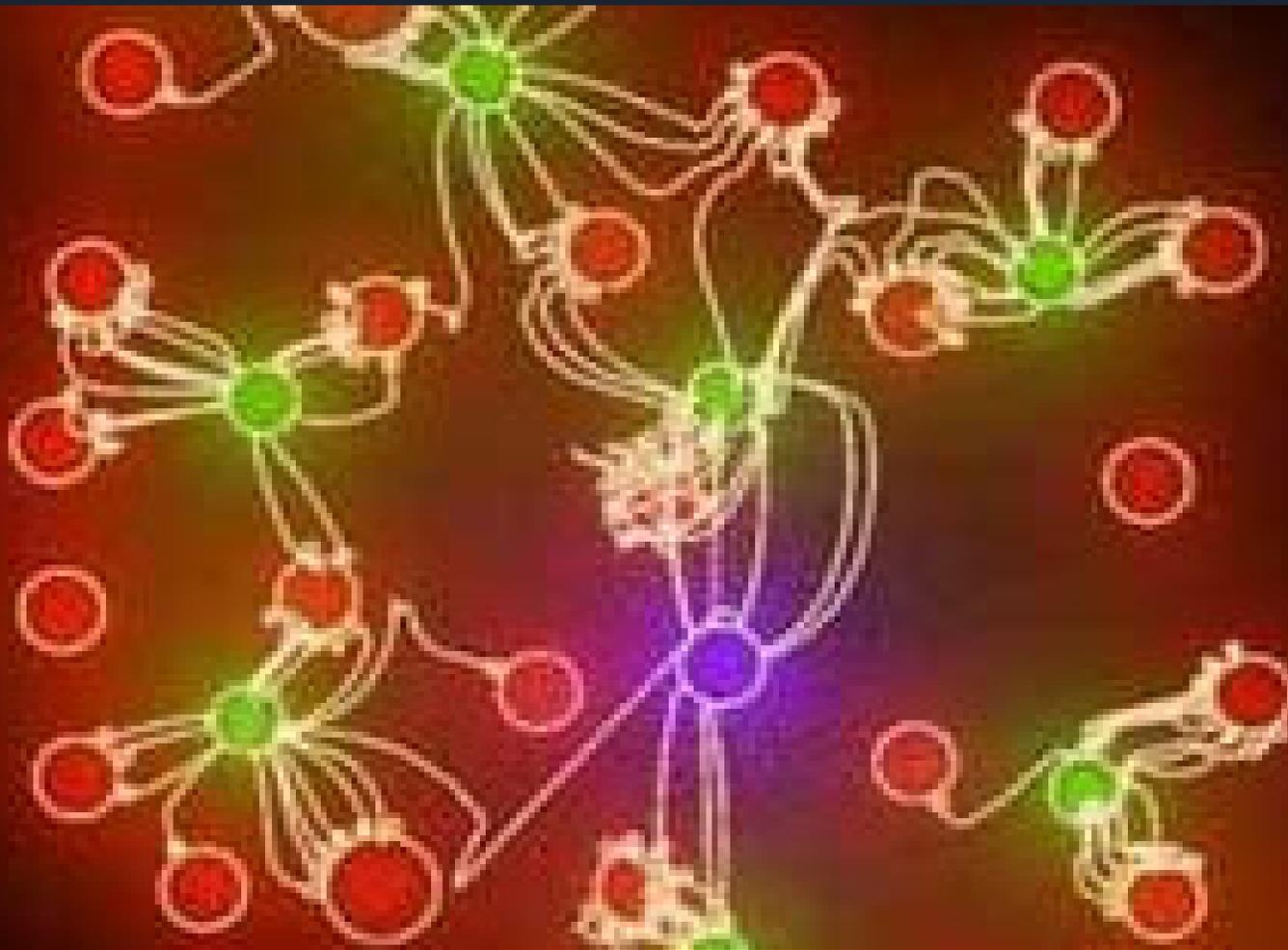
Easy to remember

Reveals details re: the speaker's values, experience, strengths, responses, etc..

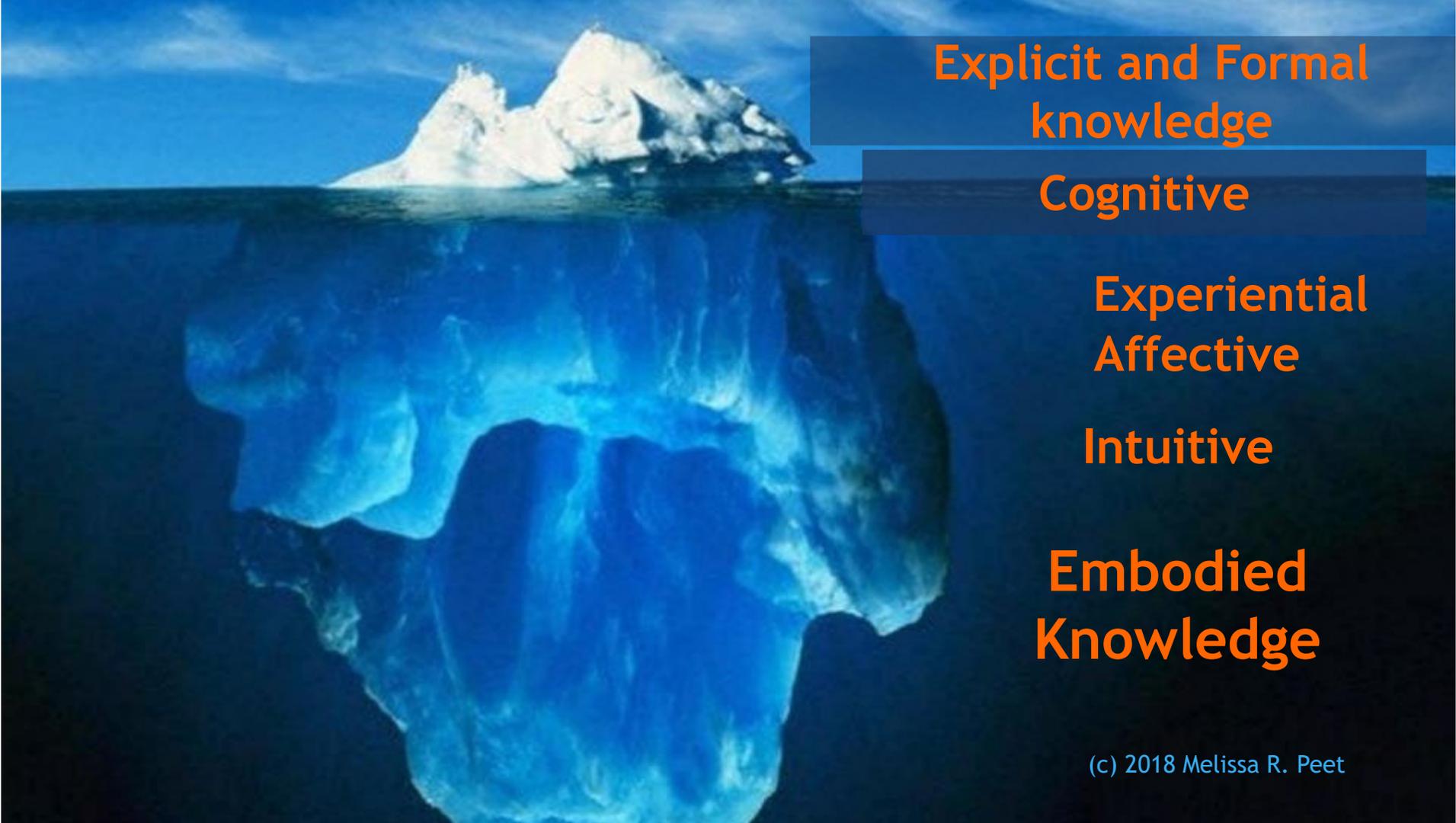
Naturally integrates a person's mental, emotional, physical and spiritual dimensions of being

Discovery 4: Embodied Knowledge

most insight occurs unconsciously within our bodies, completely outside of our awareness



Discovery 5 - formal education reveals only a small portion of our total knowledge and capacities

An iceberg floating in the ocean. The small tip above the water represents formal education, while the much larger submerged part represents the vast majority of human knowledge and capacities that are not formally taught.

**Explicit and Formal
knowledge**

Cognitive

**Experiential
Affective**

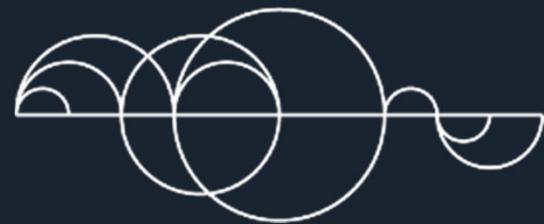
Intuitive

**Embodied
Knowledge**

Discovery 6



Most peoples' conscious identity and beliefs - what we believe to be true about ourselves - is not aligned with our embodied experiences.



In the embodied gap between our identities and our experience we lose:

- Coherence
- Curiosity
- Desire to learn
- Focus and a sense of direction
- Self-esteem
- Ability to make meaning
- Mental, Physical and emotional health
- High quality connections with others



Discovery 7: Typical self-reflection methods and questions do not work

- What are your values?
- What are your strengths?
- What kinds of situations do you thrive in?
- What gives you a sense of purpose?
- What makes you feel resilient?

Asking Embodied Questions leads a person to describe their their responses to specific contexts and thus engages their hidden “body of knowledge.”



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Discovery 8: Disembodied
knowledge and communication is
our norm, hiding in common words
and phrases

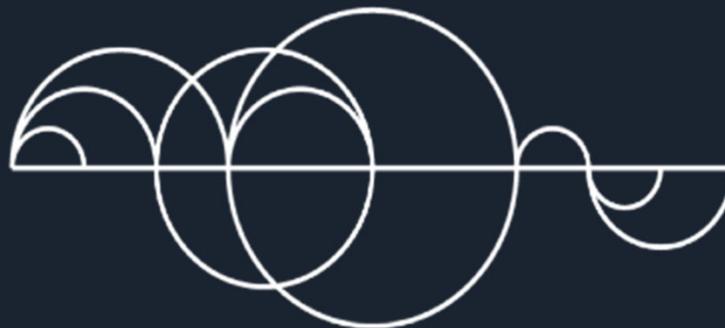
What did you learn at school today?





But wait...

Not all embodied knowledge is useful or good. In addition to hidden strengths, our embodied knowledge also contains things that hold us back: limiting beliefs, false assumptions, destructive behaviors and negative cultural stereotypes (just to name a few).



Action Research Phase II Findings



***OMG!!! WHAT IN THE
WORLD IS HAPPENING
HERE????***

Discovery 9: within embodied knowledge

we have an underlying wholeness that contains our inherent capacities, strengths, sources of aliveness and purpose; this coherence is resource-creating and thus “generative”



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Discovery 9: we are naturally whole and coherent

The more we live from our our inherent “generative knowledge” the more purposeful and engaged we naturally become.



Discovery 10: Dimensions of Generative Knowledge

Purpose and Motivating Forces

Our natural sources of aliveness, focus and coherence

Enabling Context and Conditions

The external conditions that naturally invoke our highest and best self

Core Capacities

Our unique “set” of strengths, insights and capacities

Transformational Resources -

The tools and resources we use to create change and transform our resistance

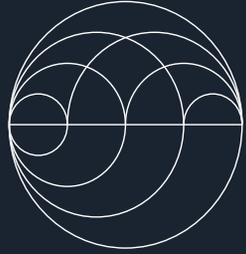
What we need to create resilience within individuals and workplaces:

1. A different mindset about data
1. Norms that support embodied communication
1. Mechanisms to uncover and build upon peoples' generative knowledge

Generative Coaching Skills

- Presence and time-making
- Generative Listening
- The Process of Generative Knowledge Inquiry
 - Asking embodied questions
 - Unpacking common words and phrases
 - Recognizing hidden patterns within embodied data
 - Articulating embodied strengths in detail
 - Identifying the generative “field” within one’s own body
 - Generative looping - connecting people back to their natural wholeness when they are stuck or resistant to change

Questions?



The Generative Knowledge Institute

<https://generativeknowledge.com/>

Training for

- Coaching, mentoring and resilience-making
- Leadership within organizations
- Teaching and education

Consultation Services

- One-on-one coaching
- Generative evaluation
- Embodied and generative strategic planning

Contact Dr. Peet at melpeet@gmail.com

Key Concepts

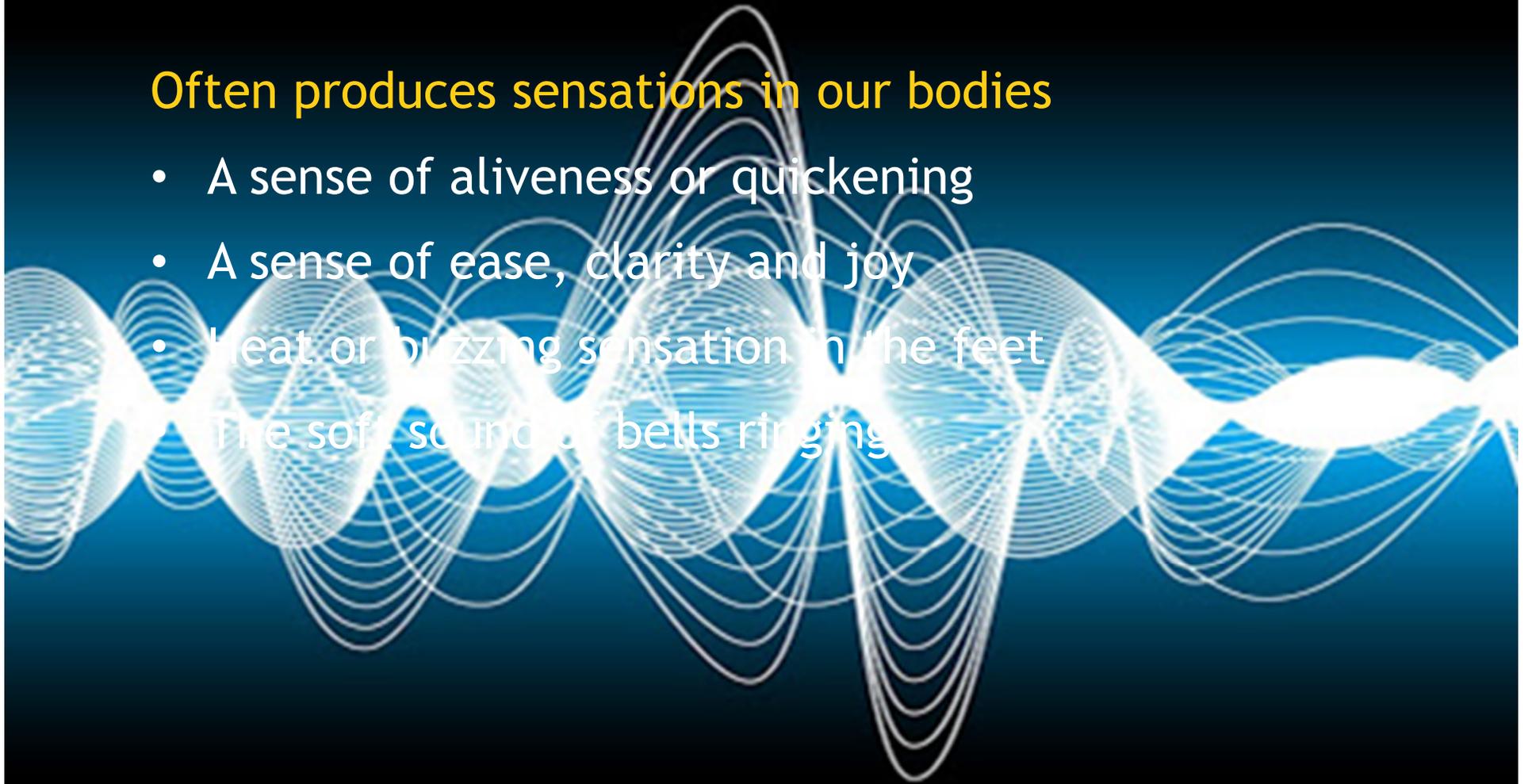
Embodied and Tacit knowledge = essential information, beliefs, and assumptions that people possess but are neither aware of, nor able to easily express.

Generative Knowledge = the hidden and embodied resources (sources of intelligence, motivation, creativity, etc..) for thriving and change that exist within each person, group and organization but are largely hidden from our awareness.

Evidence of Generative Listening

Often produces sensations in our bodies

- A sense of aliveness or quickening
 - A sense of ease, clarity and joy
 - Heat or buzzing sensation in the feet
- The soft sound of bells ringing



Embodied Learning Activates Coherence

- Increased ability to self-regulate (Bradley, 2010; Bedell 2010)
- 40% improvement in long-term memory (Lloyd, 2010) •
- 24% improvement in short-term memory (Lloyd, 2010)
- Increased ability to focus (Lloyd, 2010; Ginsberg, 2010)
- Increased ability to process information (Ginsberg, 2010)
- Faster reaction times (McCarty, 2010)
- Higher test scores (Bradley, 2010)
- Improved ability to learn (Bradley, 2010)

**SOURCE: compiled by Kim Cameron, 2016, derived from McCarty, 2013*

Moving From Disembodied to Embodied Prompts

You want to	Disembodied	Embodied
Understand someone's idea of collaboration	What do you think makes for good collaboration?	Tell me about a time when you experienced effective collaboration; what was the context, how did people interact?
Know what someone learned at school today	What did you learn at school today?	Tell me about a time today when you felt really engaged or challenged at school - what was happening?
Understand what success means to your client	What does success mean to you?	?
The challenges someone faces as an entrepreneur	?	?

Essential Discovery: Embodied Knowledge and Communication

- Prompts people to describe their experiences in as much detail as possible, thus revealing subtle (but essential) insights, decisions, actions, etc. rather than just their surface-level thoughts, feelings or attitudes.
- Embodied communication allows people to connect to the truth of their experience, thus revealing the motivations, assumptions, strengths, etc.. that underlie their decisions and actions but remain hidden from awareness. As these resources are revealed, people become stronger, more resilient, more internally aligned and forthcoming.



Embodied vs. Disembodied Questions

Disembodied Questions: prompt surface level information and address only what a person thinks or feels. Answers to these questions can sound fine at first but are typically vague and abstract; they do not reveal the rich details needed to truly understand someone or create change

Ex: *What is your definition of leadership? (disembodied)*

Embodied Questions: get below the surface to “actionable intelligence” - not just what a person thinks, but their actual experience: what they see, notice, act upon, are motivated by, etc. The answers bring aliveness and contextualized information

Ex: *Can you tell me about a time when you witnessed a good leader in action?*

Ex: *Can you tell me about a time when you were a good leader?*