



Passion Code

Wisdom, passion and creativity for sustainable development

Our Passion Code

Perspectivity consists of people dedicated to help build a sustainable society. This Passion Code describes what Perspectivity stands for and what binds us; it is a reference for all what we do and for the way we do it.

Our complex world

Within a few generations, our world has profoundly changed and humanity finds itself in a situation that differs fundamentally from any prior state. Our knowledge and technological capabilities have developed with exponential speed and have given us an infinitely better understanding of and bigger influence on the "hard" (material) as well the "soft" (human behavioural) world around us. Simultaneously **systemic complications** (number, variety and interrelatedness of factors influencing local and global development) have increased dramatically. In addition, the **social diversity** (gender, religion, age, nationality, ethnicity etc.) of people involved in societal issues has increased because of intensifying communication and mobility. Finally, the notion that human activity is reaching its limits with regards to the available resources and ecological carrying capacity of our planet gives an acute feeling of **global interdependence** and puts extra pressure on global society. In this Passion Code we will comprise these three interrelated phenomena under the term **complexity**.

Our believe and commitment

At Perspectivity, we are convinced that with the knowledge, technology and resources we have available, there are fantastic **opportunities** for mankind to live and develop with meaning and dignity in a sustainable, mutually enriching relationship with his environment.

What we see, however, is social and political turbulence and ecological deterioration. In our efforts to answer to the tough social, ecological and economic challenges facing us, we tend to focus on discussion, on taking opposing stands on issues and winning the debate through argumentation. The optimum outcome is explored through polarization of divergent views

in an effort to arrive at “the one best solution”. With this polarizing model of interaction, humanity has achieved huge technological and societal advances. But these ways don’t seem to work in dealing with the complexity mentioned above. Instead, they seem to bring us social stalemates, deepening divides and, in the end, **existential crises**.

Perspectivity is a (com)passionate response to this discrepancy. We are convinced that people are able to unlock their collective wisdom, passion and creativity if they engage in **inspired dialogue** and **self-reflective learning**. And it is our sincere belief that through such processes of interaction they will be able to deal with the complexity of our today’s world, to make full use of the potential of their diversity and so to grab the opportunities for building a humane and sustainable society. We at Perspectivity are deeply committed to making a maximum contribution to this happening.

Dealing with complexity

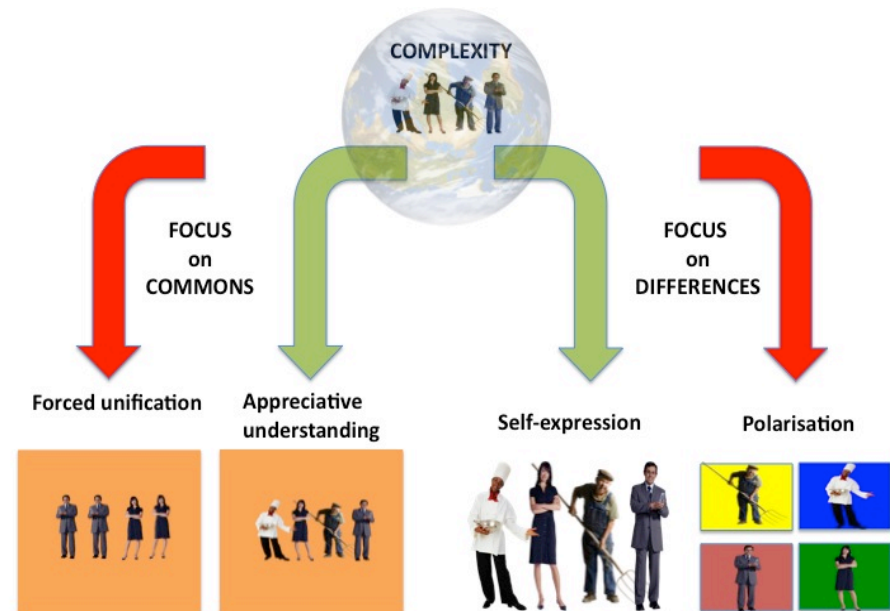
If we want to create conditions in which inspired dialogue and self-reflective learning can emerge we have to understand and guide the processes of interaction. In situations of complexity, we always have the choice to focus on what is common in an issue, and on what is different. And each of these focuses can take two shapes (see the schemes presented below)

Focusing on differences, through:

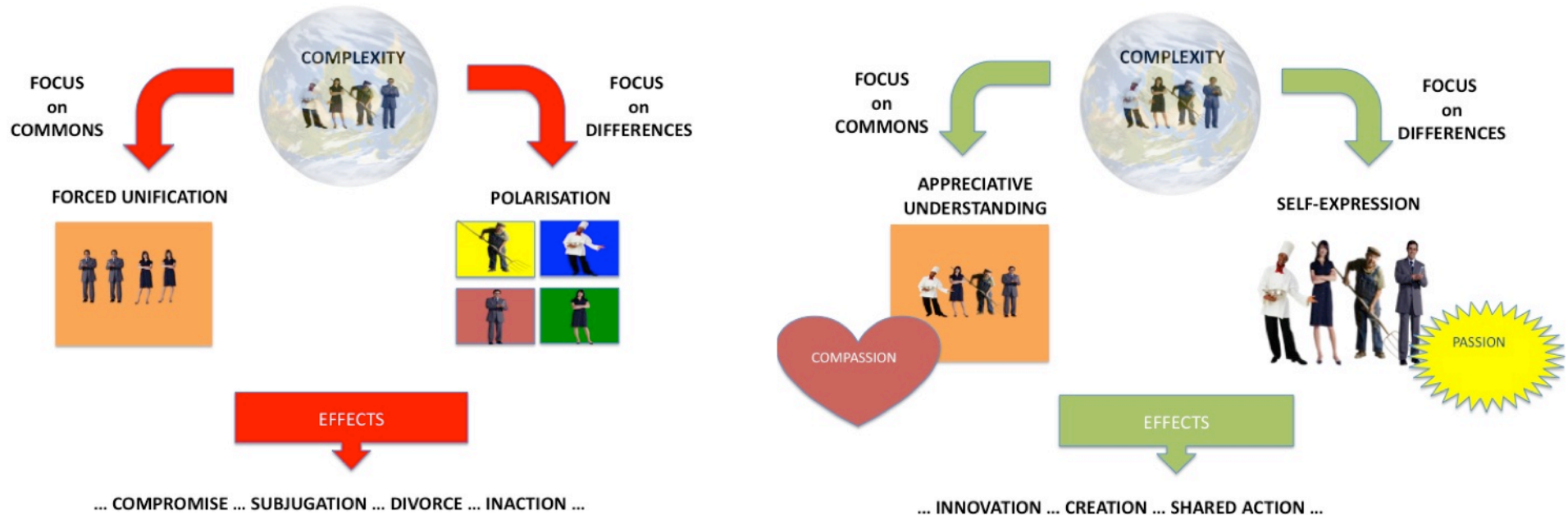
- **Self-expression:** Seeking self-realization by developing and expressing one’s unique and pure authenticity; aiming to distinguish and excel in order to achieve something better than is available now. **OR:**
- **Polarization:** Magnifying differences and classifying them as better versus worse; focusing on winning the debate in order to pursue one’s own predefined ideas.

Focusing on what is common, through:

- **Appreciative understanding:** Suspending judgement and prejudice and listen openly with the aim to truly understand the other in order to discover common ground and expand it by embracing differences. **OR:**
- **Enforced unification:** Forcing unity, orchestrating, centralizing and standardizing; applying power to suppress differences and bring into conformity.



In complex situations, when we focus on differences through polarization and on what is common through enforced unification, we tend to create degenerative solutions, with outcomes that are characterised by resistance (as a result of win-lose situations), conformism or subjugation (submitting to the strongest e.g. the one with the most votes), compromise (everyone can “live with it”), or divorce (agreeing to disagree and parties go their own way). All this often leads to outcomes that are a far cry from what could have been achieved if the collective creative potential would have been brought to expression. Because divides and frustration are by-products of such processes, the agreed solutions are mostly not sustainably implemented.



On the other hand, when we focus on differences through self-expression and on what is common through appreciative understanding, we tend to create generative solutions, characterised by integration (bringing the best of multiple parts together), creation (the free flow of inspiration to realisation) and innovation (the actual implementation of change). In support of a common purpose, we tap into the collective wisdom of the group and the collective potential is brought to full expression. Because energy and enthusiasm are by-products of such creative processes, we tend to follow-through and sustainably implement the ideas.

Although this second route is very rewarding it takes great personal investments to interact with appreciative understanding and self-expression and we need to identify the drivers in us to do so:

The driving force for appreciative understanding is **compassion**, the endless source of curiosity, mildness and patience that brings people to truly interact with others and their environment in a way that creates sustainable value and is creative. It opens people's eyes for the value in what is different and helps them to protect what is unique, scarce and vulnerable. It invites others to open up and share their most inner and valuable thoughts and creates a sense of unity and wholeness that overcomes any differences there may be.

The driving force for self-expression is **passion**, the endless source of energy and inspiration that brings people to do what they do with unbridled enthusiasm. It makes them reveal the very best they have to offer and persist in the face of adversity. They feel how much more meaningful their role as leader, manager and professional is for their communities, businesses and families when all of their actions are based upon their passions.

The more we do things with passion and compassion, the more we will do what is "right"

Inspired dialogue and self-reflective learning

The concepts of inspired dialogue and self-reflective learning are central to Perspectivity. Here follows how we define them:

Inspired dialogue: a process of interaction among a group of multiple stakeholders, whereby all perspectives on a common issue are passionately expressed and appreciatively understood in an engaging, structured and balanced manner. Multiple perspectives are valued and integrated into creative, often innovative, shared solutions for complex challenges. Inspired dialogue is a fertile ground for self-reflective learning.

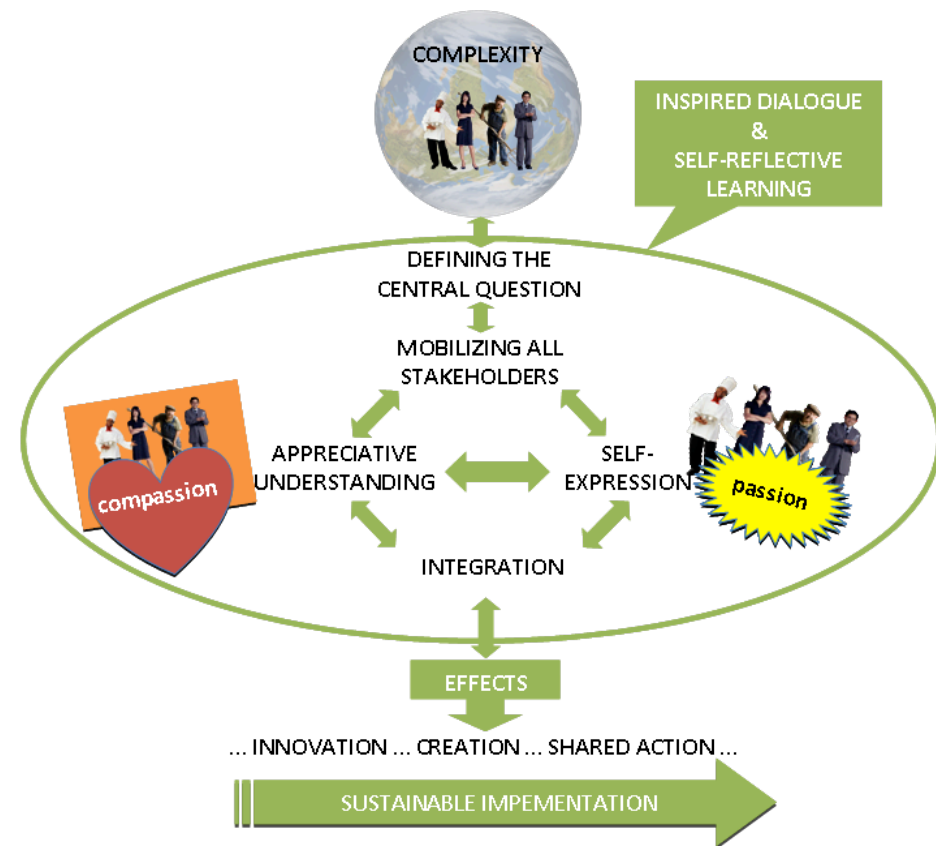
Self-reflective learning: a process of inner dialogue that leads to reflection on real experience or new information, of openly and honestly testing these against broader concepts and earlier assumptions, accepting any differences and

integrating them into new insights. Self-reflective people actively create, capture, transfer and mobilize knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable them to adapt to a changing environment. Self-reflective learning is a capacity that strongly enhances the capability of dialogue.

It is our purpose to help people deal with complexity by co-designing processes that enable inspired dialogue and self-reflective learning through an iterative process of appreciative understanding and self-expression. In the schedule below it is shown in more detail how such a process is set-up to maximize the chance of successful outcomes. The process is highly iterative, as every next step can influence the preceding one, and sometimes even “circular” in that the outcome brings you back to the beginning for a next round at a higher level of understanding or commitment. In the picture this is represented by all arrows going in both directions. We want to stress that what we describe here is equally relevant for large scale processes in communities and organizations as for two neighbours solving a quarrel between them.

The start of the process will generally be the identification of an “issue” or “opportunity”. Somehow, somewhere and at some point in time, someone defines the need to grab an opportunity, to avoid a stalemate, to solve a dispute, etc. Mostly, the issue is formulated as a question: “How do we make sure that...?” We call this: “Defining the central question”.

The next step, and a critical starting point to answering any question in a sustainable way, is identifying and mobilizing a valid representation of **all** stakeholders to the issue. This seems obvious, but in many cases important stakeholders are excluded from the conversation (“We don’t talk with terrorists”, “What do these kids know about running a school anyway?”). In initial conversations with the stakeholders it often emerges that the central question needs to be revised and the group of stakeholders adjusted.



In the next step, the stakeholders are brought together for a dialogue on the central question. Once again, please remember that this can be about a man deciding to invite his neighbour with an open mind to talk about a long-pending issue, as well as about a large scale process, such as a scenario-planning exercise or a Future Search Conference. But in all cases, the process of interaction needs to be set-up such that the chance for constructive dialogue is maximized. If successful, the interaction will take the form of self-expression fed by passion (with focus on what is different and unique) and appreciative understanding fed by compassion (with focus on what is common and on the whole), as depicted in the schedule.

Flowing naturally from this alternate process of self-expression and appreciative understanding, integration of ideas takes place. People start to make connections and combinations that they never made before, see possibilities where they only saw barriers in the past and may have "Aha Erlebnisse" that lead to truly original concepts.

This total process, from formulation of the central question through appreciative understanding and self-expression to the rich integration of ideas, with all its iterations and feed-back loops, is what we call "Inspired dialogue and self-reflective learning". And because these kinds of processes create energy and commitment, implementation follows naturally and in a generative and innovative fashion, based on the understanding that has been created. Sustainable future plans are created that break through deadlocks and self-imposed limits and often go well beyond what was thought possible at the outset. The door to improved communication, leadership, management, decision-making and other aspects of sustainable development is opened. We believe that, eventually, this will bring well-being to our diverse world: Social and economic welfare to its communities, effectiveness to its public institutions, sustainable success to its businesses, peaceful solutions to its conflicts and self-realisation to its people.

How we work

It is at the core of Perspectivity to assist people, groups, organizations and communities to deal with complexity by helping them to approach these through "inspired dialogue" and "self-reflective learning". The central capability in all these processes are inspired dialogue paired with self-reflective learning of the participants and we are constantly looking to perfect these capabilities in ourselves.

We offer:

- **Process facilitation:** Enabling communities and organizations in coping with challenges related to complexity by: Co-creating processes that enhance inspired dialogue and self-reflective learning in the several stages towards answering their most central question(s), making use of scenario planning, future search, appreciative inquiry, u-theory and others.

- **Awareness building:** Information and activities to raise awareness about and find answers to the dynamics that play out in situations of systemic complexity, social diversity and global interdependence. We do so via on-line and social media communication, learning events and the development and facilitation of serious games.
- **Training and coaching:** Building capacity for individuals, teams and organisations in order for them to understand and apply dialogue-capability in their development. We do this for children (schools) as well as for experienced professionals.
- **Structures, systems and tools:** Assisting organizations with tools and methods in structurally anchoring inspired dialogue and self-reflective learning as a natural and continuous process of growth and in support of the aforementioned services.

Our values

In performing the things we do we are guided by the following values:

- **Authenticity:** We constantly check if the things we do are genuine and in line with the approaches we believe in. We do not compromise for opportunistic reasons, being aware that people are not always served best by going along with their wishes.
- **Congruency:** We ensure that the way we work is in line with the way we guide our clients to work. We preach what we practice and practice what we preach.
- **Wholeness:** We operate as whole beings, meaning that we address issues rationally, emotionally and existentially, using our “whole brain”. We do not separate between formal and informal, hierarchic and functional, private and business.
- **Reciprocity:** We believe that if we genuinely seek to co-create a better world with and for our clients and other partners, this will be recognized and rewarded by them. We prefer valuation of the work done above up-front negotiation and relation above transaction.

Perspectivity in the world

We see that, beneath the blanket of cynicism and fear that covers our world and hampers our growth, there are movements afoot across the globe that say “enough”! Women are changing their roles; environmentalists are organizing to regenerate the planet; universal human rights are being re-written to include future generations; movements are reaching beyond the customary in search of more hopeful belief systems. In organizations across government, non-profit, and the private sector there are signs of change. We begin to see some of the new habits of mind, heart, and imagination in life — organizational learning, valuing diversity and whole system thinking. In short: a time of change seems to be upon us and we intend on

working in mutually enriching ways with any person or organization that wants to contribute to effecting this change working from similar or complementary principles. We will seek to co-create rather than compete believing that, in the end, this will be beneficial to all. Many people and organizations in the world around us have inspired us. We encounter a great deal of synchronicity whenever we engage in applying our ideas.

How we are organized

The ideas of Perspectivity appeal to a wide range of people. The contribution they can or want to make to Perspectivity also varies widely. There is a large group of volunteers, who are active in spreading the news, applying the principles in their own private or professional environments, attending and preparing events and projects, facilitating game sessions, performing administrative and communication tasks and/or making monetary donations. But there is also a group of professionals who use the Perspectivity ideas as a basis to provide for their subsistence and who guide communities and organizations towards inspired dialogue and self-reflective learning on a commercial basis.

We have chosen to face the challenge of mobilizing all these widely different talents and ambitions by providing for a professional, commercial organization (the Perspectivity enterprise) next to a volunteers-organization with charity status (the Perspectivity Network, supported by the Perspectivity Foundation). This Passion Code is the compass and umbrella for both organizations. We will apply the ideas of this Passion Code to the work of both organizations and, above all, to the cooperation between both. That gives us the trust that we will be able to integrate the differences, with volunteers and professionals working shoulder to shoulder in a mutually enriching way.

What we are not

In this passion code we have clarified what Perspectivity stands for, what is driving us and which values we are embracing. For reasons of clarity, we conclude this code by listing a number of things that Perspectivity is not:

- An action group promoting or representing any particular interest, goal or opinion other than the ideas explained in this code.
- An organization with a toolbox of quick fixes. It will always take serious efforts (this can be in terms of time, money or other inputs) from our clients to co-create approaches with us and to take the lead in implementing these.
- A politically, religiously or otherwise ideologically inspired organization. We are open to and yet critical about all ideologies and visions, trying to appreciatively understand the best in everything.
- An environmental organization; we seek to promote processes that lead to social, ecological and economic sustainability at the same time.