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LEARNING *for* CHANGE AND INNOVATION

**WORLD CONGRESS**

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# HOW CAN AN ORGANISATION LEARN ITS WAY TO BECOMING 'SUSTAINING'?

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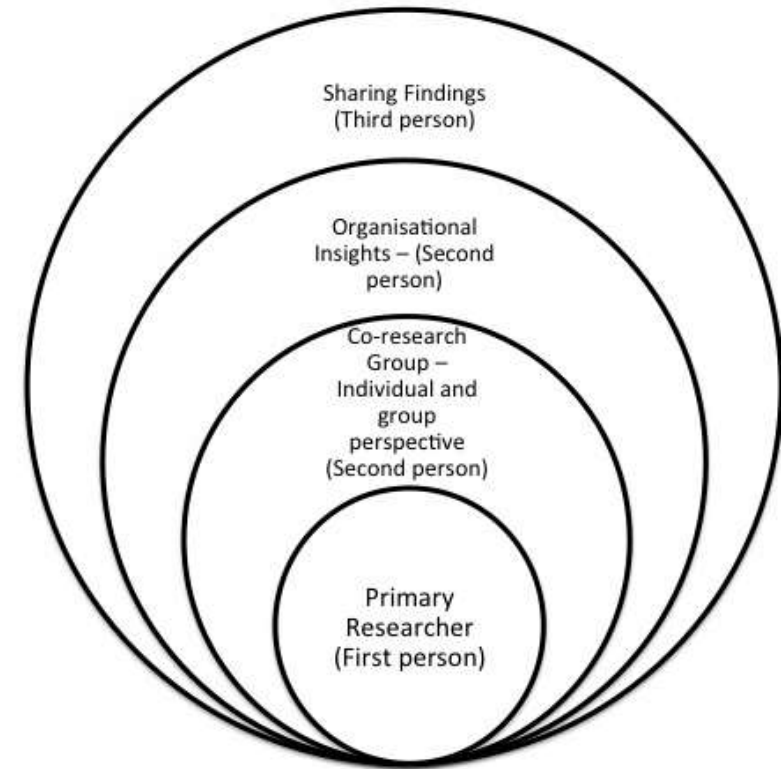


# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Increase appreciation of the role of emergent change in organisational transformation.
- Identify the salient personal development of researcher and co-researchers that enabled emergent change.
- Identify conversation as a form of action in action research.
- Identify threshold concepts involved in the emergent change.
- Identify leverage points for change within the case study organisation

# AGENDA

- Introduce the research
- Salient research findings:
  - Researcher
  - Co-researchers
  - Organisation
- Principles for wider application

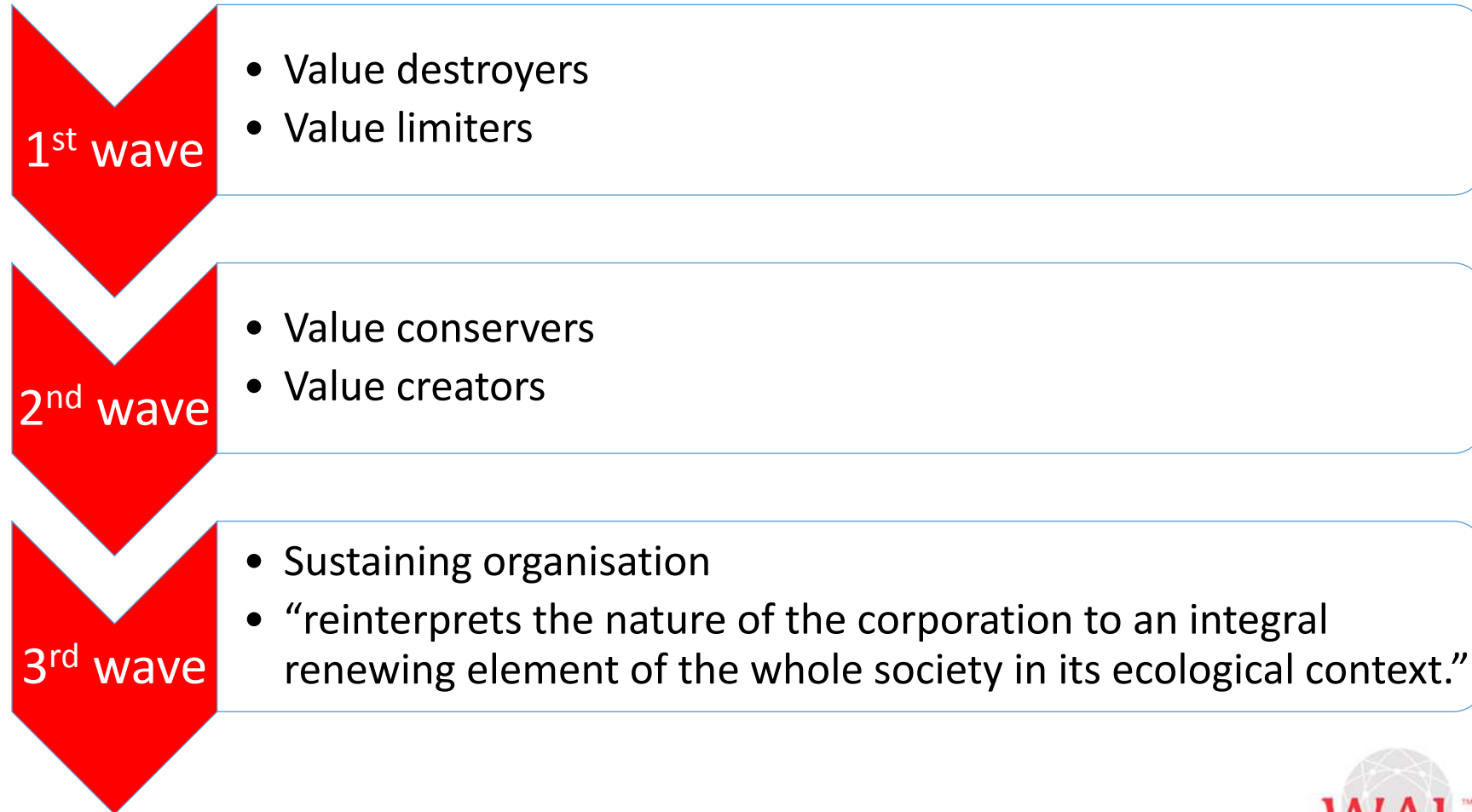


# FROM THE ORGANISATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY LITERATURE

- The role of organisations in resolving global 'unsustainability'.
- 'Weak' and 'strong' sustainability (REF).



# 3 WAVES OF CHANGE TO FORM A SUSTAINING ORG



Dunphy et.al., *Organizational Change for corporate sustainability*, 2007

# A FUNDAMENTAL SHIFT IN PARADIGM

- Thinking and acting in the world in a way that recognises the interdependence of everything. (Senge, 2014)
- Seeing and working in ‘wholes’
- More than a cerebral understanding. Whole people – mind, body, spirit.

## *Complex adaptive systems – ‘living systems’*



# OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- Employed the lens of complex adaptive systems
- Systemic and emergent action research over 2 years (2010 – 2012)
- Local government body
  - 450 employees
  - CEO support – tentative executive team support
  - Small co-research group



# ABOUT THE CO-RESEARCH GROUP

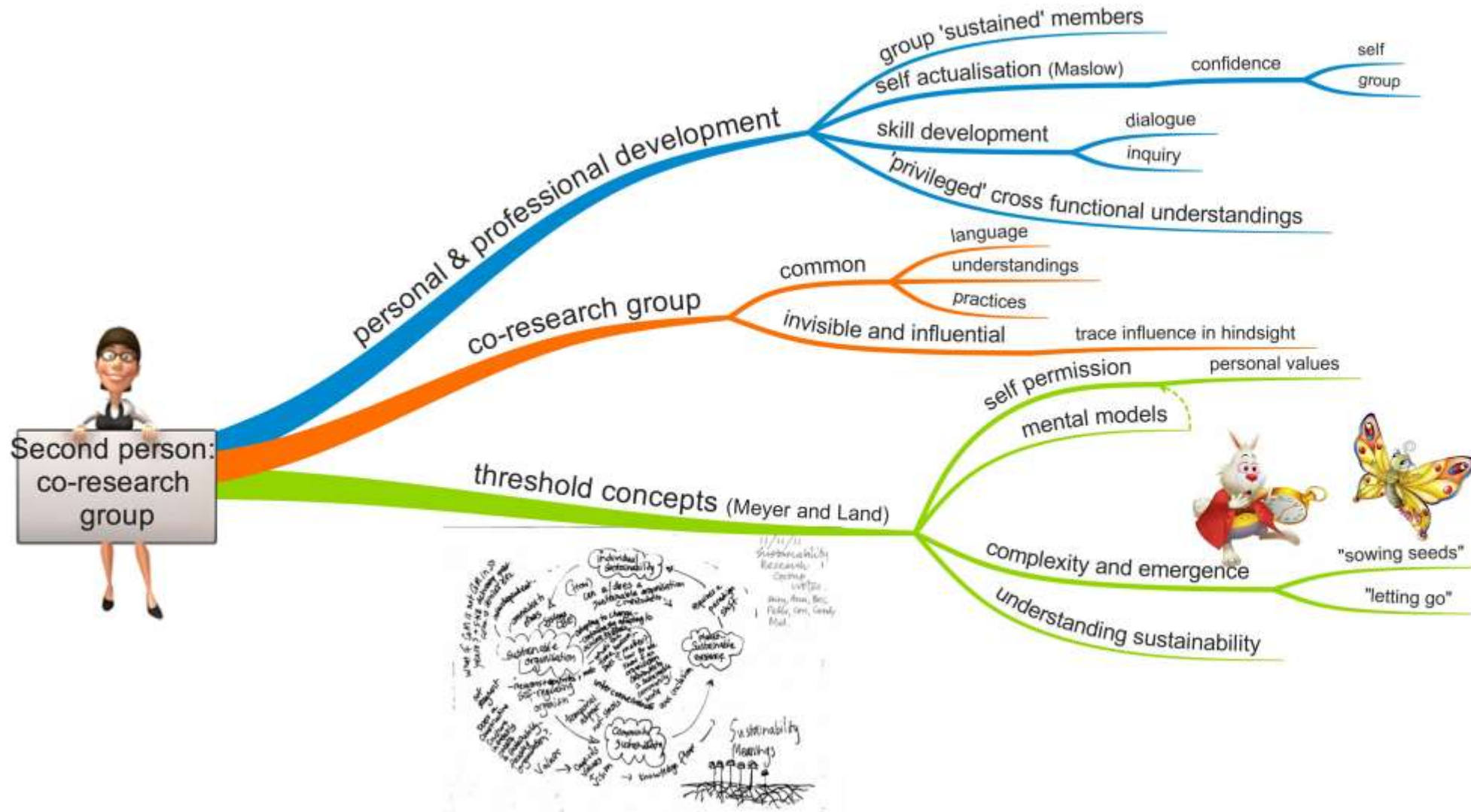
- Formation – open to all with an interest.
- Core group of 5 established – only 1 with senior authority. Up to 12 different members over the research period.
- Met fortnightly for 2 hours over 2 years
- Meetings ‘unstructured’ but focused on the research question



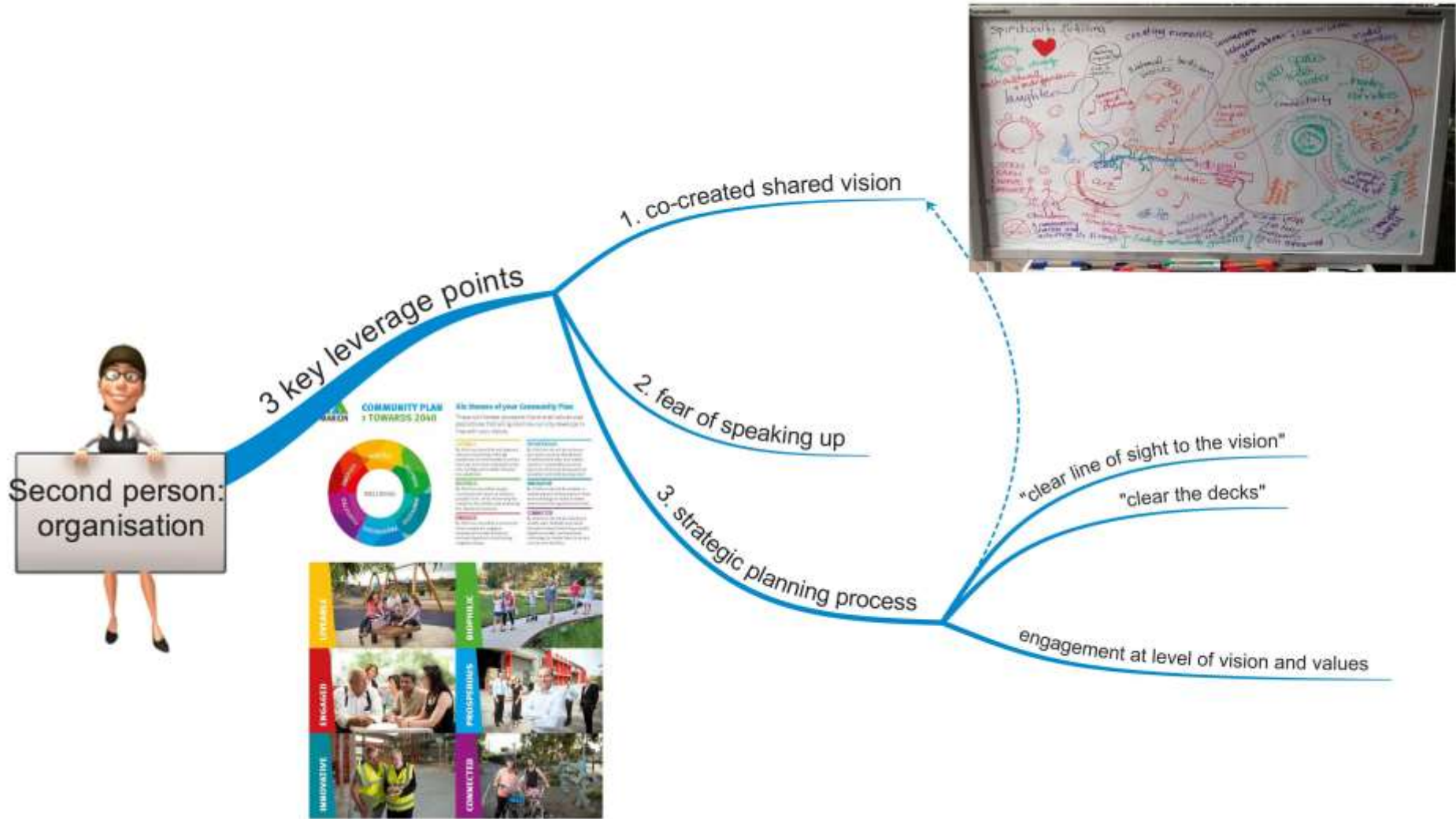
# CASE STUDY FINDINGS



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# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Researcher/facilitator to be guided by an understanding of the behaviour of complex adaptive systems.
- Guide conversations to develop an understanding of the identified threshold concepts.
- Unplanned conversations are the ‘action’ and catalyst for the paradigm shift to emerge – in good time.
- Nurture the liberation of personal values.
- Generate and nurture a co-created shared vision.
- Less is more.

# CONNECTING TO YOUR EXPERIENCES

- How has a participative action research process developed you and others? Has it expanded your consciousness?
- In what ways does this case study reflect your own experiences with emergent change?
- What are the more subtle realms of emergent change in your experience?