

generative scribing

A SOCIAL ART
of the 21st CENTURY

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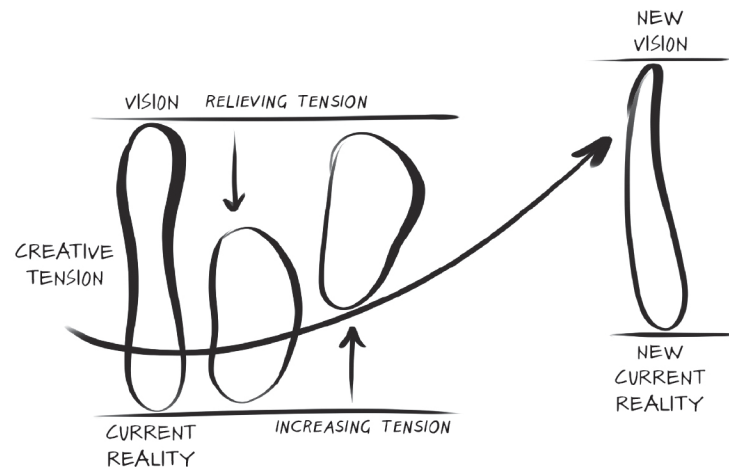
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Kelvy Bird



Cambridge, Massachusetts

choice



In life and in facilitation, the ability to manage creative tension can mean the difference between growing or collapsing.

With vision above and reality at the base, creativity resides between the two. This model from Robert Fritz shows how a practice can remain static or be stretched.³⁷ “Tension seeks resolution” he writes. We are hungry. We eat.

In our practice, we determine the amount of tension we want to sustain.

Sometimes I can determine the structure of my working environment, such as where to set up in a room or choosing who is on my team. At other times elements of the structure are determined for me, like being required to use the colors of a company’s logo or to draw in a particular style.

In defining my own structure, when do I challenge myself in order to move into my desired future, raising my own bar? Or, when do I accept a limit in order to ease some pressure? The answer depends on the nature of the creative tension in my mind (dread or excitement), in my heart (lump of sadness or joy), and in my body (stomach in knots or raring to go).

A wide gap between an aspiration and current reality indicates a high level of tension. Noticing this, I ask myself: “How much can I take? Can my and the group’s container hold a higher-keyed energy? Where are others in their level of comfort or stress? Can the system expand its boundaries?”

Scribes draw to either relieve or increase tension, and thus facilitate the pace of change in conversation.

Sometimes a group seems edgy, unstable. I will probably want to help hold things together and touch an underlying order to minimize tension. I get more grounded in data to understand how the bits of content fit together to make sense. I imagine the social body as an organism seeking some quiet, rest. I draw more slowly, more carefully. I soften my stance, listen more deeply, and relate to what needs more time to resolve.

Sometimes a group seems ripe for movement. So I draw with more speed, more conviction. My attitude is that possibility is within reach. My marks come out crisp, steady, as if carving a direction for the group to gain momentum and courage.

Over time, if a group intends to change, a generative scribe can help raise the level of vision and note the updated current reality. With attunement to where a group has been and where they aspire to go, we can make the path visible. We can set up conditions for choice.

³⁷ Robert Fritz, *Creating: a Guide to the Creative Process* (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1991), p. 27.