

Liberating Structures for greater meetings

A short introduction what Liberating Structures is and how to get started



Our aspiration as leader, manager, change agent, project manager, process coach and facilitator is to have lively meetings, workshops and network gatherings where everyone is engaged, contributes knowledge and experiences and jointly shapes the future. Navigating the increasingly complex world needs our collective intelligence. To advance our thinking and approaches and to develop new solutions, we need the perspective of everyone. And we need better meetings.

Liberating Structures offers an approach to organize meetings in a different way. With a set of 33 playful, practical and combinable microstructures, lively interaction is possible in every context. Liberating Structures is a do-it-yourself concept for teams, groups, networks to work better together.

- Liberating Structures is about people developing solutions in close collaboration.
- They are not stuck to chairs nor to groups. They co-create and take responsibility over their learning and collaboration process.
- Liberating Structures promotes a shared approach fostering joint inquiry.

Liberating Structures are imperfect little methods that try to draw out more of each person's intelligence, imagination, and creativity while at the same time combining, mutating, and smashing that together with others' in a way that often results in unexpected gains from unusual places. [Qua Fisher](#)

Immerse yourself in a Liberating Structures workshop

The good news is that these structures are easy to learn! In a **Liberating Structures immersion workshop** you will discover and practice alternate ways of tapping multiple intelligences, and peoples' creative imaginations to achieve results for issues that really matter. Witness the power we unleash when we make simple shifts in our interactions. Check the Website for [immersion workshops around the globe](#).

What's behind, underneath and beyond Liberating Structures?

Toolbox

Liberating Structures offers a toolbox containing 33 basic structures (you could also call them activities, interactions or methodologies) – some are small, others are big. The structures are deceptively simple, subtle and powerful that specify a set of minimum rules in order to engage everyone – no matter hierarchical positions or group size. Each Liberating Structure is designed to produce immediate results that can transform a meeting, a workshop or a conversation. All the structures are well explained and easily accessible through various channels: the [website](#), [an App](#), and the [book](#). The toolbox is for everyone and adaptable for every context (conversation and reflection in teams, groups, networks, schools, family, etc.).

Process literacy for more self-organization and self-facilitation

Modern work life is blessed with many meetings. It is no luxury [to invest in process knowledge](#) and develop internal facilitation skills. For those who have the interest to experiment with the role of the facilitator, Liberating Structures is a great opportunity. As facilitator and co-facilitator, you support collaboration and share responsibility for the process.

The [Matchmaker Matrix](#) helps to select the right structure. As with the toolbox there are various structures for different kinds of conversations: Sharing ideas, know-how or experiences; generating ideas or solutions; analyzing and debriefing; getting or giving help; strategizing; and planning. Advanced Liberating Structures practitioners combine the structures to strings that allow a group to explore an issue in more in-depth. Through the sequence of steps, a conversation is guided, a team or a group gains focus and has more creative and richer conversations. It becomes possible to reliably work with more difference, persistent ambiguity, and higher orders of complexity. As Liberating Structures become a habitual way of interacting, the potential to transform an organization, a community or system-wide initiative becomes tangible, practical, and familiar.

Support is available for all facilitators through [user groups](#) and the global community on Slack helping with advice and resources.

Collaborative mindset

The force of Liberating Structures is deeply ingrained in their DNA, the '[shared logic and organizing patterns](#)'. To understand this DNA we must have a look at [the principles](#) and at [the little word 'liberating'](#). The 10 principles engrave the liberated spirit. Liberated participants need liberated workshops need liberated facilitators need liberated processes. Liberating Structures provoke a "[disruptive ride](#)". They invite for a look under the surface of the iceberg of what we believe good collaboration is and of how we understand and approach working and learning together. They ask for a mind shift from a centralized pattern to a distributed one where people are in the driver's seat and have authority over their learning process. Liberating Structures are a call and a path for a more collaborative and [networked mindset](#).

Compiled by Nadia von Holzen, Learning Moments/ December 2019

