

ACTIVITY

VISIONING A POST-TRANSITION FUTURE

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| People: | Ideally everyone in your group |
| Time: | 1 hour per activity |
| Resources: | This activity sheet and a place to meet |

Why should we do this?

Part of the work of transition is about creating a collective positive vision of what our community could be. Doing this work is creative and energising, and puts us in touch with how important it is to have a safe, healthy, peaceful future, for ourselves and for future generations.

Advanced industrialised countries have very confusing information about what kind of future we could have, and most stories in films and books only show two possibilities - futures of endless technological development, population growth and resource use, or collapse - and sometimes both. The story which is most needed for our times is how the human race made a peaceful shift away from a focus on consumption, productivity and economic growth towards something sustainable, equitable and satisfying. To do Transition we need to find out what that story could look like where we live, and explore it in depth and detail.

This guide gives you a choice of two processes to do with your Initiating group to start to explore what your individual and shared vision of a future includes. Don't worry if you have different ideas - no one can know what the future will really bring. Some may feel that others have ideas that aren't realistic. Don't get into judging each other's vision - this is more like a process of dreaming, which may spark all kinds of things that haven't taken shape yet.

At first the Initiating group will be the ones holding the vision. Ultimately you want the vision shared and owned by as many people as possible - the more people holding something positive the better.

The result of the visioning exercise can feed into the timeline activity that you can download here: <http://transitionnetwork.org/resources/producing-timeline-activity/>

How to do it:

We have created 2 activities that you can do as a group to develop a vision. One is quite interactive and the other takes the form of a guided journey, both of these are useful activities and you can do both if you like and see what visions emerge.

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Activity 1: Exploring a post-Transition world

If your group isn't comfortable with a visualisation process you can simply open a space for talking about what's not working in our current system, and what a post-Transition future might include

Here's a structure you can use to do this.

Materials

Have some thick pens or crayons, and flip chart or lining paper so you can put all your ideas on one piece of paper.

1. What needs to change - (20 minutes)

Split into groups of at least 3 people, each taking one or more of the following themes - and any others you want to add:

- Energy and resources
- Environment including climate change and other pollution issues
- Equality and inclusion, social and personal well being
- Economics - including growth, financial institutions and structures

Have 10 minutes in your group to brainstorm things that aren't working and that are causing, or need to, change. Write down your answers on large paper if you have it, so other will be able to see. Don't get into arguments - if you disagree just include all the points of view.

Each group then takes 2 minutes to report back to the whole group.

2. Imagine what would a post-Transition future look like? (10 minutes)

Take 5 minutes to imagine yourself taking a tour around your community in a future time where things have gone as well as, or better than you can imagine and the challenges you have identified have been addressed in a positive way (it doesn't have to be "realistic" unless you want to be). You might choose one area of life (food production, raising children, housing, livelihoods or anything else) to explore, or just imagine taking a walk and noticing what's there.

In pairs or threes, share some of the things you imagine would be in your community. Take 5 - 10 minutes for this.

3. Sharing the vision (10-15 minutes)

Come back into the whole group and spend 5 - 10 minutes in silence writing and drawing on your shared piece of paper - words or images that show what you think the future might include. Make it fun and as detailed or visionary as you like!

Take 10 minutes together to look at what you've created, going round and giving everyone a chance to say something about the following questions:

- What's on the paper - what does your shared vision include?
- How was it to imagine this future - what surprised you, what did you like or not?

Together reflect on what's in your shared vision. Does it address the challenges you talked

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A vision for the future is never finished - it will always be evolving. Don't spend time arguing about details - instead notice where you have agreement, or where there are issues that are particularly charged for one or more people. Celebrate where you agree, and take a moment to feel how much uncertainty we are actually in these times.

You may want to keep your shared vision somewhere, to look at again and update as new people join, or to re-vision later.

Activity 2: Guided visualisation to imagine a positive future

Another way to create a vision is to do a guided visualisation. One person guides the group through a process of imagining a positive future in your community. Below are notes for someone facilitating and a script for this process - feel free to adapt or change it. This process has been used on many Transition workshops, and many find it a relaxing and unusual way to step forward in time and imagine where we might be heading.

Once this is done you then reflect on what you have thought in small groups and then with the full group. It can be good to record this and use it to build your group's vision.

Notes for the facilitator

When you introduce this to your group you may want to include things like:

- The technique of guided visualisation works for some more than others. If you feel uncomfortable it's fine not to do it – or you could just experiment with dipping in and out, whatever works for you
- If you don't easily get images just let something else happen – it might be words, sounds or feelings
- For most people it's easiest to relax and close your eyes, but it's also fine to keep your eyes open and just use your imagination

While guiding the process just check what's happening in the group – very occasionally people have strong or disturbing experiences when doing this kind of exercise - if this happens gently stop and bring the group back to a normal place.

How to read out the visualisation

- Speak out the following instructions
- At the end of each paragraph give a pause
- Give a longer pause where you are inviting people to imagine things
- Use your voice to create a sense of calm and peace

Visualisation text:

Get comfortable in your seat, you may want to have your spine straight and your feet flat on the floor. Many people find it easier to visualise if their eyes are closed, but it's fine if you prefer to keep them open.

So let your attention come into this present moment, being aware of the sounds in the room, and following the rhythm of your breath, coming and going.

We are going to go on a journey, to one possible future for your community to explore what this world might be like, guided by this process and your imagination.

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At this moment in time none of us know what the future holds, and our actions now will shape what happens. In this journey we choose to visit a positive future, where communities have successfully made a transition to a viable, thriving, sustainable way of life.

As you relax, invite the intuitive part of your mind to come forward. Let go of the rational, logical, left brain, and invite your imagination, your creative self, your intuition – the part that can be surprised, that loves sensations like touch, smell, colour, beauty.

Imagine that you go to sleep tonight in your bed, wherever that is...

And while you are sleeping a miracle happens. As you sleep you are transported forwards in time to a day when the transition has more or less happened.

All the changes that are needed for a sustainable presence on the planet have taken place – without you having to do any more, to go to any more meetings... As you move forward in time you don't age – you are just visiting this future world at the age you are now. Just imagine yourself drifting forward through the months.. the years..

Keeping your eyes closed, or staying with this imagining, let yourself wake up in this future world. What is the first thing you notice that tells you that this is a different world you are waking up in? Is it a sound? Something about the light? Perhaps the scent of the air? Or the feel of the sheets on your skin?

Letting images arise, notice how you get ready for the day in this different world. Getting up ... Getting dressed...

You find something to eat. Perhaps you are alone having breakfast. Perhaps there are other people there. What is the place like, where you are eating? Notice the taste and texture of the food. How would you know that this meal is a future meal and not one from before..

Just letting your imagination guide you, without trying to think with your head, letting sensations, smells, sounds, sights, arise in your awareness, and imagine these experiences as fully as you can.

Now you have a day to explore this world, as a visitor or a tourist. You walk out to explore. Where do you want to go, what do you want to see?

Find your way to some part of the community's activities – perhaps something you do for your job in the old life, or something you're curious about. Take transport to get there, or walk.. What do you notice on the way?

When you arrive use all your senses to notice as much as possible about this activity. What technology is being used? What kind of materials? What are the sounds, smells, the shapes of this activity?

Who is doing it – what ages? Men, women? People from different cultures? How do the people seem as they work? What does the pace feel like? How do they seem in their bodies?

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Someone comes over to answer your questions, to be your guide. If there's anything you'd like to know take this opportunity to ask them. Rather than making up the answer yourself just let the scene play out – as if you are watching a film. Perhaps they have an answer that is completely unexpected.

What is it like to talk with them? How is it to look into their eyes? Is there anything that tells you that this is a future conversation and not from before?

When you have seen all you need to about this activity find a way to say take your leave.

Time is passing in this future world. You are coming to evening now. You have been invited to join people in the community for some kind of gathering. Perhaps it's a meeting with things to decide. Perhaps a celebration – a birthday, a harvest, a commemoration. Just let yourself find your way to a place where people are starting to gather.

As you arrive, again notice with all your senses. What are the colours of the place. How is it decorated? Is it indoors or outside? What are the sounds – is there music? Voices? Sounds from nature? How does the air smell as evening is falling?

Notice who is here – older people? Children? How is the event organised? Just let it unfold, as if you are watching a film – but with all your sense engaged. You meet more people, you take part - or you observe and listen.

So let time move forward again, this day is coming to an end. Take your leave from the gathering. At some point on your journey home you stop and notice nature around you – the darkness, the scents and sounds of the night. How is it to notice the sky, the living environment?

And your day in this future place is ending, you make your way back to your bed and fall asleep again. And in your sleep you drift back in time, back to this present time, knowing that you can visit this future place again any time that you wish.

So just let yourself come back to this year, and this time and place, your group meeting, returning fully into your body. Taking your time, reconnecting with your breath, with your weight on the chair, hearing the sounds in the room..

When you are ready, opening your eyes or coming fully back, and stretching your body.

Sharing the vision

Once the visualisation has finished then:

- Get together in small groups of no more than 3
- Spend 10 minutes discussing your experience of the visualisation
- Come back together as a full group and share what you experienced

You may want to take notes to feed into the timeline activity. Think about:

- Anything you liked about the future world you visited?
- Anything you didn't like?
- What surprised you?

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At the very end give everyone the opportunity to feedback on the process itself.

Make sure that your notes are saved to inform the timeline activity available here:
<http://transitionnetwork.org/resources/producing-timeline-activity/>

More support:

For more support and information on creating visions and analysing how we see the world go here:

<http://transitionnetwork.org/do-transition/starting-transition/7-essential-ingredients/vision/>

Check out the 7 essential ingredients of Transition here:

<http://transitionnetwork.org/do-transition/starting-transition/7-essential-ingredients/>

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