



SUSPENSION OF DISCONNECT

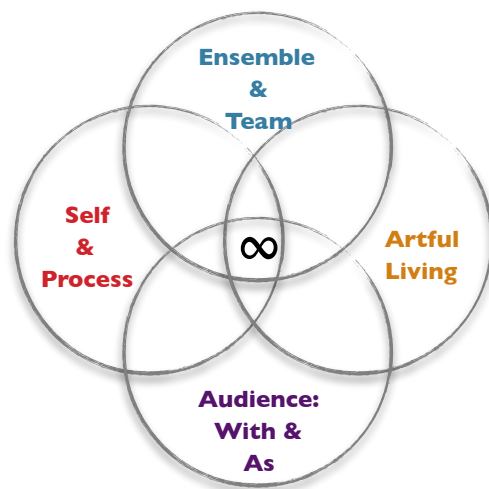
A New Context and Pedagogy for the Arts in the 21st Century



Suspending our disbelief assumes we live in a state of disbelief 24/7 and artists ask us to believe just a bit for the 2 minutes to 2 hours we are with them. This is thought and imagination based. It has worked wonders for humanity to evolve into a complex web of information paralysis. Out of self preservation, an epidemic of disconnect—from self to to community to Earth to higher purpose—has come to the forefront. To transcend this stagnation, Simon and Jess coined the magnet “Suspension of Disconnect” to draw constellation lines between other individuals and organizations instinctually acting upon the antidote - connecting through body, awareness, and collective consciousness. Our curiosity is what will arise in the collaborative moment when we both suspend disbelief AND disconnect.

- **Setting Your Sights:** Drive a stake into the ground and express how you are feeling right now - could be in the form of a gesture, metaphor, or sound. Be concise. Then, with the focus, effort, and calm of an archer, state your intention for the class/ rehearsal and send the arrow flying across the room. Visualize a rope tied to its end, attached to the stake you just drove into the ground. The tension between the two is your potential path from where you are to where you want to go. Your identity informs your intention. Your intention expands your identity. And it's all out there in the open for the ensemble to see and possibly collaborate within like a daring ropes course!
- **3 year-old Filter:** What's my intention? Why do I do what I do? For example, “I create art to evoke playfulness and awe.” Then ask “Why?” Write that answer down. Keep asking then writing, try 3-4 rounds, until you hit a statement that makes you a little scared to say out loud. A statement that lives in the realm of “Who am I to say that?!” That's your horizon where the possible and impossible meet.
- **Object Identity:** Share a one-minute story about an important object in your life. By interacting through the abstract or analogy of the object, the ensemble can derive a deeper and more immediate connection to self and each other.

FOUR THEMES OF SUSPENSION OF DISCONNECT





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Continued (ITAC Thnk Tank January 2020)



FOUR THEMES OF SUSPENSION OF DISCONNECT

- Connection with self & process:

- Strengthening your creative magnet through identity, intention, vulnerability, daring, compassion, and awareness.
- Identity: Lineage of self (training, familial raising), lineage of arts area, lineage of the themes you are drawn to explore
- Intention: The motivation inside the action. The same action shifts dramatically based on intentionality. A simple handshake can have the intention of dominance or the intention of deep condolences. The handshake remains the same. The connection is drastically different.
- Impact: Is the ripple effect of how your identity and intentions affect the world at large. It requires a horizon—a dream beyond your lifetime—to help raise your eyes up and out as you keep stepping out into the unknown. The creative collaboration between what is (senses/connection) and what can be (belief/imagination) is your artistic journey through life.

- Connection with artful living:

- Activating & expanding your senses (the fab five—sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing plus out of the boxes like: sense of humor, decency, intuition...)
- Creativity occurs in the unknown. This requires questions that are open to new answers. Not all questions are. Let's unpack them and get to the intentions behind them.

On a scale from known to unknown, a question can be asked with three different intentions:

Interrogation

Asking to confirm “known” answer

Inquiry

Asking with some “knowns” but open the answer

Curiosity

Completely open to answer

- Connection with ensemble & team:

- Being Open Playful & together.
- Encouraging compassionate & nonjudgmental productive feedback based in listening and bearing witness.
- Identify attributes of connection (possibly in other forms) that then help you feel & articulate when it's truly occurring in your ensemble & team.
- Create brave community spaces for crafting a horizontal leadership structure where ideas and feelings are “called up” not “called out”.
- L. O. V. E. = Let Others Voluntarily Evolve

- Connection with an audience & as an audience:

- Constantly redefine audiences' role. Tune into presence, authenticity, loss of sense of time, collected breath and heartbeat...
- How do I sense I am with them and they are with me? What is the feeling spectrum from bearing witness and participating?
- How do spaces encourage connection from digital to physical, from traditional to avante garde, from stage to classroom?
 - What forms have you experienced that have touched on those connections?
 - How were you encouraged and/or directed to interact with them, as an audience member or creator?
 - If this is a new exploration, where is there a little room for the unknown in your structure for the audience?



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CI BOOKS:

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RESOURCES

Brown, Brené. *Daring Greatly*.
Brown, Stuart M.D. *Play: How It Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul*
Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. *Flow*
Elkind, David Ph.D. *The Power of Play*
Grey, Peter. *Free to Learn*
Lerman, Liz. *Hiking the Horizontal*
Nachmanovitch, Stephen. *Free Play*
Pillmore, Jess. *Creatively Independent: Life on Your Terms with Play, Community and Awareness*.
Sinek, Simon. *Why Leaders Eat Last*
Sutton-Smith, Brian. *The Ambiguity of Play*
Tharp, Twyla. *The Collaborative Habit: Life Lessons for Working Together*
Wangh, Stephen. *The Heart of Teaching*

Keep playing! Keep exploring!



Jess Pillmore
the revolution is YOU
the revolution is ME
the revolution is US

Simon Sharkey
Seize opportunity by the beard for it has a bald behind!



TNS:

Our work is designed to enthrall, transform, shape and celebrate the possibilities and opportunities in every encounter. Our passion is building relationships that change the way we view the world around us and spur us into action. We make work on every scale and are constantly stretching the possibilities of theatre and art as a space where magic happens, where "acts of wanton wonder" are the norm, where the ordinary is made extraordinary.

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THE NECESSARY SPACE is led by Simon Sharkey who is best known as one of the original team that built The National Theatre of Scotland and shaped their "Theatre Without Walls." Building on Simon's pioneering work across the world, we invite you to get in touch and start to shape your space. We can help you create your "Theatre of Opportunity" in any setting, at any scale and in any context.

CREATIVELY INDEPENDENT is the play-filled conduit between where you are and where you want to be. PUBLICATIONS: HowlRound's Sustainable Artistry series, *Psychology Today*, and books: *Creatively Independent* (2013) & *Creative Ownership alongside Shakespeare* (2020). SAMPLE CLIENTS: Brown/Trinity Rep, NYU/Tisch, Interlochen, Idyllwild, BU, Troy Univ., Univ. of Miss., UVA, ISTA, USU, LSU, multiple state thespian and professional development conferences AWARDS: NEA grant, multiple national SAFD awards. CURRENT PROJECTS: "A Fire Just Waiting" featuring Ani DiFranco's music and an educational script series facilitating interdisciplinary devising.

Thank you ITAC Think Tank for the opportunity for Creatively Independent and The Necessary Space to meet and collaborate in order to Suspend Disconnect in the arts, education, and humanity. Jess and Simon are in the process of co-authoring a book based on research and interviews with some of the world's best directors, thinkers and teachers. The book explores the idea of "Suspension of Disconnect" as a methodology that transcends the "suspension of disbelief" and places the artist, audience, teacher, student and participant in new and deeper relationships.