



# **Manager's Toolbox for working with the Inner Development Guide**

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## **Preface**

This handbook is intended to offer support for managers, HR consultants and change leaders in companies and public sector organizations in working with the 25 skills and qualities in the Inner Development Guide (IDG). The handbook assumes that the reader works in an organization that has already started to explore how the IDG framework can be used to improve how the organization aligns with the kind of values and concerns outlined in the UN's Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The core of the handbook is a toolbox: a set of 31 concretely described activities managers can use with their own teams to address development needs in the five broad dimensions of the IDG framework: Being, Thinking, Relating, Collaborating and Acting. Many of these activities are adapted from the very comprehensive collection of activities available on the transition-makers.nl website. The activities in that collection are designed for use in higher education. In this handbook, a smaller number of the activities have been selected and adapted for use in workplaces.

The handbook is the result of a “collaboration” between me, Thomas Jordan, and the Large Language Models ChatGPT and Claude. I was the scientific consultant and lead analyst in the process that resulted in the first version of the IDG framework in 2021. In 2025 I was part of the workgroup that designed the revised second version of the framework, based on over 20.000 survey responses from 194 countries. My own papers elaborating on the meaning of the IDG skills and qualities was one of the sources used when creating this handbook.

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# CONTENTS

Part 1: Orientation

Part 2: Activities and Practices

2A: Quick Engagements (1-15 minutes)

2B: Team Development (30-60 minutes)

2C: Deeper Work (60-90 minutes)

2D: Extended Development (2+ hours)

Part 3: Situation Guide

Part 4: Indices and Appendices

# Part 1: Orientation

## 1.1 Welcome to the toolbox

### What is this?

This handbook is a practical resource for managers working toward sustainability goals. It is not a prescribed plan or a step-by-step program you must follow. Instead, it is a resource bank of tools and activities that you can choose from based on your team's needs and your company's sustainability commitments.

The activities and practices in this handbook are designed to develop the inner capabilities needed for outer sustainability work. They help build the awareness, values, motivations, and skills that enable your team to contribute effectively to your company's efforts toward the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

You will find activities ranging from one minute to two hours, allowing you to integrate inner development into your existing routines without disrupting your work. Some activities are quick check-ins or reflections. Others are deeper exercises for team development. Choose what fits your context.

### What is IDG and why does it matter?

The Inner Development Guide (IDG) is a research-based framework identifying the skills and capabilities we need to develop to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. It addresses a critical gap: the distance between where we are today and where we need to be according to the UN's Agenda 2030.

The framework recognizes that achieving sustainability requires inner transformation. We need to develop our relationship to ourselves and to the world around us. This means strengthening our awareness, clarifying our values, building our capacity for systems thinking, deepening our care for communities and ecosystems, and developing the courage to act on our commitments even when it is difficult.

The IDG framework organizes these capabilities into five dimensions:

**Being** – developing our inner lives, understanding our values, and maintaining presence

**Thinking** – understanding our complex world through systems thinking, long-term orientation, and perspective skills

**Relating** – caring for others and the world, developing genuine connection to colleagues, communities, future generations, and nature

**Collaborating** – building trust and working together across boundaries and differences

**Acting** – leading and enabling change with courage, creativity, and perseverance

Each dimension contains specific skills that together form a comprehensive framework for inner development (for an overview, see appendix 1). You will find these explained in section 1.2 below.<sup>1</sup>

## **Why inner development strengthens teams**

When team members develop these capabilities, they become more effective contributors to your company's sustainability work. Inner development is not separate from sustainability work—it is what makes sustainability work possible.

Consider what happens when a team develops strong *Being* capabilities. Managers and team members become clearer about their values and more able to maintain commitment to sustainable practices even under budget pressure. They can hold steady when facing the discomfort that comes with changing unsustainable practices. They make decisions aligned with long-term sustainability rather than short-term convenience.

When a team develops *Thinking* capabilities, they understand how different sustainability issues connect to each other. They see how a decision about waste management connects to procurement practices, supplier relationships, and circular economy principles. They consider multiple stakeholder perspectives and think about impacts on future generations.

Teams strong in *Relating* capabilities do not treat sustainability as an external compliance requirement. They genuinely care about worker conditions in their supply chains. They feel connected to the communities affected by their operations and to the natural ecosystems their company impacts. This intrinsic care drives more authentic and sustained sustainability efforts.

Strong *Collaborating* skills allow teams to work effectively with diverse stakeholders—from factory workers to environmental organizations to government regulators. They can communicate across cultural and organizational boundaries, co-create solutions with unlikely partners, and mobilize people toward ambitious sustainability goals.

And when teams develop *Acting* capabilities, they have the courage to speak up about unsustainable practices, the creativity to find new solutions, and the perseverance to keep going despite setbacks and slow progress.

## **Core principle**

You know your team best. You understand what will support your sustainability work and what fits your organizational context. This handbook gives you choices, not prescriptions.

Choose activities that fit your needs. In Parts 4 and 5 you can get help in selecting the activities that fit your actual situation. Test the activities. Evaluate what works. Adjust as needed. This is an ongoing practice, not a project with an end date. As your team develops these capabilities, you will find new ways to contribute to your company's sustainability commitments and to the broader goals of Agenda 2030.

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<sup>1</sup> For a more comprehensive explanation of the 25 skills and qualities of the Inner Development Guide, see Jordan & Claude [AI]: The 25 skills and qualities in the Inner Development Guide (2025), available through this link: [http://perspectus.se/tj/publikationer/Skriftserie\\_2025.16\\_The25IDGs.pdf](http://perspectus.se/tj/publikationer/Skriftserie_2025.16_The25IDGs.pdf)

## 1.2 The five dimensions explained

This section provides a brief background on each of the five dimensions of the IDG framework. For each dimension, you will find an explanation of what it means, the five specific skills it contains (see also Appendix A), why it matters for sustainability work, a workplace example, and guidance on when to focus on developing that dimension.

These explanations give you the conceptual foundation you need to choose appropriate activities from the handbook and understand how they support your sustainability goals..

### **Being – developing our inner lives**

**What it means:** Understanding yourself, your values, and maintaining presence. Developing clarity about what matters and why.

**The five skills:** Inner compass, Integrity and authenticity, Openness and learning mindset, Self-awareness, Presence.

**Why this matters for sustainability:** When you are clear about your values and aligned with sustainability principles, you make consistent decisions even under pressure. You can hold steady when facing the discomfort that comes with changing unsustainable practices. Self-awareness helps you notice when convenience or short-term thinking is pulling you away from sustainability commitments.

**Workplace example:** A manager with strong Being capabilities can maintain commitment to sustainable practices during budget pressures, help the team stay grounded during organizational changes affecting sustainability initiatives, and model integrity when sustainability commitments conflict with convenience.

**When to develop:** When sustainability work feels disconnected from daily decisions, when short-term pressures override sustainability commitments, when the team lacks clarity about values and purpose

### **Thinking – understanding our complex world**

**What it means:** Seeing patterns, understanding interconnections, thinking systemically and long-term. Grasping complexity rather than seeking simplistic solutions.

**The five skills:** Critical thinking, Perspective skills, Systems thinking, Long-term orientation and visioning, Complexity awareness.

**Why this matters for sustainability:** Sustainability challenges are inherently complex and interconnected—climate, social justice, economics, ecology. Systems thinking helps you see how your company's actions ripple through these systems. Long-term thinking prevents solutions that create new problems. Perspective skills helps you understand diverse stakeholder needs.

**Workplace example:** A team with developed thinking skills does not just reduce waste—they understand how waste connects to procurement, supplier practices, and circular economy principles. They anticipate how today's decisions affect future generations and consider multiple stakeholder perspectives when making sustainability choices.

**When to develop:** When sustainability solutions create unintended problems, when the team struggles to see connections between different sustainability issues, when short-term thinking dominates, when only one perspective is considered

## **Relating – caring for others and the world**

**What it means:** Developing genuine care and connection—to colleagues, communities, future generations, and the natural world. Moving from indifference to compassion.

**The five skills:** Appreciation, Connectedness, Humility, Empathy and compassion, Forgiveness.

**Why this matters for sustainability:** At its core, sustainability is about caring—for people, ecosystems, future generations. Without developing genuine care and connectedness, sustainability becomes an abstract obligation rather than intrinsic motivation. Empathy helps you understand how your company's actions affect communities and ecosystems. Humility recognizes that we are part of nature, not separate from it.

**Workplace example:** A team strong in relating does not just comply with social sustainability standards—they genuinely care about worker conditions in their supply chain. They feel connected to the communities affected by their operations and to the natural ecosystems their company impacts. This intrinsic care drives more authentic and sustained sustainability efforts.

**When to develop:** When sustainability feels like an external requirement rather than intrinsic motivation, when the team shows indifference to sustainability impacts, when there is disconnect between company and affected communities, when people struggle to care about future generations or ecosystems

## **Collaborating – building trust and working together**

**What it means:** Creating the conditions for collective action. Building trust, communicating effectively across differences, mobilizing diverse stakeholders toward shared goals.

**The five skills:** Communication skills, Co-creation skills, Inclusive mindset and intercultural competence, Relationship-building skills, Mobilization skills

**Why this matters for sustainability:** No company can achieve sustainability alone. It requires collaboration across departments, with suppliers, customers, competitors, communities, and regulators. Effective collaboration enables breakthrough innovations and systemic change. Trust allows difficult conversations about changing unsustainable practices.

**Workplace example:** A team skilled in collaborating can work effectively with diverse stakeholders—from factory workers to environmental organizations to government regulators. They communicate across cultural and organizational boundaries, co-create solutions with unlikely partners, and mobilize people toward ambitious sustainability goals.

**When to develop:** When sustainability work happens in silos, when communication breaks down across departments or with external partners, when diverse stakeholders struggle to work together, when the team cannot mobilize broader support for sustainability initiatives

## **Acting – leading and enabling change**

**What it means:** Taking action that matters. Developing the courage to challenge unsustainable practices, the creativity to find new solutions, and the perseverance to keep going despite setbacks.

**The five skills:** Courage, Creativity, Hope and optimism, Proactivity, Resilience.

**Why this matters for sustainability:** Knowing what needs to change is not enough. Acting on that knowledge often requires courage—to speak up, to challenge established practices, to take risks. Sustainability work involves setbacks and slow progress. Perseverance and optimism help teams maintain engagement without falling into denial or cynicism. Creativity helps find solutions that work within real constraints.

**Workplace example:** A team with strong acting capabilities does not just identify sustainability problems—they take action to address them. They speak up when they see unsustainable practices, even when it is uncomfortable. They find creative ways to advance sustainability goals within budget constraints. When progress is slow or setbacks occur, they maintain commitment and find meaning that sustains their engagement.

**When to develop:** When people know what should change but do not act, when fear or discomfort prevents sustainability action, when setbacks undermine engagement, when the team lacks creative approaches to sustainability challenges, when cynicism or burnout threaten long-term commitment

These five dimensions work together. A team strong in Thinking can see what needs to change, but without Being capabilities they may lack the values clarity to maintain commitment. Relating provides the care that motivates action, but without Collaborating skills that care cannot translate into effective collective work. Acting provides the courage and perseverance to keep going, but without all the other dimensions to guide it, action can be misguided or unsustainable.

As you work with this handbook, you will see how activities draw on multiple dimensions. This interconnection reflects how inner development actually works—not as separate skills developed in isolation, but as integrated capabilities that strengthen each other and together enable more effective sustainability work.

## Part 2: Activities and Practices

### Introduction

Part 2 is a resource bank describing a large number of different activities that you may find helpful for your team(-s). The chapter is divided into four parts:

- 2A: Quick Engagements (1-15 minutes)
- 2B: Team Development (30-60 minutes)
- 2C: Deeper Work (60-90 minutes)
- 2D: Extended Development (2+ hours)

On the next 2 pages you will find an overview of all the activities in this part.<sup>2</sup>

### 2A: Quick Engagements (1-15 minutes)

This section contains brief activities you can integrate into existing meetings, use as check-ins, or practice individually. These quick engagements help build inner development capabilities without requiring dedicated workshop time. They are designed to fit naturally into your work rhythm while strengthening the capabilities needed for effective sustainability work.

Each activity indicates which dimension it develops, the time required, difficulty level, and specific IDG skills it strengthens. Use these activities regularly to build habits that support your team's sustainability commitments.

#### Being Dimension

##### 1. Values Check-in

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Difficulty:** ★

**IDG skills:** Inner compass, Self-awareness, Integrity and authenticity

**When to use:** Before making decisions about sustainability initiatives, when the team feels disconnected from purpose, as a regular meeting opener

**How it supports sustainability work:** Values clarity prevents short-term thinking from overriding sustainability commitments. When team members stay connected to what matters, they make decisions aligned with long-term responsibility even under pressure.

#### Instructions:

Ask each person to silently complete this sentence: "In this situation, what matters most to me is..." Give 30 seconds of silence. Then invite anyone who wishes to share their answer in one sentence. No discussion needed. This brief practice helps the team notice whether their decisions align with their stated values.

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<sup>2</sup> An additional resource is the collection of 75 brief personal exercises for training IDG-related skills and qualities available at [http://idg.thomasjordan.se/IDG\\_VCoL\\_website/index.html](http://idg.thomasjordan.se/IDG_VCoL_website/index.html). These exercises are designed for use by individuals in daily life.

## Overview of activities

This table provides an overview of all 31 activities in the toolbox, organised by section. Section 2A contains quick engagements (1-15 minutes), section 2B contains team development activities (30-60 minutes), section 2C contains deeper work (60-90 minutes), and section 2D contains extended development (2+ hours).

Activity	Section	Time	Difficulty	Dimensions	IDG skills
Values Check-in	2A	5 min	★	Being	Inner compass, Self-awareness, Integrity and authenticity
Presence Pause	2A	2 min	★	Being	Presence, Self-awareness
Learning Mindset Moment	2A	3 min	★	Being	Openness and learning mindset, Self-awareness
Connections Web	2A	10 min	★★	Thinking	Systems thinking, Complexity awareness
Future Impact Question	2A	5 min	★	Thinking	Long-term orientation and visioning
Multiple Perspectives Round	2A	8 min	★★	Thinking	Perspective skills, Critical thinking
Gratitude Practice	2A	5 min	★	Relating	Appreciation, Connectedness
Connection to Impact	2A	7 min	★★	Relating	Connectedness, Empathy and compassion
Humility Check	2A	4 min	★	Relating	Humility
Quick Team Check-in	2A	5 min	★	Collaborating	Communication skills, Relationship-building skills
Inclusive Listening Round	2A	10 min	★★	Collaborating	Inclusive mindset, Communication skills
Co-creation Prompt	2A	8 min	★	Collaborating	Co-creation skills
Courage Prompt	2A	5 min	★★	Acting	Courage
Progress Celebration	2A	5 min	★	Acting	Hope and optimism, Resilience
Next Step Commitment	2A	5 min	★	Acting	Proactivity
Team Check-in	2B	30-45 min	★★	Being, Relating, Collaborating	Self-awareness, Communication skills, Connectedness, Relationship-building skills
Acting in Alignment	2B	45-60 min	★★	Being, Acting	Inner compass, Integrity and authenticity, Self-awareness, Courage
Deep Listening	2B	45-60 min	★★	Relating, Collaborating	Empathy and compassion, Presence, Communication skills, Relationship-building skills

Values Mapping	2B	40-50 min	★★	Being	Inner compass, Self-awareness, Integrity and authenticity
Systems Thinking Practice	2B	50-60 min	★★★	Thinking	Systems thinking, Complexity awareness, Long-term orientation, Critical thinking
Building Psychological Safety	2B	45-60 min	★★	Relating, Collaborating	Relationship-building skills, Communication skills, Empathy and compassion, Humility
Positive Reframing	2B	45-60 min	★★	Being, Relating, Acting	Hope and optimism, Resilience, Self-awareness, Connectedness
Exchanging Perspectives	2C	75-90 min	★★★	Being, Thinking, Relating	Openness and learning mindset, Perspective skills, Humility, Critical thinking
Shared Problem Definition	2C	60-90 min	★★★	Thinking, Collaborating	Systems thinking, Complexity awareness, Perspective skills, Communication skills, Co-creation skills
Critical Thinking	2C	60-90 min	★★★	Thinking	Critical thinking, Long-term orientation, Systems thinking, Complexity awareness
Adapting Response Patterns	2C	60-90 min	★★★	Being, Acting	Self-awareness, Presence, Resilience, Integrity and authenticity
Navigating Uncertainty	2C	60-75 min	★★★	Thinking, Acting	Complexity awareness, Resilience, Humility, Courage
Making Courageous Decisions	2C	60-75 min	★★★	Being, Acting	Courage, Integrity and authenticity, Inner compass, Resilience
Sensemaking	2C	75-90 min	★★★	Thinking, Collaborating	Systems thinking, Complexity awareness, Perspective skills, Critical thinking, Co-creation skills
Triggering Team Trust	2C	60-75 min	★★★	Relating, Collaborating	Relationship-building skills, Empathy and compassion, Communication skills, Humility
My Natural Next Step	2D	2 hours	★★★	Being, Acting	Inner compass, Integrity and authenticity, Self-awareness, Courage

*Difficulty levels: ★ = suitable for any team, ★★ = requires some psychological safety, ★★★ = requires established trust*

*Sections: 2A = Quick Engagements (1-15 min), 2B = Team Development (30-60 min), 2C = Deeper Work (60-90 min), 2D = Extended Development (2+ hours)*

## ***2. Presence Pause***

**Time:** 2 minutes

**Difficulty:** ★

**IDG skills:** Presence, Self-awareness

**When to use:** At the start of meetings, when the team feels scattered or rushed, before important sustainability discussions

**How it supports sustainability work:** Presence helps us notice when automatic reactions or convenience are pulling us away from sustainability commitments. It creates space for more considered responses aligned with long-term responsibility.

### **Instructions:**

Invite everyone to take three slow breaths. Say: "Notice where your attention is. Notice what you are carrying from before this meeting. As you breathe out, let yourself arrive here." After three breaths, continue with your agenda. This simple practice helps the team shift from reactive mode to more thoughtful engagement.

## ***3. Learning Mindset Moment***

**Time:** 3 minutes

**Difficulty:** ★

**IDG skills:** Openness and learning mindset, Self-awareness

**When to use:** After setbacks in sustainability work, when defensiveness appears, before reviewing sustainability initiatives

**How it supports sustainability work:** Sustainability work involves learning and adaptation. An openness to learning helps teams adjust approaches rather than defending unsuccessful ones, strengthening the effectiveness of sustainability efforts.

### **Instructions:**

Ask: "What is one thing we learned this week about our sustainability work—even from what did not go as planned?" Each person shares one brief learning in a sentence. Frame this explicitly as learning, not as failure. This builds the habit of extracting value from all experiences.

## **Thinking Dimension**

## ***4. Connections Web***

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Difficulty:** ★★

**IDG skills:** Systems thinking, Complexity awareness

**When to use:** When planning sustainability initiatives, when solutions seem simple, before making decisions with broad impacts

**How it supports sustainability work:** Sustainability challenges are interconnected. Systems thinking helps teams see how actions in one area affect others, preventing solutions that create new problems.

**Instructions:**

Choose a sustainability issue you are working on. On a whiteboard or flipchart, write it in the center. Ask: "What connects to this?" As people name connections—suppliers, regulations, other departments, future generations, ecosystems—draw lines showing relationships. Spend just 10 minutes mapping. The goal is not completeness but noticing interconnections you may have overlooked.

**5. Future Impact Question**

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Difficulty:** ★

**IDG skills:** Long-term orientation and visioning

**When to use:** Before decisions with long-term implications, when short-term thinking dominates, during sustainability planning

**How it supports sustainability work:** Long-term thinking is essential for sustainability. This practice helps teams consider impacts beyond immediate results, strengthening alignment with Agenda 2030 and future generations.

**Instructions:**

Before making a decision, ask: "If we are successful with this approach, what will the situation look like in five years? In ten years?" Take a few minutes to consider. Then ask: "What might we be missing about long-term impacts?" This simple practice shifts attention from immediate results to enduring consequences.

**6. Multiple Perspectives Round**

**Time:** 8 minutes

**Difficulty:** ★★

**IDG skills:** Perspective skills, Critical thinking

**When to use:** When stakeholder conflicts appear, before implementing changes, when sustainability initiatives face resistance

**How it supports sustainability work:** Effective sustainability work requires understanding diverse stakeholder perspectives. This helps teams consider how decisions affect different groups and find approaches that work across differences.

**Instructions:**

Choose a sustainability challenge. Identify three different stakeholders: for example, a supplier, a customer, and someone from a future generation. Take 2 minutes per perspective. Ask: "How would this person see this situation? What would concern them? What would they need?" The goal is not to solve anything but to expand understanding of whose interests are at stake.

## **Relating Dimension**

### ***7. Gratitude Practice***

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Difficulty:** ★

**IDG skills:** Appreciation, Connectedness

**When to use:** As meeting closings, when the team feels discouraged, to build team connection

**How it supports sustainability work:** Appreciation strengthens connection and sustains motivation for long-term sustainability work. When teams notice and name what they value, they reinforce commitment to protecting it.

#### **Instructions:**

At the end of a meeting, invite each person to share one thing they appreciate—about a team member's contribution, about progress on sustainability work, or about something in the natural world. Keep it brief. One sentence each. This builds habits of noticing what matters and what is worth sustaining.

### ***8. Connection to Impact***

**Time:** 7 minutes

**Difficulty:** ★★

**IDG skills:** Connectedness, Empathy and compassion

**When to use:** When sustainability feels abstract, when decisions affect communities or ecosystems, to strengthen intrinsic motivation

**How it supports sustainability work:** Genuine care for affected communities and ecosystems drives more authentic sustainability efforts than compliance alone. This practice strengthens felt connection to those impacted by company operations.

#### **Instructions:**

Before a decision affecting people or ecosystems, pause. Ask: "Who is affected by this? What is their experience?" Take a few minutes to consider specific communities, workers, or ecosystems. Try to imagine their daily reality. This brief practice shifts sustainability from abstract compliance to concrete care for real beings.

### ***9. Humility Check***

**Time:** 4 minutes

**Difficulty:** ★

**IDG skills:** Humility

**When to use:** When the team feels certain about solutions, before implementing new sustainability initiatives, when resistance appears

**How it supports sustainability work:** Humility recognizes that we are part of interconnected systems, not separate from them. It prevents overconfidence in solutions and keeps teams open to feedback and adjustment.

**Instructions:**

Ask: "What might we be wrong about here? What are we not seeing?" Take 2 minutes for people to reflect silently, then 2 minutes for anyone to share thoughts. This is not about undermining confidence but about maintaining openness to learning and adjustment.

**Collaborating Dimension**

***10. Quick Team Check-in<sup>3</sup>***

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Difficulty:** ★

**IDG skills:** Communication skills, Relationship-building skills

**When to use:** At the start of meetings, when team energy feels off, regularly to maintain connection

**How it supports sustainability work:** Sustainability work requires sustained collaboration. Regular check-ins help teams notice tensions early and maintain the relational foundation needed for long-term cooperation.

**Instructions:**

Ask: "On a scale of 1 to 5, how are you arriving to this meeting?" Go around briefly—each person shares their number and optionally one word about why. No fixing or solving. Just noticing where people are. This helps the team adjust their approach to match actual capacity and builds habits of honest communication.

***11. Inclusive Listening Round***

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Difficulty:** ★★

**IDG skills:** Inclusive mindset and intercultural competence, Communication skills

**When to use:** When some voices dominate, before decisions, to ensure diverse input on sustainability initiatives

**How it supports sustainability work:** Effective sustainability work requires hearing diverse perspectives. This practice ensures quieter voices are included, strengthening the quality of decisions and building collective ownership.

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<sup>3</sup> This activity is adapted from an activity described on the [transitionsmakers.nl](https://www.transitionsmakers.nl) website, a rich collection of activities related to the IDG framework.

**Instructions:**

On an important question, use a structured round where each person speaks in turn for 1 minute without interruption. No one speaks twice until everyone has spoken once. No debate during the round. This ensures everyone contributes and helps the team notice patterns across all voices.

**12. Co-creation Prompt**

**Time:** 8 minutes

**Difficulty:** ★

**IDG skills:** Co-creation skills

**When to use:** When planning sustainability initiatives, when ideas feel stale, to build shared ownership

**How it supports sustainability work:** Co-creation builds shared ownership of sustainability initiatives. When people contribute to solutions, they are more committed to implementing them.

**Instructions:**

Present a sustainability challenge. Ask: "What would you add to this idea to make it work better?" Give people 2 minutes to think individually, then 6 minutes to build on each other's ideas. The rule: only additions and improvements, no criticism. This builds habits of collaborative development rather than debate.

**Acting Dimension****13. Courage Prompt**

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Difficulty:** ★★

**IDG skills:** Courage

**When to use:** When decisions are difficult, when sustainability commitments face pressure, before raising concerns

**How it supports sustainability work:** Sustainability work often requires courage—to speak up, to challenge unsustainable practices, to maintain commitments under pressure. This practice helps identify what responsible courage looks like.

**Instructions:**

When facing a difficult decision, ask: "What is the responsible thing to do here, even if it is uncomfortable?" Take 2 minutes of silence for people to consider. Then ask: "What is one small courageous action we could take?" This distinguishes courage from recklessness and identifies concrete next steps.

#### ***14. Progress Celebration***

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Difficulty:** ★

**IDG skills:** Hope and optimism, Resilience

**When to use:** When progress feels slow, after completing sustainability milestones, to maintain motivation

**How it supports sustainability work:** Sustainability transformation is long-term work. Noticing progress helps teams maintain engagement and find genuine sources of hope without falling into denial.

**Instructions:**

Ask: "What is one step forward we have taken on our sustainability work this month, even a small one?" Take 5 minutes for people to name specific progress. The goal is not to exaggerate but to notice real movement. This builds capacity to see progress while remaining realistic about work ahead.

#### ***15. Next Step Commitment***

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Difficulty:** ★

**IDG skills:** Proactivity

**When to use:** At the end of meetings about sustainability, after planning sessions, to move from discussion to action

**How it supports sustainability work:** Proactive commitment to next steps ensures sustainability discussions lead to concrete action. Small commitments build momentum for larger transformation.

**Instructions:**

Before ending a meeting, ask each person to answer the question: "What is one small action I will take on our sustainability work this week?" Each person states one specific action in one sentence. Write these down. This builds habits of personal accountability and ensures meetings translate into movement.

These quick engagements are designed for regular use. As they become familiar, they require less explanation and flow naturally into your work rhythm. Choose activities that address current team needs, and rotate through different dimensions to build balanced development of inner capabilities that strengthen your sustainability work.

## 2B: Team development (30-60 minutes)

This section contains structured activities for team development sessions. These activities require dedicated time but fit within a single meeting or workshop session. They help teams develop stronger inner capabilities for sustainability work through shared practice and reflection.

Use these activities when you can set aside focused time for team development. They build psychological safety, strengthen collaboration, clarify values, and develop the collective capabilities needed for effective sustainability transformation.

### 16. Team check-in<sup>4</sup>

**Time:** 30-45 minutes

**Difficulty:** ★★

**IDG skills:** Self-awareness, Communication skills, Connectedness, Relationship-building skills

**Dimensions:** Being, Relating, Collaborating

**When to use:** Regularly as a team development practice, when team energy feels off, after changes or difficult periods, when sustainability work feels disconnected from people

How it supports sustainability work: Sustainability work is sustained by people, not just systems. Regular check-ins help teams notice stress, celebrate progress, and maintain the relational foundation needed for long-term collaboration on challenging work.

**What you need:** Comfortable seating arranged in a circle, timer

#### Step-by-step instructions:

Step 1 – Set the frame (5 minutes): Explain that this is time to notice how people are actually doing, not how they should be doing. Say something like: "Sustainability work asks a lot of us over the long term. This is time to check in honestly about where we are. There are no right answers here—just honest noticing."

Step 2 – Individual reflection (5 minutes): Ask people to reflect silently on three questions: How am I doing with our sustainability work? What is energising me? What is draining me? No need to write, just notice. Give the full five minutes of silence—do not rush this step.

Step 3 – Round of sharing (15-20 minutes): Go around the circle. Each person shares briefly on the three questions—two to three minutes each. Explain the ground rules before starting: no one responds or tries to fix what is shared. Just listen. If someone chooses to pass, that is fine. As the manager, consider going first to model the level of honesty you hope to see.

Step 4 – Notice patterns (10 minutes): After everyone has shared, ask: "What patterns do we notice across what we heard? What does this tell us about how to support each other in this work?" Discuss as a group. Look for themes across multiple people, not individual situations.

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<sup>4</sup> This activity is adapted from an activity described on the [transitionsmakers.nl](https://www.transitionsmakers.nl) website, a rich collection of activities related to the IDG framework.

You might notice patterns like: many people feeling energised by collaboration but drained by reporting requirements.

Step 5 – Closing (5 minutes): Ask each person to complete one sentence: "What I need from this team right now is..." or "One way I can support this team is..." Go around the circle one more time. These closing statements often reveal practical ways the team can help each other.

Tips for managers: Model honesty by going first. If people struggle with the draining question, that itself is information—either things are genuinely fine, or honesty feels unsafe. Silence is productive; do not rush to fill it. Do this regularly (monthly or quarterly), not just when problems appear. Over time, the check-in builds trust and makes it easier to surface concerns before they become crises.

## 17. Acting in alignment<sup>5</sup>

**Time:** 45-60 minutes

**Difficulty:** ★★

**IDG skills:** Inner compass, Integrity and authenticity, Self-awareness, Courage

**Dimensions:** Being, Acting

**When to use:** When there is a gap between stated values and actual behaviour, when sustainability commitments are not translating into action, when people feel conflicted about decisions

How it supports sustainability work: Many people support sustainability in principle but struggle to act on it when doing so is inconvenient or uncomfortable. This activity helps teams identify the gap between values and behaviour, explore what prevents alignment, and commit to concrete action that reflects stated values.

**What you need:** Paper and pens for each participant, flipchart or whiteboard

### Step-by-step instructions:

Step 1 – Identify the gap (10 minutes): Ask participants to write individually: "What is one sustainability-related action I believe is important but do not consistently do?" Give examples to help people think concretely: choosing sustainable suppliers even when more expensive, speaking up about unsustainable practices, maintaining long-term thinking under short-term pressure, reducing travel even when it is convenient. Emphasise that everyone has gaps—this is not about judgement but about honest reflection.

Step 2 – Explore what prevents action (15 minutes): In pairs or small groups of three, participants share their example and discuss: What makes this difficult? What am I protecting by not acting? What do I fear might happen if I do act? Encourage honesty about real constraints and fears, not justifications. The point is to understand the gap, not to defend it. Listeners should ask curious questions, not offer solutions.

Step 3 – Clarify values (10 minutes): Ask: "Why does this action matter to me? What value does it serve?" Have participants write down the core value at stake. This might be: care for

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<sup>5</sup> This activity is adapted from an activity described on the [transitionmakers.nl](http://transitionmakers.nl) website, a rich collection of activities related to the IDG framework.

future generations, integrity, responsibility, fairness to workers elsewhere in the supply chain. This step reconnects the action to its deeper purpose and strengthens motivation.

**Step 4 – Find the next step (15 minutes):** Ask: "What is one small step toward greater alignment that I could take this month?" The step should be: specific (not vague intentions), achievable (within actual constraints), and genuine movement toward the value (not a symbolic gesture). Participants write their commitment. Examples of good next steps: "I will ask about sustainability criteria in our next supplier review" rather than "I will be more sustainable."

**Step 5 – Accountability (10 minutes):** Participants share their commitment with one accountability partner from the group. Partners agree to check in with each other in two weeks to ask: "How did it go? What did you learn?" Exchange contact details or schedule a brief meeting. Accountability significantly increases follow-through.

**Tips for managers:** This activity works because it acknowledges the real difficulty of alignment rather than assuming good intentions are enough. Model vulnerability by sharing your own gap—this gives permission for honesty. Avoid either-or thinking; small steps matter and compound over time. Follow up in future meetings to ask how experiments are going.

## **18. Deep listening<sup>6</sup>**

**Time:** 45-60 minutes

**Difficulty:** ★★

**IDG skills:** Empathy and compassion, Presence, Communication skills, Relationship-building skills

**Dimensions:** Relating, Collaborating

**When to use:** When sustainability discussions feel superficial, when people do not feel heard, after tension or misunderstanding, to build psychological safety

**How it supports sustainability work:** A significant portion of sustainability obstacles stem from relationships rather than technical factors—people sensing their input is ignored, important concerns surfacing too late in the process, or uncomfortable realities being diluted or side-stepped. Practising genuine listening helps teams bring concerns into the open early, incorporate varied perspectives, and avoid the withdrawal and conflict that follow when people feel dismissed. This is not therapy—it is a professional listening practice that improves decision quality.

**What you need:** Pairs of chairs arranged for private conversations, timer

### **Step-by-step instructions:**

**Step 1 – Frame the practice (5 minutes):** Explain that listening is different from waiting to speak. Say something like: "In our daily work, we often listen to respond, fix, or judge. Today we will practice listening to understand. Real listening means setting aside your own response while someone is talking. You are not trying to solve, agree, or disagree. You are trying to

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<sup>6</sup> This activity is adapted from an activity described on the [transitionsmakers.nl](https://www.transitionsmakers.nl) website, a rich collection of activities related to the IDG framework.

understand." Clarify the ground rules: no advice, no fixing, no debating. The goal is understanding, not agreement.

**Step 2 – Choose a focus (5 minutes):** Give participants a prompt related to sustainability work. Choose one that fits your team's current situation. Examples: "Something about our sustainability work that concerns me but I have not said," or "An aspect of our sustainability commitments where I notice tension," or "What I need to sustain my engagement with this work." Write the prompt where everyone can see it.

**Step 3 – First round of listening (12 minutes):** Participants work in pairs. Person A speaks for 5 minutes while person B listens completely without interrupting. Person B does not prepare responses, ask questions, or give advice. Just listens. Maintain eye contact as culturally appropriate. After 5 minutes, signal the time. Person B then takes 2 minutes to reflect back what they heard—not interpretation or judgement, just what person A said. For example: "What I heard you say is that you feel torn between meeting targets and raising concerns about supplier practices. Did I get that right?" The speaker may briefly clarify but should not expand.

**Step 4 – Second round of listening (12 minutes):** Switch roles. Person B speaks for 5 minutes while person A listens with the same quality of attention. Then person A reflects back for 2 minutes.

**Step 5 – Debrief the practice (15 minutes):** Return to the full group. Ask: "What was it like to be listened to without interruption? What was difficult about listening without responding? What did you notice?" Discuss as a group. Common observations include: it feels surprisingly rare to be fully heard; it is harder than expected not to prepare a response; silence felt uncomfortable at first. Then ask: "What does this suggest about how we normally communicate about sustainability issues?"

**Step 6 – Application (10 minutes):** Ask: "What would change in our sustainability work if we practised this quality of listening more regularly? What is one conversation where this would make a difference?" Invite participants to identify a specific upcoming conversation where they will practice deep listening.

**Tips for managers:** Most people have rarely experienced being fully heard. This can be surprisingly powerful. The discipline is in not responding—even nonverbally. Reflecting back is not agreement; it is demonstrating that you heard. Use this practice regularly to build team capacity for difficult conversations. You can also use the listening structure in one-to-one meetings.

## **19. Values mapping**

**Time:** 40-50 minutes

**Difficulty:** ★★

**IDG skills:** Inner compass, Self-awareness, Integrity and authenticity

**Dimensions:** Being

**When to use:** When sustainability work feels like external obligation rather than intrinsic motivation, when decisions involve competing values, when team needs clarity on what guides their work

How it supports sustainability work: Clear values provide the foundation for sustained sustainability work. When people understand what matters to them and why, they can make aligned decisions even under pressure. This activity helps teams clarify individual and shared values that guide sustainability commitments.

**What you need:** Paper and pens, flipchart or whiteboard, sticky notes

**Step-by-step instructions:**

Step 1 – Individual values identification (10 minutes): Ask each person to write down 3-5 core values that matter to them in relation to sustainability and responsibility. Give examples to prompt thinking: care for future generations, justice, stewardship of nature, human dignity, integrity, fairness, transparency, community well-being. Ask them to choose values that genuinely motivate them, not what they think they should value. This distinction matters—imposed values do not sustain action under pressure.

Step 2 – Share and notice patterns (15 minutes): Each person writes their values on sticky notes (one value per note) and places them on the wall or a large sheet of paper. As a group, read silently and notice: Where do we have strong overlap? Where do we have differences? Work together to cluster similar values. Name each cluster with a word or short phrase that captures the shared meaning. You might end up with clusters like "care for people," "long-term thinking," "honesty."

Step 3 – Explore tensions (10 minutes): Ask: "Where do these values create tension in our sustainability work?" For example, care for employees might create tension with environmental standards if costs increase. Justice might create tension with profitability. Fairness to current workers might conflict with fairness to future generations. Do not try to resolve the tensions—just name them honestly. Write the tensions on the flipchart. Acknowledging real tensions is more useful than pretending they do not exist.

Step 4 – Identify shared commitments (10 minutes): Ask: "Despite our differences and the real tensions, what 2-3 values do we share as a team that will guide our sustainability work?" Discuss and agree on a short list. Write them clearly and visibly. These become reference points for future decisions.

Step 5 – Application (5 minutes): Ask: "How can these shared values help us make better decisions about our sustainability work? What decision we face right now would benefit from bringing these values into the conversation?" Identify at least one concrete decision where you will explicitly reference the shared values.

Tips for managers: Values are only useful if they are genuinely held, not imposed. Shared values emerge from honest individual reflection, not from company statements. Differences in values are not problems to solve but realities to acknowledge. Use your shared values to guide difficult decisions—return to them when the team faces trade-offs.

## **20. Systems thinking practice**

**Time:** 50-60 minutes

**Difficulty:** ★★★

**IDG skills:** Systems thinking, Complexity awareness, Long-term orientation and visioning, Critical thinking

## **Dimensions:** Thinking

**When to use:** When sustainability solutions create unintended problems, when the team struggles to see connections between issues, before implementing major sustainability initiatives

How it supports sustainability work: Sustainability challenges are inherently systemic—environmental, social, and economic factors are deeply interconnected. Systems thinking helps teams understand these connections, anticipate unintended consequences, and find leverage points for effective action. This activity teaches a practical method for mapping complex issues.

**What you need:** Large whiteboard or several flipchart sheets, markers in different colours, sticky notes

### **Step-by-step instructions:**

**Step 1 – Choose a challenge (5 minutes):** Select a specific sustainability challenge your team is working on. Write it in the centre of the board in a circle or box. Be specific rather than general. Good examples: "Reducing packaging waste in our product line," "Improving labour conditions at supplier factories," "Reducing carbon emissions from business travel." Avoid vague challenges like "being more sustainable."

**Step 2 – Identify direct factors (10 minutes):** Ask: "What directly affects this issue?" Brainstorm factors and write them around the centre issue. For packaging waste, factors might include: purchasing decisions, supplier packaging options, customer expectations, disposal infrastructure, cost pressures, regulatory requirements, competitor practices, product protection needs. Write each factor in its own circle. Do not filter at this stage—capture what the team identifies.

**Step 3 – Map connections (15 minutes):** Now draw lines showing how factors connect to each other, not just to the central issue. Use arrows to show direction of influence. For example: Cost pressures → influence purchasing decisions → which influence supplier choices → which influence packaging options. Ask repeatedly: "What affects what here? Does A influence B, or does B influence A, or both?" Use different colours to distinguish types of influence if helpful. The map will become messy—this is normal and reflects real complexity.

**Step 4 – Identify feedback loops (10 minutes):** Look for circular relationships where A affects B, which affects C, which affects A again. Circle these loops with a distinct colour. There are two types of loops to look for. Reinforcing loops amplify change: for example, reducing packaging → lowers costs → frees budget for further sustainability investment → enables more packaging reduction. Balancing loops resist change: for example, reducing packaging → increases product damage → increases returns → pressure to restore packaging. Label each loop as reinforcing (R) or balancing (B). Ask: "Are these loops working for or against our sustainability goals?"

**Step 5 – Find leverage points (15 minutes):** Ask: "Where in this system could we intervene most effectively? What changes would ripple through multiple connections?" Look for points where one change affects many factors. Common leverage points include: policies that shape many decisions, information flows that change awareness, relationships that influence multiple actors. Discuss which leverage points are within your influence. Mark the most promising leverage points on the map.

Step 6 – Plan action (5 minutes): Based on your systems map, ask: "What is one action we could take that considers these interconnections? How will we monitor for unintended consequences?" Choose an action that addresses a leverage point rather than just a symptom. Identify what signals would tell you if the action is creating unintended problems elsewhere in the system.

Tips for managers: Systems maps are never complete—the goal is insight, not comprehensiveness. Start simple and add complexity as needed. Real systems are messy, so expect a messy diagram. The value is in the thinking process and the conversation, not the finished diagram. Keep the map visible and return to it as you learn more. Adjust your understanding as you see how the system actually responds to interventions.

## **21. Building psychological safety**

**Time:** 45-60 minutes

**Difficulty:** ★★

**IDG skills:** Relationship-building skills, Communication skills, Empathy and compassion, Humility

**Dimensions:** Relating, Collaborating

**When to use:** When sustainability discussions feel unsafe or superficial, when people hesitate to raise concerns, in newly formed teams, after conflict or significant change

How it supports sustainability work: Sustainability work requires speaking uncomfortable truths, acknowledging uncertainty, and challenging unsustainable practices. None of this is possible without psychological safety—the shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking. This activity helps teams build that safety deliberately.

**What you need:** Flipchart or whiteboard, markers, sticky notes

### **Step-by-step instructions:**

Step 1 – Frame psychological safety (5 minutes): Explain that psychological safety is not about being comfortable or nice. Say something like: "Psychological safety means being able to speak honestly, admit uncertainty, raise concerns, and take interpersonal risks without fear of humiliation or punishment. It does not mean avoiding disagreement—it means being able to disagree safely. This is essential for sustainability work, which often requires challenging established practices and naming uncomfortable truths."

Step 2 – Individual reflection on safety (10 minutes): Ask people to reflect silently and write notes for themselves only: When do I feel safe to speak up on this team? When do I hold back? What signals tell me it is safe or unsafe to raise a concern? Give the full ten minutes. These reflections remain private unless someone chooses to share.

Step 3 – Share patterns without blame (15 minutes): In pairs or small groups of three, ask people to share patterns they notice, not specific incidents or people. Emphasise this distinction: say "I hold back when decisions seem already made" rather than "I held back when you decided X." The focus is on patterns and conditions, not on blaming individuals. After pair discussions, capture themes on sticky notes and place them where everyone can see.

Step 4 – Identify safety-building behaviours (15 minutes): Place all sticky notes where everyone can see them. Ask: "What behaviours would increase safety in this team?" Brainstorm specific, observable behaviours. Examples: acknowledging when we do not know something, asking questions without defensiveness, welcoming concerns about sustainability approaches, admitting mistakes openly, thanking people for raising difficult issues. Write these on the flipchart. Focus on behaviours, not attitudes—behaviours can be practised and observed.

Step 5 – Make commitments (10 minutes): As a team, agree on 2-4 behaviours you will practise to build safety. Be specific about what this looks like in your context. Write them down where they can be referenced later. Agree on how you will remind each other—respectfully—when you notice these behaviours or their absence. Some teams use a code word; others simply agree to name what they notice.

Step 6 – Closing (5 minutes): Ask: "What would become possible in our sustainability work if safety increased by just 10 percent? What uncomfortable truth might we finally be able to discuss?" These questions help the team see why safety matters for their actual work.

Tips for managers: You cannot demand psychological safety—you build it through consistent behaviour over time. Model the behaviours you want to see, especially admitting uncertainty and mistakes. Respond well when people take risks by thanking them for raising concerns, even if you disagree. Address violations of safety quickly and calmly. Safety enables the honest conversations sustainability work requires.

## 22. Positive reframing

**Time:** 45-60 minutes

**Difficulty:** ★★

**IDG skills:** Hope and optimism, Resilience, Self-awareness, Connectedness

**Dimensions:** Being, Relating, Acting

**When to use:** When teams feel fatigued or discouraged, after setbacks or criticism, when sustainability feels like an extra burden, during long transitions or slow progress

How it supports sustainability work: Sustainability work can feel overwhelming, emotionally heavy, and like endless sacrifice. Without reframing, teams may disengage, become cynical, or reduce sustainability to mere compliance. This activity helps teams reconnect with purpose, see their agency without denial, and maintain motivation responsibly. It prevents both toxic positivity and hopeless cynicism by anchoring motivation in genuine meaning.

**What you need:** Flipchart or whiteboard, markers

### Step-by-step instructions:

Step 1 – Acknowledge the difficulty (5 minutes): Begin by saying something like: "Sustainability work is demanding. Progress is often slow, setbacks are common, and the scale of the challenges can feel overwhelming. This practice differs from forced optimism. The aim is to locate genuine paths forward while fully acknowledging the real difficulties involved." This framing avoids toxic positivity and legitimises the real challenges people face.

Step 2 – Name the challenge honestly (10 minutes): Ask: "What feels heavy, frustrating, or discouraging right now? What feels beyond our control?" Capture responses on the flipchart

without comment or attempts to solve. Let people express what is genuinely difficult. Do not rush to fix or minimise. This step is essential—reframing only works when people feel their concerns have been acknowledged. Common responses might include: slow progress, lack of resources, feeling like individual actions do not matter, resistance from others.

Step 3 – Identify what is still possible (15 minutes): Now shift the focus. Ask: "Where do we still have agency? What small actions still matter? What are we learning, even when progress is slow?" Encourage realism, not forced cheerfulness. The goal is to notice genuine sources of influence and meaning, not to minimise difficulties. Write these on the flipchart alongside the challenges. People might identify: specific decisions within their control, relationships they can influence, skills they are developing, small wins that often go unnoticed.

Step 4 – Reframe the situation (15 minutes): Invite the group to complete sentences like: "Rather than framing this as \_\_\_\_, an alternative view would be..." or "What this difficulty also opens up is..." or "Our obligation in this situation could be..." Write reframed statements visibly. Look for perspectives that acknowledge difficulty while opening space for meaningful action. For example: "Rather than framing slow progress as failure, an alternative view would be that we are building foundations for lasting change." Not every challenge will have an obvious reframe—that is acceptable.

Step 5 – Anchor in purpose (10 minutes): Ask: "Why does this work matter? Who benefits if we persist? What would disengagement cost?" Keep this grounded and specific rather than abstract. Connect the team's work to real people, communities, or ecosystems that are affected by their sustainability efforts. Naming specific beneficiaries strengthens motivation more than abstract principles.

Closing reflection (5 minutes): Ask: "What reframing feels genuine, not forced? What helps you stay engaged responsibly?" Invite each person to name one insight or perspective shift they want to carry forward.

Tips for managers: Steer clear of platitudes and manufactured enthusiasm—these undermine credibility. Accept that people can hold contradictory feelings simultaneously, feeling both disheartened and dedicated. Lasting motivation grows from genuine purpose rather than external pressure. This activity works best when repeated periodically, not as a one-time fix. Return to it when the team faces setbacks or when energy flags. The goal is not to eliminate difficulty but to maintain engagement despite difficulty.

These team development activities build stronger foundations for sustainability work. Use them regularly, not just when problems appear. Schedule dedicated time—typically once a month or quarter—for this kind of development work. The capabilities built through these activities strengthen your team's ability to sustain commitment to challenging sustainability transformation over time.

## 2C: Deeper work (60-90 minutes)

This section contains activities that require more time and stronger psychological safety.<sup>7</sup> These are challenging activities suitable for teams with established trust and willingness to engage with complexity and difficulty.

Use these activities when your team has built a foundation of trust, when you face particularly complex sustainability challenges, or when deeper development work is needed. These activities help teams navigate uncertainty, build shared understanding of complex problems, and strengthen the courage and collaboration needed for transformative sustainability work.

### 23. Exchanging perspectives

**Time:** 75-90 minutes

**Difficulty:** ★★★

**IDG skills:** Openness and learning mindset, Perspective skills, Humility, Critical thinking

**Dimensions:** Being, Thinking, Relating

**When to use:** When facing sustainability dilemmas with no clear right answer, when there is uncertainty or disagreement, when you want better options rather than faster consensus, to model responsible leadership

How it supports sustainability work: Questions about sustainability seldom offer clear-cut solutions. They typically present tensions between different priorities, require decisions based on partial knowledge, extend across generations, and affect diverse groups with different interests. Managers often get stuck inside their own perspective, even when well-intentioned. This structured approach improves collective thinking by creating space for different viewpoints to emerge—setting aside the usual patterns of argument, convincing, or deference to seniority. The method may feel unusual at first, but it works because it prevents the immediate defensive reactions that block genuine perspective skills.

**What you need:** Chairs arranged so people can turn away from each other, timer, paper and pen for each participant

#### Step-by-step instructions:

Step 1 – Frame the purpose (5-10 minutes): This step is crucial for the activity to work. Say something like: "Our purpose today is not to reach conclusions or persuade each other. Instead, we want to expand what we can see before moving toward any decision. This approach works particularly well for sustainability-related decisions, since these typically involve complexity that exceeds any single person's understanding." Then clarify the ground rules explicitly: avoid arguing or defending positions, hold back from offering solutions to the presenter, and prioritise genuine inquiry over being right. Write these rules where everyone can see them. Explain that this process may feel unfamiliar, but ask people to trust it.

Step 2 – Choose a real case (5 minutes): One participant volunteers to be the case owner. The case should meet three criteria: it must be real and current (not hypothetical), it must involve a

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<sup>7</sup> All the activities in this section are adapted from activities described on the [transitionsmakers.nl](https://www.transitionsmakers.nl) website, a rich collection of activities related to the IDG framework.

sustainability or responsibility tension, and it must be something the person genuinely struggles with. The case owner then formulates one open question. Good questions start with phrases like: "How can..." or "In what way might..." or "What would be a responsible way to..." Example: "How can I balance delivery deadlines with our commitment to reduced environmental impact?" Write the question where everyone can see it.

Step 3 – Clarifying questions (5 minutes): The other participants ask clarifying questions only. This means: no suggestions disguised as questions, no opinions, no "why didn't you..." or "have you tried..." The purpose is purely to understand the situation, not to solve it. If participants slip into advice-giving, gently redirect: "That sounds like a suggestion. Can you rephrase as a clarifying question?"

Step 4 – Perspective consultation (15 minutes): This is the core of the activity and may feel strange at first. The case owner physically turns away—either turning their chair around or turning their back slightly to the group. This is not symbolic; the physical turning matters. It signals that the case owner is now in listening mode only. The other participants then speak as if the case owner were not present. They discuss among themselves: how they would understand the situation, what assumptions they notice (both the case owner's and their own), what options they see, what risks or responsibilities stand out to them. Important rules during this phase: speak respectfully about the case owner, do not give direct advice ("You should..." or "If I were them..."), speak from your own perspective only ("I notice..." "What strikes me is..."). The case owner listens silently, takes notes, and does not react—not even nonverbally. This silence is essential; it allows the case owner to hear perspectives without needing to defend or respond.

Step 5 – Case owner reflection (10 minutes): The case owner turns back to face the group. They now share their reflections, answering questions like: What perspectives felt new or surprising? What assumptions did I notice in myself that I had not seen before? What possibilities emerged that I had not considered? This is still not a discussion—it is the case owner processing what they heard. Others listen without responding yet.

Step 6 – Joint harvest (15-20 minutes): Now open the conversation to everyone. As a group, reflect together: What did we learn about the issue itself? What did we learn about how we think—our assumptions, blind spots, habitual framings? How does this affect our understanding of responsibility and sustainability in this situation? Optionally, close by asking: "What would a more responsible next step look like now?"

Closing reflection (5 minutes): Invite each person to complete one sentence: "One perspective I want to carry forward is..." or "One assumption I want to question is..." Go around the group so everyone speaks.

Tips for managers: Remember this is a professional thinking tool, not a therapeutic intervention. Quiet moments serve a purpose—resist filling them. The method works precisely because the presenter refrains from responding while hearing others' perspectives. If you are the manager, consider being the case owner first to model vulnerability and demonstrate that the method is safe. If the physical turning away feels too awkward for your team culture, you can have the case owner close their eyes or look down at their notes instead, but some form of disengagement is important.

## 24. Shared problem definition

**Time:** 60-90 minutes

**Difficulty:** ★★★

**IDG skills:** Systems thinking, Complexity awareness, Perspective skills, Communication skills, Co-creation skills

**Dimensions:** Thinking, Collaborating

**When to use:** At the start of sustainability initiatives, when teams disagree on priorities, when actions feel fragmented or symbolic, before making high-impact decisions

How it supports sustainability work: Well-intentioned sustainability efforts often fall short for reasons unrelated to commitment. Teams frequently operate from divergent understandings of what the core issue actually is, miscommunicate without realising it, and move to action before adequately understanding the challenge. This exercise provides a deliberate pause—enough time to reveal hidden assumptions, develop shared understanding, and avoid responses that are merely symbolic or miss the real issue. The time invested in shared problem definition saves much more time later by preventing misaligned efforts.

**What you need:** Flipchart or whiteboard, sticky notes, markers

### Step-by-step instructions:

Step 1 – Name the challenge (5 minutes): Write one broad sustainability challenge on the board. Be specific enough to be meaningful but broad enough to allow different interpretations. Good examples: "Reducing our environmental footprint," "Responsible supply chains," "Employee well-being and sustainable performance." Poor examples (too vague): "Being more sustainable." Do not narrow the challenge yet—the point is to see how different people understand the same broad issue.

Step 2 – Individual reflection (10 minutes): Ask everyone to write individually, with no discussion: What do I think the real problem is here? What concerns me most about this challenge? What do I think is often overlooked when we discuss this issue? Use one sticky note per thought. Give the full ten minutes—people often need time to get past their first obvious answers to deeper concerns.

Step 3 – Share and cluster (15-20 minutes): Participants place their sticky notes on the wall or a large sheet of paper. As a group, read them silently first. Then work together to cluster similar ideas, moving sticky notes into groups. Name each cluster with a short phrase that captures the shared meaning. You are not deciding what is true or correct—only noticing patterns in how people understand the problem. Common patterns might reveal that some people see the problem as technical while others see it as cultural, or that concerns about cost dominate while concerns about impact are underrepresented.

Step 4 – Explore differences (15 minutes): This step is crucial for sustainability work. Ask: "Where do we see different interpretations of the problem? What assumptions might explain these differences? What perspectives are missing from our sticky notes—perhaps customers, suppliers, communities affected by our operations, or future generations?" Discuss as a group. The goal is not to resolve differences but to make them visible. Often, apparent disagreements about solutions stem from different understandings of the problem.

Step 5 – Formulate a shared problem statement (15-20 minutes): Together, craft one or two shared problem statements. Start with the phrase: "The challenge we need to address is..." A good problem statement has three qualities: it is not a solution (avoid statements that imply what to do), it includes tensions (acknowledging competing concerns), and it acknowledges complexity (not oversimplifying). Example: "The challenge we need to address is how to reduce environmental impact while maintaining delivery reliability and employee engagement, in a context where short-term cost pressures often override long-term thinking." Write the final statement clearly and visibly.

Closing reflection (5 minutes): Ask: "How has your understanding of the problem changed through this conversation? What feels clearer now? What still needs exploration?"

Tips for managers: Resist the urge to solve—the point of this activity is understanding, not solutions. Clarity before action saves time later because it prevents the team from solving different problems while thinking they agree. Shared understanding builds ownership; people are more committed to addressing problems they helped define. Return to the problem statement periodically to check whether it still captures the challenge accurately.

## 25. Critical thinking

**Time:** 60-90 minutes

**Difficulty:** ★★★

**IDG skills:** Critical thinking, Long-term orientation and visioning, Systems thinking, Complexity awareness

**Dimensions:** Thinking

**When to use:** When sustainability initiatives feel rushed, when proposals sound too simple for complex problems, when teams disagree strongly, before major ESG-related decisions

How it supports sustainability work: Sustainability challenges often come with strong opinions, fashionable solutions, and pressure to act fast and "do something." Critical thinking helps managers and teams slow down conclusions, examine assumptions, avoid unintended consequences, and make more responsible decisions. This activity is not about being negative or creating obstacles; it is about being thorough before committing resources.

**What you need:** Flipchart or whiteboard, markers, a real sustainability-related proposal or decision

### Step-by-step instructions:

Step 1 – Choose a real case (5 minutes): Select something concrete: a sustainability initiative under consideration, a CSR proposal, a policy change, or a supplier or investment decision. The case should be current or realistic, not hypothetical—critical thinking is most useful when applied to real decisions. Write the proposal clearly on the board so everyone can see exactly what is being examined.

Step 2 – Surface initial reactions (10 minutes): Before analysis, capture gut reactions. Ask participants: "What do you think about this proposal? What feels attractive about it? What worries you?" Go around the group quickly, capturing answers on the flipchart without

discussion or debate. This step surfaces intuitions that might otherwise remain hidden and influence the conversation unconsciously.

**Step 3 – Examine assumptions (20 minutes):** Now dig deeper. Ask: "What assumptions are we making? What must be true for this proposal to work as intended? What are we not questioning?" Write assumptions visibly on the flipchart. Examples of assumptions to look for: "This will actually reduce emissions" (will it?), "People will change their behavior" (why would they?), "Costs will balance out over time" (based on what evidence?), "Our suppliers will cooperate" (have we asked them?). Encourage curiosity rather than critique. The goal is to make hidden assumptions visible, not to attack the proposal or the people who developed it.

**Step 4 – Explore consequences (20 minutes):** Ask: "What short-term effects might this proposal create? What long-term effects could emerge? Who benefits from this proposal? Who might be negatively affected? What risks are we not naming?" Be sure to explicitly consider: environmental impact (intended and unintended), social impact (on workers, communities, future generations), and effects on trust and credibility (both internally and with external stakeholders). Map consequences on the flipchart, distinguishing intended effects from potential unintended effects.

**Step 5 – Reframe the decision (15 minutes):** Based on what has emerged, invite the group to strengthen the proposal. Ask: "How might we revise the proposal itself, the decision criteria, or the implementation approach to address what we have discovered? What would a more responsible version of this decision look like?" The goal is not to abandon the initiative but to improve it through critical examination. Sometimes critical thinking reveals that a proposal needs fundamental rethinking; more often, it suggests modifications that make success more likely.

**Closing reflection (5 minutes):** Ask: "How did critical thinking change our understanding of this proposal? What would have happened if we had skipped this examination and moved directly to implementation?"

**Tips for managers:** Avoid letting this become criticism of people—keep the focus on ideas and assumptions. Responsible decisions often require the discomfort of questioning things we want to believe. Critical thinking is not the same as being negative; it is about being thorough. Use this activity before committing significant resources to sustainability initiatives, not after problems have already emerged.

## **26. Adapting response patterns**

**Time:** 60-90 minutes

**Difficulty:** ★★★

**IDG skills:** Self-awareness, Presence, Resilience, Integrity and authenticity

**Dimensions:** Being, Acting

**When to use:** In high-pressure environments, when people feel reactive or defensive, after conflicts or near-misses, as part of leadership development

**How it supports sustainability work:** In sustainability work, many misaligned actions happen under time pressure, during conflict, or when trade-offs feel uncomfortable. People fall back on habitual reactions that may not serve long-term responsibility. This activity helps managers

and teams notice their habitual reactions, pause before acting on autopilot, and choose responses aligned with responsibility and long-term impact. It addresses the gap between knowing what is right and actually doing it under pressure.

**What you need:** Flipchart or whiteboard, markers, paper for each participant

**Step-by-step instructions:**

Step 1 – Normalise pressure responses (5 minutes): Begin by reducing defensiveness. Say something like: "When under pressure, we all fall back on habits. This is not a weakness—it is human. Our brains are wired to respond quickly in stressful situations, often before we have time to think. The question is not whether we have automatic reactions, but whether those reactions serve responsible action. Today we will examine our patterns with curiosity, not judgement."

Step 2 – Introduce the response pattern model (10 minutes): Draw three columns on the board, labelled: Trigger (What happens?), Reaction (What do I typically do?), and Impact (What are the consequences?). Explain the model briefly: "We often react before reflecting. A trigger occurs—perhaps a difficult email, a tight deadline, a challenging question in a meeting—and we respond automatically. That response has impacts on people, on relationships, on our sustainability goals. By slowing down to see this pattern, we can begin to choose our responses rather than simply react." Give an example: Trigger = receiving pushback on a sustainability proposal. Reaction = becoming defensive and dismissing the concerns. Impact = the person with concerns stops raising them, important information is lost, trust decreases.

Step 3 – Individual reflection (15 minutes): Ask participants to think of a real situation involving a sustainability tension, a value conflict, or a pressured decision. They fill in the three columns privately for their own situation: What was the trigger? What was my typical reaction? What was the impact—on people, on the environment, on trust, on long-term goals? Give the full fifteen minutes. These reflections remain private unless someone chooses to share. Encourage honesty: the most useful insights come from examining reactions we are not proud of.

Step 4 – Small group sharing (20 minutes): In pairs or groups of three, participants share what they are comfortable sharing. Emphasise: focus on patterns, not on judging yourself or others. The listeners' role is to understand, not to fix or advise. Useful questions listeners might ask: "What were you trying to protect when you reacted that way?" "What pressure were you feeling in that moment?" "What need were you trying to meet?" These questions help surface the underlying logic of reactions without condemning them. No advice yet—this step is purely for understanding.

Step 5 – Design alternative responses (20 minutes): Now shift to designing change. Ask: "What response would better align with responsibility and sustainability? When you notice the trigger next time, what could you do differently?" Help participants think concretely. Alternative responses might include: a question to ask yourself before reacting ("What would I advise someone else to do here?"), a physical pause (taking three breaths, standing up, getting water), asking for time ("Can I think about this and get back to you?"), asking for input ("What am I missing here?"), or naming uncertainty explicitly ("I am not sure about this—let me consider it further"). Each participant writes down one specific alternative response they want to practise.

Step 6 – Personal experiment (10 minutes): Each participant completes the sentence: "Next time I notice this trigger, I will..." Frame this explicitly as an experiment, not a test. Say: "You are not committing to perfect behaviour. You are committing to trying something different and seeing what happens. If it does not work, that is useful information." Participants may share their experiment with a partner for accountability, or keep it private.

Closing reflection (5 minutes): Ask the whole group: "What makes it hard to pause under pressure in our organisation? What would help us support each other in responding more thoughtfully?" These questions often surface systemic factors (tight deadlines, blame culture, lack of psychological safety) that the team may want to address separately.

Tips for managers: Do not turn this into performance evaluation—the goal is learning, not assessment. Keep the tone curious, not corrective. Reinforce that changing habitual patterns takes time and practice; no one succeeds immediately. Follow up in future meetings by asking how experiments are going, which signals that this work matters and creates gentle accountability. Model vulnerability by sharing your own patterns and experiments.

## 27. Navigating uncertainty

**Time:** 60-75 minutes

**Difficulty:** ★★★

**IDG skills:** Systems thinking, Resilience, Humility, Courage

**Dimensions:** Thinking, Acting

**When to use:** When future impacts are unclear, when teams are stuck waiting for more data, when decisions feel risky or politically sensitive, during periods of transition or change

How it supports sustainability work: Sustainability work is full of incomplete data, long feedback loops, and conflicting signals. Managers are often expected to act as if certainty exists, even when it does not. This creates pressure to pretend confidence or to delay decisions indefinitely while waiting for impossible certainty. This activity helps teams acknowledge uncertainty openly, make decisions without pretending, and reduce both false confidence and unnecessary anxiety.

**What you need:** Flipchart, markers

### Step-by-step instructions:

Step 1 – Normalise uncertainty (5 minutes): Begin by legitimising doubt. Say something like: "In sustainability work, certainty is often a luxury we do not have. The systems we are trying to influence are complex, the time horizons are long, and the data is incomplete. Responsible leadership means acting with uncertainty, not denying it or waiting until it disappears. Today we will practise making decisions transparently, acknowledging what we do not know."

Step 2 – Identify the uncertain decision (10 minutes): Name the decision the team is facing. Ask: "What makes this decision uncertain? What specifically do we not know?" Write the uncertainties visibly on the flipchart. Be concrete: "We do not know whether customers will pay more for sustainable packaging" is more useful than "There is market uncertainty." List as many specific uncertainties as the team can identify.

Step 3 – Distinguish what we know and do not know (15 minutes): Create three columns on the flipchart: (1) What we know, (2) What we assume, (3) What we do not know. Work through the decision together, placing each relevant factor in the appropriate column. This exercise often reduces anxiety by showing that some things we thought were uncertain are actually known, while revealing that some things we treated as known are actually assumptions. Be rigorous: "We know" should be reserved for things with solid evidence; everything else is assumption or unknown.

Step 4 – Explore possible futures (20 minutes): Ask: "If things go better than expected, what happens? If things go worse than expected, what happens? What early signals would tell us which direction things are heading?" Map different scenarios on the flipchart. Focus on plausible futures, not extreme or unlikely ones. For each scenario, identify what you would see in the first weeks or months that would indicate which future is unfolding. These become monitoring signals.

Step 5 – Decide how to act responsibly (15 minutes): Ask: "Given what we know, what we assume, and what we do not know, what decision is responsible right now? What safeguards can we build in? How can we remain adaptable as we learn more?" Encourage approaches that preserve flexibility: reversible steps rather than irreversible commitments where possible, learning loops that gather feedback quickly, and transparency with stakeholders about what is uncertain. The goal is not to find certainty but to act responsibly despite its absence.

Closing reflection (5 minutes): Ask: "How did naming uncertainty explicitly change the quality of our discussion? What helps us act responsibly when we cannot be certain of outcomes?"

Tips for managers: Avoid false certainty—it erodes trust when reality proves more complex. Transparency about uncertainty actually builds trust because it demonstrates honesty. Responsible leadership includes being willing to say "we do not know yet" and to make decisions anyway when waiting is itself a choice with consequences. This activity helps teams act responsibly despite uncertainty rather than being paralysed by it or pretending it does not exist.

## **28. Making courageous decisions**

**Time:** 60-75 minutes

**Difficulty:** ★★★

**IDG skills:** Courage, Integrity and authenticity, Inner compass, Resilience

**Dimensions:** Being, Acting

**When to use:** When sustainability decisions are unpopular, when there is pressure to compromise values, when short-term performance conflicts with long-term responsibility, when managers feel caught in the middle between directives and ethics

How it supports sustainability work: Sustainability commitments frequently collapse despite genuine support from leaders. The problem is that following through often carries genuine costs—to careers, relationships, standing within the organisation, or short-term performance. Acting on sustainability principles may mean questioning established ways of working, voicing concerns when silence would be more comfortable, or accepting delays when speed is expected. This activity helps managers acknowledge fear without being ruled by it, distinguish

legitimate caution from avoidance, and identify concrete courageous actions with appropriate support.

**What you need:** Flipchart, markers, paper for each participant

**Step-by-step instructions:**

Step 1 – Normalise fear and risk (5 minutes): Begin by making it acceptable to feel fear. Say something like: "Being courageous is not the same as being fearless. It means taking responsible action even when you feel the fear. Everyone in leadership faces situations where doing the right thing feels risky. Today we will examine those situations honestly, without pretending that courage is easy or that fear is a sign of weakness." This framing legitimises hesitation without excusing avoidance.

Step 2 – Identify a real decision (10 minutes): Ask participants to reflect individually on a decision where sustainability or responsibility is at stake and where there is perceived risk. The risk might be: reputational (looking foolish or difficult), relational (damaging relationships with colleagues or superiors), performance-related (missing targets or slowing down), or personal (affecting career prospects or standing). Participants write privately about their situation. They do not need to share details yet—just identify the situation clearly for themselves.

Step 3 – Name the risks explicitly (15 minutes): In small groups of three or four, or in pairs, participants share what they are comfortable sharing. The focus is on three questions: What do I fear might happen if I take the responsible action? Who or what do I feel responsible for protecting (including myself)? What do I fear losing? Encourage honesty rather than justification. The point is to make the feared consequences visible and speakable. When fears are named out loud, they often become less overwhelming and more manageable. Listeners should receive what is shared without trying to fix it or minimise it.

Step 4 – Distinguish fear from responsibility (20 minutes): This is the crucial analytical step. On the flipchart, create two columns: "What we are afraid of" and "What we are responsible for." Work through examples from the small group discussions (with permission) or use a composite example. Ask: "If we set aside our anxieties momentarily, what would responsible action look like? How do our fears compare to our actual obligations? Looking back from ten years in the future, what would those affected by this decision expect us to have done?" This distinction often clarifies moral agency. Sometimes what we fear (disapproval, conflict, short-term costs) is less weighty than what we are responsible for (long-term impacts, affected communities, organisational integrity). Sometimes the fears point to legitimate concerns that should shape how we act courageously, not whether we act.

Step 5 – Identify a courageous next step (15 minutes): Ask each participant: "What is the smallest courageous action I could take? Not the complete solution, but the next step that moves toward responsible action?" Then ask: "Who could support me in taking this step?" Emphasise two principles: courage is often incremental (small steps build capacity for larger ones), and support reduces risk (courageous action is easier when you are not alone). Participants write down one concrete step they commit to taking and identify at least one person who could support them.

Closing reflection (5 minutes): Ask the whole group: "What makes courage difficult in our organisation? What conditions or practices would help courage become more possible here?"

These questions often reveal systemic factors that the team or organisation could address to make ethical leadership easier.

Tips for managers: Courageous behaviour develops through practice rather than emerging from fixed character traits. Small acts of courage build capacity for larger ones. Having allies and support structures makes a significant difference. Leading with integrity strengthens trust over time, even when it involves short-term costs. Model courage yourself by sharing your own difficult decisions and fears. Do not use this activity to pressure people into risky action; the goal is to help them find their own genuine next step, however small.

## 29. Sensemaking

**Time:** 75-90 minutes

**Difficulty:** ★★★

**IDG skills:** Systems thinking, Complexity awareness, Perspective skills, Critical thinking, Co-creation skills

**Dimensions:** Thinking, Collaborating

**When to use:** After gathering a lot of information, when different interpretations coexist, during or after change initiatives, when sustainability efforts feel fragmented

How it supports sustainability work: In sustainability work, teams are often faced with many signals, conflicting data, and different interpretations of what is happening. Without shared sensemaking, teams talk past each other, jump to disconnected actions, and lose coherence and trust. Sensemaking is not about finding the single correct interpretation; it is about building enough shared understanding to act coherently together.

**What you need:** Flipchart or whiteboard, markers, relevant inputs (reports, stakeholder feedback, metrics, observations)

### Step-by-step instructions:

Step 1 – Lay out the inputs (10 minutes): Invite participants to briefly share what information they are bringing to this conversation: reports they have read, data they have seen, feedback they have received, observations they have made. Capture key points visibly on the flipchart, but do not analyse or evaluate yet—just gather. The goal is to see what raw material the group is working with. Different people may be working from very different information, which partly explains why they reach different conclusions.

Step 2 – Notice patterns and tensions (20 minutes): Now begin to look across the inputs. Ask: "What patterns do we see? What themes recur across different sources? What tensions or contradictions stand out? What seems connected to what?" Guide participants toward provisional phrasing: "What appears to be happening is..." "A possible theme here is..." "Something I'm noticing is..." This provisional approach maintains openness and prevents the group from settling on interpretations too quickly. Write patterns and tensions on the flipchart. Common patterns in sustainability work might include: tension between short-term and long-term, gaps between stated intentions and observed behaviour, different stakeholders seeing the same situation very differently.

Step 3 – Name emerging themes (20 minutes): Work together to cluster the observations and name 3-5 emerging themes. A theme is a higher-level interpretation that makes sense of multiple observations. Examples of themes: "Efficiency versus resilience—we keep optimising for efficiency in ways that reduce our ability to adapt." "Short-term pressure versus long-term responsibility—quarterly targets consistently override sustainability commitments." "Information silos—different parts of the organisation have pieces of the puzzle but no one sees the whole." Write the themes clearly on the flipchart.

Step 4 – Build a shared narrative (20 minutes): Ask: "If we had to explain what is going on to a new colleague or an outside stakeholder, what story would we tell? How would we describe the situation we are in?" Work together to construct a brief narrative—perhaps a short paragraph—that captures the shared understanding. A good narrative: acknowledges complexity without being paralysed by it, avoids blaming individuals or groups, identifies tensions without necessarily resolving them, and points toward responsible action. Write the narrative where everyone can see it.

Step 5 – Identify implications for action (10 minutes): Ask: "What does this shared understanding suggest we should do? What does it suggest we should not rush into? What questions do we need to explore further before acting?" Focus on direction and priorities rather than detailed action plans. Sensemaking creates the foundation for good decisions; the decisions themselves may require separate processes.

Closing reflection (5 minutes): Ask: "What feels clearer now than when we started? What remains open or uncertain? How has this conversation changed how you understand our situation?"

Tips for managers: This process is about building understanding, not reaching decisions—resist the pull toward solutions. Some ambiguity is acceptable and even appropriate; not every question needs resolution in a single session. Developing common ground is a necessary foundation for effective action. Return to this activity periodically, especially when circumstances change significantly or when the team feels confused about direction.

### **30. Triggering team trust**

**Time:** 60-75 minutes

**Difficulty:** ★★★

**IDG skills:** Relationship-building skills, Empathy and compassion, Communication skills, Humility

**Dimensions:** Relating, Collaborating

**When to use:** In newly formed teams, after conflict or change, when sustainability discussions feel unsafe or superficial, as part of leadership or team development

How it supports sustainability work: Effective sustainability work depends on candour, willingness to raise difficult topics, and sustained collaboration through challenging periods. These become impossible when trust is absent. But trust is often treated as something that either exists or does not, rather than something that can be deliberately built. This activity helps teams examine trust explicitly, identify specific behaviours that build or erode it, and make concrete commitments to strengthen it.

**What you need:** Flipchart, markers

**Step-by-step instructions:**

Step 1 – Frame trust as practical (5 minutes): Begin by demystifying trust. Say something like: "Functional trust is distinct from personal affection. It means people can be candid, depend on each other to follow through, and raise concerns without expecting blame or ridicule. Trust is practical: it makes collaboration possible. And it is built through specific behaviours over time. Today we will identify what those behaviours are for our team." This framing avoids sentimentality and focuses on functional trust that enables work.

Step 2 – Reflect individually (10 minutes): Ask participants to write privately, answering these questions: When do I feel safe to speak up on this team? What conditions or behaviours make that possible? When do I hold back from saying what I think? What conditions or behaviours cause that? What specific behaviours from others increase my trust? What specific behaviours decrease it? Give the full ten minutes. These reflections remain private unless someone chooses to share.

Step 3 – Share patterns, not stories (20 minutes): In small groups of three or four, participants share patterns they notice—not specific incidents or complaints about individuals. Emphasise this distinction repeatedly. Good sharing sounds like: "I notice I hold back when a decision seems already made" or "I trust more when people acknowledge what they do not know." Problematic sharing sounds like: "Last week when Maria said X, I lost trust." The focus is on patterns and conditions, not on processing specific conflicts. After small group discussions, capture themes on the flipchart where everyone can see them.

Step 4 – Identify trust-building behaviours (20 minutes): Looking at the themes on the flipchart, ask: "What behaviours would increase trust in this team? What small, specific things could we do differently?" Brainstorm behaviours and write them down. Good trust-building behaviours are: specific (not "be more trustworthy" but "acknowledge when you do not know something"), observable (others can see whether it is happening), and actionable (people can actually do them). Examples: following through on commitments or renegotiating early if you cannot, naming concerns early rather than letting them fester, listening without interrupting, acknowledging mistakes rather than defending, thanking people for raising difficult issues.

Step 5 – Make collective commitments (15 minutes): As a group, agree on 2-4 trust-building behaviours that you will practise as a team. Write these commitments clearly. Then agree on how you will hold each other accountable: How will you remind each other—respectfully—when you notice these behaviours or their absence? Some teams agree on a signal or code word; others simply agree to name what they notice. Plan to revisit these commitments in future meetings to assess how they are working.

Closing reflection (5 minutes): Ask: "What would change in our sustainability work if trust on this team increased by just 10 percent? What conversations might become possible? What is one behaviour I personally commit to practising?" Go around the group so everyone names their personal commitment.

Tips for managers: Demonstrate trustworthy behaviour before expecting it from your team. Trust accumulates gradually through reliable, consistent action. When trust is damaged, address it promptly and without drama rather than allowing grievances to fester. Remember that trust enables the honest, difficult conversations that sustainability work requires; it is not a nice-to-have but a prerequisite for effective collaboration on complex challenges.

These deeper work activities require more time and stronger psychological safety than the activities in previous sections. Use them when your team has established trust, when you face particularly complex sustainability challenges, or when you need to strengthen foundational capabilities for long-term transformation work. These activities are appropriate for quarterly team development sessions or dedicated workshops. The depth of engagement they enable strengthens your team's capacity to sustain commitment to challenging sustainability goals over time.

## 2D: Extended development (2+ hours)

This section contains in-depth work for teams with established psychological safety and time for deeper exploration. Extended development activities allow teams to work through complex personal and collective challenges related to sustainability transformation.

These activities are appropriate for half-day or full-day team development sessions, quarterly off-sites, or dedicated workshops. They require significant commitment of time and emotional energy, but they address fundamental barriers to sustainability action that shorter activities cannot reach.

Use extended development work when your team has built strong trust, when you face persistent gaps between values and action, or when you need to address deeper personal and systemic barriers to sustainability transformation.

### 31. My natural next step<sup>8</sup>

**Time:** 2 hours (120 minutes)

**Difficulty:** ★★★ (requires psychological safety)

**IDG skills:** Courage, Self-awareness, Inner compass, Openness and learning mindset, Humility, Hope and optimism

**Dimensions:** Being, Acting

For more mature groups: This activity requires teams with established trust and psychological safety. It involves acknowledging personal limitations and exploring uncomfortable feelings about behaviour change.

**When to use:** When there is a persistent gap between sustainability values and actual behaviour, when people know what they should do but do not do it, when teams face values conflicts around sustainability, when cynicism or paralysis prevents action

How it supports sustainability work: This activity addresses a fundamental challenge in sustainability work: the gap between what we believe is important and what we actually do. Many people support sustainability in principle but struggle to act on it when doing so is uncomfortable or involves loss. This activity helps participants identify small sustainability-oriented changes they could make but do not because of discomfort, explore what values conflict with making these changes, and find nuanced, personally appropriate next steps that strengthen alignment between values and action.

**What you need:** Flipchart or whiteboard, markers, paper and pens for each participant

#### Step-by-step instructions:

Step 1 – Frame the activity (10 minutes): Begin by acknowledging that this work is challenging. Say something like: "When we consider sustainability, it can feel paralysing. We may swing between two unhelpful extremes—believing our individual efforts count for nothing compared to governments and corporations, or feeling we must transform everything about our lives

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<sup>8</sup> This activity is adapted from the workbook *Den mänskliga faktorn*, Lunds stift, 2024.

immediately. This activity charts a middle path: discovering what genuine movement is actually within reach for each of us right now."

Explain the core insight: We often conflate our underlying needs with the particular ways we have grown accustomed to satisfying them. Consider someone who assumes they need an overseas holiday, when what they actually need is restoration and a break from routine—something that could be achieved through many different experiences. The key is separating the genuine need (renewal, connection, pleasure) from the specific habit we have built around meeting that need (a particular type of trip or purchase).

Emphasise: "Sustainable living is not about deprivation or sacrifice. The aim is to build lives that are rich, purposeful, and aligned with what we care about. This means discovering how to meet our real needs in ways that also honour our values. Progress can be gradual—setting a direction and moving toward it step by step over months or years is entirely valid."

Step 2 – Brainstorm micro-changes (15 minutes): Ask participants to brainstorm individually: What are small sustainability-related changes I could make but do not currently make because they are uncomfortable or involve some kind of loss?

Provide examples to stimulate thinking: choosing sustainable suppliers even when more expensive, speaking up about unsustainable practices, cycling or walking instead of driving, eating less meat, buying second-hand rather than new, choosing train travel over flying, reducing consumption, repairing rather than replacing, choosing products with less packaging, reducing energy use, composting organic waste, supporting circular economy practices in procurement.

Each person writes a list of 5-8 possible changes. These should be things they genuinely could do but currently choose not to, not things that are impossible given their circumstances.

Step 3 – Choose one micro-change to explore (10 minutes): Ask each person to choose one change from their list that feels both meaningful and uncomfortable. The change should matter enough that making it would feel significant, but should also involve real difficulty or loss. If a change feels easy, it is probably not the right one for this exercise.

Participants write down: The specific change I am choosing to explore is...

Step 4 – Explore the gap (25 minutes): This is the heart of the activity. Ask participants to explore in writing, then discuss in pairs or small groups:

What makes this change difficult for me? What am I protecting by not making this change? What values does this change conflict with? What loss or fear is present here?

Encourage complete honesty. Common conflicts include: comfort versus environmental responsibility, convenience versus sustainability, social belonging versus values (when peer group has different norms), immediate pleasure versus long-term responsibility, personal freedom versus collective good, financial security versus environmental standards.

The goal is not to judge these conflicts but to see them clearly. Often the values we are protecting are legitimate—the conflict is real, not a failure of character.

Step 5 – Identify what would help (20 minutes): Ask: What would make this change easier for me? What resources, support, or adjustments would help?

Encourage participants to think beyond current constraints. If the system were designed to support this change, what would be different? Examples might include: higher travel allowances for train rather than flights, extra time off to compensate for slower travel, shared meal preparation to reduce fast food dependence, bike infrastructure, workplace composting systems, peer support groups, organisational policies that align with sustainability values.

Also ask: What support could I ask for? Who else might be working on this? What would help me honour both the competing values rather than sacrificing one completely?

Step 6 – Find the natural next step (25 minutes): Now comes the crucial move toward action. Ask: What is my natural next step—not the perfect step, not the complete solution, but the next genuine step I could take?

Emphasise moving beyond binary thinking. Change rarely happens as a sudden, complete transformation. Examples: Someone who currently eats meat daily might begin with a single plant-based day each week rather than attempting immediate vegetarianism. Someone whose work involves regular air travel might commit to taking the train for any journey under a certain distance rather than eliminating all travel. These partial steps are not compromises—they are realistic starting points that build capacity for further change.

The step should be: specific and concrete (not vague intentions), genuinely achievable given actual circumstances and competing values, meaningful (moves toward alignment with sustainability values), personally appropriate (fits this person's situation, not what someone else should do).

Each participant writes: My natural next step is...

Step 7 – Accountability and celebration (10 minutes): Participants share their next step with one accountability partner. Partners agree: When will you take this step? How will I know you have done it? When shall we check in (suggest three weeks)?

Emphasise: When a new pattern has established itself, celebrate the progress. Then you will likely be ready for your next natural step. This is not a one-time activity but an ongoing practice of gradual alignment.

Closing reflection (5 minutes): Ask the full group: What did you notice about the gap between values and behaviour? What made it possible to identify a genuine next step? How does this feel different from simply "trying harder" to do the right thing?

Tips for managers: This activity works because it acknowledges real difficulty rather than assuming good intentions are enough. It honours competing values rather than dismissing them. It focuses on small, genuine steps rather than impossible transformations. Model vulnerability by doing the exercise yourself and sharing honestly. Avoid judgement of what people choose as their next step—what matters is that it is genuine movement toward alignment. Small steps compound over time. Create space for this reflection to happen again in several months.

Follow-up: After three weeks, bring the team together briefly to share: How did it go? What did you learn? What made it easier or harder than expected? Are you ready for another natural next step? This accountability and shared learning strengthens collective capacity for sustainable behaviour change.

## **Creating extended development sessions**

For half-day or full-day workshops, you can combine activities from different sections to create comprehensive development experiences. Here are some suggested combinations based on common team needs:

### **Building foundation for sustainability work (Half-day, 3-4 hours)**

Combine: Values Mapping (40-50 minutes) + Building Psychological Safety (45-60 minutes) + Team Check-in (30-45 minutes) + appropriate quick engagements for breaks

This combination establishes the relational and values foundation needed for sustained sustainability work. Use when forming new teams or renewing commitment to sustainability goals.

### **Working with complex challenges (Half-day, 3-4 hours)**

Combine: Shared Problem Definition (60-90 minutes) + Systems Thinking Practice (50-60 minutes) + Sensemaking (75-90 minutes)

This combination helps teams understand complex, interconnected sustainability challenges before jumping to solutions. Use when facing particularly challenging sustainability issues or when previous approaches have created unintended consequences.

### **From understanding to action (Full-day, 6-7 hours)**

Combine: Exchanging Perspectives (75-90 minutes) + Deep Listening (45-60 minutes) + Acting in Alignment (45-60 minutes) + My Natural Next Step (2 hours)

This combination moves teams from perspective skills through genuine listening to committed action. Use when the gap between knowing what should change and actually changing is significant.

### **Strengthening collaboration (Half-day, 3-4 hours)**

Combine: Deep Listening (45-60 minutes) + Building Psychological Safety (45-60 minutes) + Triggering Team Trust (60-75 minutes)

This combination strengthens the collaborative capabilities needed for sustainability work across boundaries and differences. Use when collaboration is weak or when difficult conversations are being avoided.

## **Guidelines for extended sessions**

When designing extended sessions:

Build in adequate breaks. Use some quick engagement activities during breaks to maintain energy and focus.

Start with lighter activities and progress to more challenging ones as psychological safety builds during the session.

Include time for integration. After intense activities, allow space for participants to process what they have learned.

End with concrete commitments. Extended sessions should result in specific next steps that participants commit to taking.

Plan follow-up. Schedule a check-in session 2-4 weeks later to review progress and maintain momentum.

Consider the physical space. Extended sessions benefit from comfortable seating, natural light, ability to move around, and wall space for visual mapping and note-taking.

Prepare participants. Let them know in advance that the session will involve deep work and that psychological safety is essential. This helps people arrive with appropriate expectations.

Extended development work requires significant investment of time and emotional energy, but it addresses fundamental barriers to sustainability transformation that shorter activities cannot reach. Use these extended formats when your team is ready for deeper work and when you can commit the time needed to do it properly. The capabilities developed through extended sessions strengthen your team's ability to sustain commitment to challenging sustainability goals over the long term.

## Part 3: Situation Guide

This section helps you quickly find appropriate activities based on the situation your team is facing. Rather than reading through all activities, you can identify your current challenge and see which activities are most relevant.

The situations are organized around common challenges teams face in sustainability work. Each situation includes a brief description, recommended activities from Part 2, and guidance on how to approach the challenge.

### How to Use This Guide

Read through the situation descriptions and identify which best matches your current team challenge. Then turn to the recommended activities in Part 2. Start with the quick engagements if you have limited time or if your team is new to inner development work. Progress to deeper activities as your team builds capacity and trust.

Remember that these are suggestions, not prescriptions. You know your team best. Use your judgment about which activities will be most helpful in your specific context.

### Situation 1: Gap Between Values and Action

**You recognize this situation when:** Your team agrees that sustainability is important but actual behavior does not reflect this commitment. People know what they should do but do not do it. There is a persistent gap between stated values and daily decisions. Sustainability commitments are easily overridden by convenience, cost pressure, or habit.

**Why this matters:** Sustainability transformation requires alignment between values and action. When this alignment is weak, sustainability remains at the level of good intentions rather than becoming embedded practice.

**Recommended quick engagements (Part 2A):** Values Check-in, Learning Mindset Moment, Next Step Commitment

**Recommended team development (Part 2B):** Acting in Alignment, Values Mapping

**Recommended extended development (Part 2D):** My Natural Next Step

**How to approach:** Start with Values Mapping to clarify what actually matters to your team. Then use Acting in Alignment to explore the specific gaps between values and behavior. For deeper work with established teams, My Natural Next Step helps individuals identify concrete changes they could make but currently do not because of discomfort or competing values. Use Values Check-in regularly to maintain awareness of alignment.

### Situation 2: Sustainability Feels Like External Requirement

**You recognize this situation when:** The team treats sustainability as compliance rather than commitment. People do the minimum required. Sustainability work feels like a burden imposed from outside. There is little intrinsic motivation or genuine care for the communities and ecosystems affected by company operations.

**Why this matters:** Compliance-based sustainability produces minimum effort and fragile commitment. Intrinsic motivation based on genuine care drives more authentic and sustained sustainability efforts.

**Recommended quick engagements (Part 2A):** Connection to Impact, Gratitude Practice, Values Check-in

**Recommended team development (Part 2B):** Values Mapping, Deep Listening

**How to approach:** Begin with Connection to Impact to help team members develop felt connection to those affected by sustainability decisions. Use Values Mapping to clarify whether and why sustainability actually matters to team members personally. Deep Listening creates space for people to share what they genuinely care about. Regular Gratitude Practice builds appreciation for what is worth sustaining. The goal is to shift from external compliance to internal commitment.

### **Situation 3: Team Stuck in Simplistic Solutions**

**You recognize this situation when:** Sustainability solutions keep creating unintended problems. The team jumps to quick fixes without understanding interconnections. Different sustainability issues are treated as isolated problems. Short-term thinking dominates. Solutions that work in one area create problems in another.

**Why this matters:** Sustainability challenges are inherently complex and interconnected. Simplistic solutions waste resources and can make things worse. Effective sustainability work requires systems thinking and complexity awareness.

**Recommended quick engagements (Part 2A):** Connections Web, Future Impact Question, Multiple Perspectives Round

**Recommended team development (Part 2B):** Systems Thinking Practice

**Recommended deeper work (Part 2C):** Shared Problem Definition, Critical Thinking (from Transitionmakers activities)

**How to approach:** Use Connections Web regularly to build the habit of seeing interconnections. Systems Thinking Practice provides structured approach to mapping complex sustainability challenges. Shared Problem Definition helps teams slow down and develop shared understanding before jumping to solutions. Use Future Impact Question to extend time horizon. Multiple Perspectives Round ensures diverse viewpoints are considered. The goal is to build capacity for complexity rather than demanding simple answers.

### **Situation 4: Difficult Conversations Are Avoided**

**You recognize this situation when:** People do not speak honestly about sustainability challenges. Concerns are raised too late or not at all. The team avoids uncomfortable topics. Discussions remain superficial. People fear speaking up about unsustainable practices. Psychological safety is weak.

**Why this matters:** Sustainability transformation requires honest conversation about what is not working, what needs to change, and what obstacles exist. Without psychological safety, these conversations cannot happen.

**Recommended quick engagements (Part 2A):** Quick Team Check-in, Humility Check

**Recommended team development (Part 2B):** Building Psychological Safety, Team Check-in, Deep Listening

**Recommended deeper work (Part 2C):** Triggering Team Trust

**How to approach:** Start with regular Quick Team Check-in to normalize honest sharing about how people are doing. Building Psychological Safety helps teams identify specific behaviors that build or erode safety. Deep Listening provides practice in being fully heard. For teams ready for deeper work, Triggering Team Trust addresses trust explicitly. The key is consistency—safety builds through repeated experience that honesty is met with respect rather than punishment.

### **Situation 5: Paralyzed by Uncertainty**

**You recognize this situation when:** The team waits for more data rather than acting. Decisions are delayed because outcomes are uncertain. People want guarantees that sustainability initiatives will work before committing. Ambiguity creates anxiety. The team is stuck because perfect information does not exist.

**Why this matters:** Sustainability work always involves uncertainty. Perfect information is rare. Responsible leadership means acting with uncertainty rather than denying it or waiting for impossible certainty.

**Recommended quick engagements (Part 2A):** Humility Check

**Recommended deeper work (Part 2C):** Navigating Uncertainty, Sensemaking

**How to approach:** Navigating Uncertainty helps teams distinguish what they know, what they assume, and what they do not know. This often reduces anxiety by clarifying the actual scope of uncertainty. Sensemaking helps teams build shared understanding from diverse and sometimes conflicting information. Use Humility Check regularly to acknowledge what you might be wrong about. The goal is to build capacity to act responsibly despite uncertainty, not to eliminate uncertainty.

### **Situation 6: Setbacks Undermine Commitment**

**You recognize this situation when:** When sustainability initiatives do not work as hoped, people disengage. Slow progress leads to discouragement. The team struggles to maintain motivation through the long work of transformation. Cynicism or burnout threatens long-term commitment. People feel overwhelmed by the scale of sustainability challenges.

**Why this matters:** Sustainability transformation is long-term work involving setbacks and slow progress. Teams need capacity to maintain engagement without falling into either denial or despair.

**Recommended quick engagements (Part 2A):** Progress Celebration, Learning Mindset Moment, Gratitude Practice

**Recommended deeper work (Part 2C):** Positive Reframing (from Transitionmakers activities)

**How to approach:** Use Progress Celebration regularly to notice real movement even when incomplete. Learning Mindset Moment helps teams extract value from setbacks rather than treating them as failures. Positive Reframing helps teams find genuine sources of meaning and

hope without falling into denial. Gratitude Practice maintains awareness of what matters. The goal is resilient, grounded hope rather than either naive optimism or cynicism.

### **Situation 7: Fear Prevents Courageous Action**

**You recognize this situation when:** People know what should change but fear speaking up. Sustainability commitments are compromised when they conflict with other priorities. Managers feel caught between sustainability values and performance pressure. People are unwilling to challenge unsustainable practices because doing so carries risk.

**Why this matters:** Many sustainability commitments fail not because people disagree with them but because they involve personal or organizational risk. Courage is essential for sustainability transformation.

**Recommended quick engagements (Part 2A):** Courage Prompt, Values Check-in

**Recommended team development (Part 2B):** Acting in Alignment

**Recommended deeper work (Part 2C):** Making Courageous Decisions (from Transitionmakers activities)

**How to approach:** Making Courageous Decisions helps teams distinguish between fear and responsibility, and identify courageous next steps. Acting in Alignment addresses the gap between values and behavior. Courage Prompt provides regular practice identifying responsible action despite discomfort. Values Check-in keeps teams connected to what matters. The goal is to build capacity for courageous action, not reckless action—courage aligned with responsibility.

### **Situation 8: Fragmented Efforts and Poor Coordination**

**You recognize this situation when:** Different departments pursue disconnected sustainability initiatives. Communication across teams is poor. Collaboration with external stakeholders is superficial. The team cannot mobilize broader support for sustainability work. Sustainability efforts happen in silos.

**Why this matters:** No company can achieve sustainability alone. Effective transformation requires collaboration across boundaries with diverse stakeholders.

**Recommended quick engagements (Part 2A):** Inclusive Listening Round, Co-creation Prompt, Quick Team Check-in

**Recommended team development (Part 2B):** Building Psychological Safety, Deep Listening

**Recommended deeper work (Part 2C):** Exchanging Perspectives, Triggering Team Trust

**How to approach:** Start with Inclusive Listening Round to ensure all voices are heard. Building Psychological Safety creates the foundation for honest collaboration. Deep Listening develops the capacity to really hear others. Exchanging Perspectives helps teams integrate diverse viewpoints without debate. Co-creation Prompt builds habits of collaborative development. The goal is to strengthen the collaborative capabilities needed for effective sustainability partnerships.

## **Situation 9: Disagreement on Sustainability Priorities**

**You recognize this situation when:** Team members have different ideas about what sustainability means and what should be prioritized. Conflicting interpretations create tension. People talk past each other. There is no shared understanding of the sustainability challenges you face.

**Why this matters:** Without shared understanding of the problem, teams pursue disconnected solutions. Alignment on what you are trying to address is essential before action.

**Recommended quick engagements (Part 2A):** Multiple Perspectives Round, Connections Web

**Recommended team development (Part 2B):** Values Mapping

**Recommended deeper work (Part 2C):** Shared Problem Definition, Exchanging Perspectives, Sensemaking

**How to approach:** Shared Problem Definition helps teams develop common understanding before rushing to solutions. Values Mapping clarifies what drives different priorities. Exchanging Perspectives creates space to understand different viewpoints without debate. Multiple Perspectives Round ensures diverse stakeholder views are considered. Sensemaking helps integrate conflicting information into coherent understanding. The goal is alignment on the challenge you face, even if perfect agreement on solutions remains elusive.

## **Situation 10: New Team or Team in Transition**

**You recognize this situation when:** You have a newly formed team, team members have recently changed, or the team is facing significant organizational change. Trust has not yet been established. People do not know each other well. Sustainability work needs to start but the relational foundation is weak.

**Why this matters:** Strong relationships and psychological safety are essential for effective sustainability work. New or transitioning teams need to build this foundation.

**Recommended quick engagements (Part 2A):** Quick Team Check-in, Gratitude Practice, Values Check-in

**Recommended team development (Part 2B):** Team Check-in, Values Mapping, Building Psychological Safety

**Recommended deeper work (Part 2C):** Triggering Team Trust

**How to approach:** Start with regular Quick Team Check-in to build the habit of honest sharing. Values Mapping helps the team understand what matters to each member. Building Psychological Safety addresses trust explicitly. Use Gratitude Practice to build appreciation. When the team is ready, Triggering Team Trust does deeper work on relational foundation. Avoid jumping to complex sustainability work before establishing basic trust and connection. The time invested in relationships pays dividends in all subsequent work.

## **Using This Guide Effectively**

Most teams face multiple situations simultaneously. You might recognize your team in several of these descriptions. That is normal. Start with the situation that feels most pressing or that is creating the most difficulty for your sustainability work.

The recommended activities are starting points, not complete solutions. Test activities with your team. Notice what works and what does not. Adjust based on what you learn. Over time, you will develop intuition for which activities fit which moments.

Remember that inner development is ongoing practice, not a problem to solve once and move on. Situations recur. Teams cycle through challenges. What matters is building your team's capacity to recognize situations as they arise and respond effectively using the tools in this handbook.

As your team develops stronger inner capabilities, you will find that some situations arise less frequently or resolve more quickly. The gap between values and action narrows. Difficult conversations become easier. Complex thinking becomes more natural. This is the long-term benefit of consistent inner development work in service of sustainability transformation.

## **Part 4: Indices and Appendices**

This section provides quick reference guides to help you navigate the handbook, track your progress, and evaluate the impact of inner development work on your team's sustainability efforts.

### **Index 1: Activities by Time Available**

Use this index when you know how much time you have and want to find appropriate activities.

#### **1-5 Minutes**

Presence Pause (2 min), Learning Mindset Moment (3 min), Values Check-in (5 min), Humility Check (4 min), Gratitude Practice (5 min), Future Impact Question (5 min), Quick Team Check-in (5 min), Courage Prompt (5 min), Progress Celebration (5 min), Next Step Commitment (5 min)

#### **6-15 Minutes**

Connection to Impact (7 min), Multiple Perspectives Round (8 min), Co-creation Prompt (8 min), Connections Web (10 min), Inclusive Listening Round (10 min)

#### **30-60 Minutes**

Team Check-in (30-45 min), Values Mapping (40-50 min), Deep Listening (45-60 min), Acting in Alignment (45-60 min), Building Psychological Safety (45-60 min), Systems Thinking Practice (50-60 min)

#### **60-90 Minutes**

Shared Problem Definition (60-90 min), Exchanging Perspectives (75-90 min), Navigating Uncertainty (60-75 min), Sensemaking (75-90 min), Triggering Team Trust (60-75 min), Critical Thinking (60-90 min), Adapting Response Patterns (60-90 min)

#### **2+ Hours**

My Natural Next Step (2 hours)

### **Index 2: Activities by IDG Dimension**

Use this index when you want to develop specific dimensions of inner development.

#### **Being Dimension Activities**

Values Check-in, Presence Pause, Learning Mindset Moment, Values Mapping, Acting in Alignment, My Natural Next Step, Team Check-in (also Relating, Collaborating)

#### **Thinking Dimension Activities**

Connections Web, Future Impact Question, Multiple Perspectives Round, Systems Thinking Practice, Shared Problem Definition, Navigating Uncertainty, Sensemaking, Critical Thinking, Exchanging Perspectives (also Being, Relating)

## **Relating Dimension Activities**

Gratitude Practice, Connection to Impact, Humility Check, Deep Listening, Building Psychological Safety, Triggering Team Trust, Team Check-in (also Being, Collaborating)

## **Collaborating Dimension Activities**

Quick Team Check-in, Inclusive Listening Round, Co-creation Prompt, Building Psychological Safety, Deep Listening, Triggering Team Trust, Exchanging Perspectives, Shared Problem Definition, Sensemaking

## **Acting Dimension Activities**

Courage Prompt, Progress Celebration, Next Step Commitment, Acting in Alignment, My Natural Next Step, Making Courageous Decisions, Positive Reframing, Adapting Response Patterns

## **Index 3: Activities by Difficulty Level**

Use this index to match activities to your team's readiness and psychological safety.

### **★ Easy (Low psychological safety required)**

Presence Pause, Values Check-in, Learning Mindset Moment, Humility Check, Gratitude Practice, Future Impact Question, Co-creation Prompt, Progress Celebration, Next Step Commitment

### **★★ Moderate (Some psychological safety needed)**

Connections Web, Connection to Impact, Multiple Perspectives Round, Quick Team Check-in, Inclusive Listening Round, Courage Prompt, Team Check-in, Values Mapping, Deep Listening, Acting in Alignment, Building Psychological Safety, Positive Reframing

### **★★★ Challenging (Strong psychological safety required)**

Systems Thinking Practice, Exchanging Perspectives, Shared Problem Definition, Navigating Uncertainty, Sensemaking, Triggering Team Trust, Critical Thinking, Making Courageous Decisions, Adapting Response Patterns, My Natural Next Step

## Appendix A: The 25 skills and qualities in the Inner Development Guide

Being	Thinking	Relating	Collaborating	Acting
<p><b>Inner Compass</b> A deeply felt commitment to live and act in accordance with values and purposes that serve the good of the whole.</p> <p><b>Integrity and Authenticity</b> A sincere commitment to honesty and firmly grounded values, expressed and embodied in action.</p> <p><b>Openness and Learning Mindset</b> A curious, adaptive attitude expressed through willingness to exchange perspectives, be vulnerable, welcome change, and grow.</p> <p><b>Self-Awareness</b> Ability to be in reflective contact with thoughts, emotions, desires, and actions; to maintain a realistic self-image and to regulate oneself.</p> <p><b>Presence</b> Capacity to be fully present in the here and now, to accept reality as it unfolds, and to respond in meaningful ways</p>	<p><b>Critical Thinking</b> Ability to reflect on the validity of ideas, evidence, assumptions and plans.</p> <p><b>Perspective Skills</b> Ability to learn from diverse perspectives and integrate insights into reflective sense-making and action.</p> <p><b>Systems Thinking</b> Ability to understand complexity and work with the interconnections and properties of systems.</p> <p><b>Long-Term Orientation and Visioning</b> Imagining long-term goals and staying committed to them in ways that support broader societal and ecological well-being.</p> <p><b>Creativity</b> Ability to think outside conventional patterns, imagine new possibilities, and shape them into transformative ideas.</p>	<p><b>Appreciation</b> Relating to people and planet Earth with a deep sense of gratitude, positive regard, and joy.</p> <p><b>Connectedness</b> Feeling a sense of belonging to a larger whole, such as humanity, the planet’s web of life, and the spiritual dimensions of existence.</p> <p><b>Humility</b> Being able to respond to the needs of the situation without concern for one’s own importance.</p> <p><b>Empathy and Compassion</b> Connecting to others, oneself, and nature with kindness, care, and love, guided by the intention to reduce suffering.</p> <p><b>Forgiveness</b> Willingness to transcend hostility, work through trauma, and create space for healing.</p>	<p><b>Relationship-Building Skills</b> Nurturing relationships with emotional intelligence grounded in trust, respect, mutual understanding, and a spirit of collaboration.</p> <p><b>Inclusive Mindset and Intercultural Competence</b> Willingness and competence to embrace diversity and include people and communities with different perspectives and backgrounds.</p> <p><b>Co-Creation Skills</b> Facilitating collaborative processes with diverse stakeholders, fostering teamwork and psychological safety, and being aware of power dynamics.</p> <p><b>Communication Skills</b> Ability to listen deeply, foster genuine dialogue, advocate one’s views skillfully, manage conflicts constructively and adapt communication to diverse groups.</p> <p><b>Mobilization Skills</b> Inspiring and enabling others to engage in shared purposes and collective action.</p>	<p><b>Courage</b> Standing up for fundamental values, making decisions, taking action, and, when needed, questioning and disrupting established structures and views.</p> <p><b>Hope and Optimism</b> Building and sustaining a shared belief in our capacity to create a more just, inclusive, and sustainable future.</p> <p><b>Conscious Use of Resources</b> Acting with awareness of the planet’s limited natural resources, prioritizing conservation, regeneration, and frugality to avoid harmful consumption.</p> <p><b>Proactivity</b> Practicing future-oriented, accountable stewardship in the face of urgent challenges, grounded in solidarity and care for human dignity and the living Earth.</p> <p><b>Resilience</b> Navigating adversity with agility, staying engaged, and persevering even when progress is slow or uncertain.</p>

## Appendix B: Activity Evaluation Template

Use this template after conducting an activity to evaluate its effectiveness and plan next steps.

**Activity name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Participants:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time taken:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Reflection Questions:

#### 1. How did this activity support our sustainability work?

Consider: Did it help clarify values? Improve understanding of complex challenges? Strengthen collaboration? Enable more courageous action? Build capacity for systems thinking?

#### 2. What worked well?

Note specific moments, questions, or aspects that generated insight or engagement.

#### 3. What was challenging or did not work?

Identify obstacles, confusions, or aspects that fell flat. This is valuable learning.

#### 4. What would you adjust if using this activity again?

Consider timing, framing, questions, group size, or sequencing.

#### 5. What concrete outcomes or commitments emerged?

Note specific next steps, decisions, or changes team members committed to.

#### 6. How has our sustainability work changed as a result?

Look for evidence of: more aligned decisions, deeper systems thinking, stronger collaboration, more courage to address unsustainable practices, increased care for affected communities or ecosystems.

### Follow-up plan:

What activity will you use next? When? What preparation is needed?

## Appendix C: Quarterly Progress Reflection

Use this template every 3-4 months to assess how inner development work is strengthening your sustainability efforts.

**Quarter:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Activities used this quarter:

List the activities your team engaged with and approximate frequency.

### Impact on Sustainability Work:

#### 1. Are we making decisions more aligned with long-term sustainability?

Examples of decisions where values clarity, long-term thinking, or systems awareness made a difference.

#### 2. Do we see more systems thinking in how we approach sustainability challenges?

Evidence of considering interconnections, unintended consequences, multiple perspectives, feedback loops.

#### 3. Has our care and connection to affected communities and ecosystems deepened?

Signs that sustainability feels like intrinsic commitment rather than external compliance.

#### 4. Are we collaborating more effectively on sustainability initiatives?

Improvements in communication, trust, inclusion of diverse voices, working across boundaries.

#### 5. Are we taking more courageous action on sustainability issues?

Examples of speaking up about unsustainable practices, maintaining commitments under pressure, taking action despite discomfort.

#### 6. How have we responded to setbacks in our sustainability work?

Evidence of resilience, learning from what did not work, maintaining hope without denial.

### Areas for Development:

Which dimensions or capabilities need more attention? What situations continue to challenge the team? What activities might address these needs?

### Plan for Next Quarter:

What activities will you prioritize? What new practices will you introduce? What will you continue from this quarter?

## **Appendix D: Getting Started—First 90 Days**

If you are new to this handbook, this guide provides a suggested path for the first three months.

### **Month 1: Building Foundation**

**Goal:** Introduce the concept of inner development, build basic trust, and establish regular practices.

**Week 1-2:** Read Part 1 yourself. Introduce the idea to your team briefly—explain that you will be trying some practices to strengthen your sustainability work. Start using Quick Team Check-in at the beginning of meetings (5 minutes).

**Week 3-4:** Add Values Check-in before decisions about sustainability (5 minutes). Schedule a 60-minute session for Values Mapping. This helps the team clarify what matters and begins building shared foundation.

### **Month 2: Developing Core Capabilities**

**Goal:** Strengthen specific capabilities most relevant to your team's current sustainability challenges.

**Week 1-2:** Continue Quick Team Check-in. Identify your team's primary challenge using Part 3 Situation Guide. Choose one team development activity (30-60 minutes) that addresses this challenge. Schedule and conduct it.

**Week 3-4:** Continue regular quick engagements. Add one new quick engagement relevant to your challenge (for example, if working on systems thinking, use Connections Web regularly). Reflect on what you are noticing.

### **Month 3: Deepening and Integrating**

**Goal:** Deepen practice, begin tracking impact on sustainability work, and plan ongoing development.

**Week 1-2:** If psychological safety is sufficient, try one deeper activity (60-90 minutes) from Part 2C. Use the Activity Evaluation Template (Appendix A) to reflect on what you are learning.

**Week 3-4:** Complete the Quarterly Progress Reflection (Appendix B). Assess how inner development work has affected your sustainability initiatives. Plan activities for the next quarter based on what you have learned.

#### **Key principles for getting started:**

Start small. Brief regular practice builds stronger capacity than occasional intensive work. Be consistent with a few activities rather than trying everything at once. Pay attention to what works for your specific team. Adjust based on what you learn. Connect each activity explicitly to your sustainability work—help the team see how inner development strengthens their capacity to contribute to sustainability goals. Be patient. Capacity develops over time through regular practice.

## **Appendix E: Additional Resources**

### **About the Inner Development Goals Framework**

For more information about the research-based IDG framework, visit:  
[www.innerdevelopmentgoals.org](http://www.innerdevelopmentgoals.org)

The IDG framework was developed through collaboration between researchers, organizations, and practitioners worldwide. It identifies 25 skills and qualities across five dimensions that enable individuals and organizations to work effectively toward the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

### **About the UN Sustainable Development Goals**

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as part of Agenda 2030. They provide a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet. For more information, visit: [www.globalamalen.se](http://www.globalamalen.se) or [sdgs.un.org](http://sdgs.un.org)

### **Facilitator Development**

This handbook is designed for managers to use without specialized training in facilitation or inner development. However, if you want to deepen your facilitation capacity, consider:

Working with experienced facilitators in your organization or from external partners. Attending workshops on facilitation skills, dialogue, or group process. Practicing with easier activities before attempting more challenging ones. Co-facilitating with colleagues to share the responsibility and learn from each other.

### **Adapting Activities**

The activities in this handbook can be adapted to fit your context. You might:

Adjust the time based on your team's needs and available time. Modify questions to make them more specific to your sustainability challenges. Combine elements from different activities. Simplify activities for teams new to reflective practice. Add complexity for teams with strong foundations. The key is maintaining the core purpose of each activity while adapting the form to fit your context.

### **Working with HR and Sustainability Teams**

If your organization has HR or sustainability professionals, they can be valuable partners in this work. Consider:

Sharing this handbook with them. Asking for their support in scheduling dedicated development time. Coordinating your team's inner development work with broader organizational sustainability initiatives. Learning from their experience with team development and organizational change.

However, you do not need permission or organizational support to begin. Start with what you can do within your team and your current authority.

## **Final Words**

This handbook exists to support the inner transformation needed for outer sustainability. The activities and practices it contains help develop the awareness, values, motivations, and capabilities that enable effective contribution to sustainability transformation and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

You know your team best. Trust your judgment about what will be helpful. Start with what feels manageable. Build on what works. Adjust based on what you learn. This is ongoing practice, not a project with an end date.

As your team develops stronger inner capabilities, you will find that sustainability work becomes less of a burden and more of a meaningful contribution. The gap between values and action narrows. Complex challenges become more navigable. Collaboration strengthens. Courage grows. This is the long-term benefit of consistent inner development work in service of sustainability transformation.

The world needs the contribution your team can make. This handbook is here to support you in making that contribution as effectively as possible.