



# **Future thinking scenarios – how will youth work and youth sector transform in the future**

## ***Journeys to a New Life***

EU-CoE youth partnership  
Brussels, Nov. 23-24, 2016

**Ulrich Golüke**

**“Stop saying young people are the future,  
they are the present!”**

*(Young participant at the 2015 European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty).*

I interpret this quote to mean that **the young themselves** want to and should be at the **center** of future youth work.

The remainder of my talk and the interactive session is about one possible way that this could be achieved.

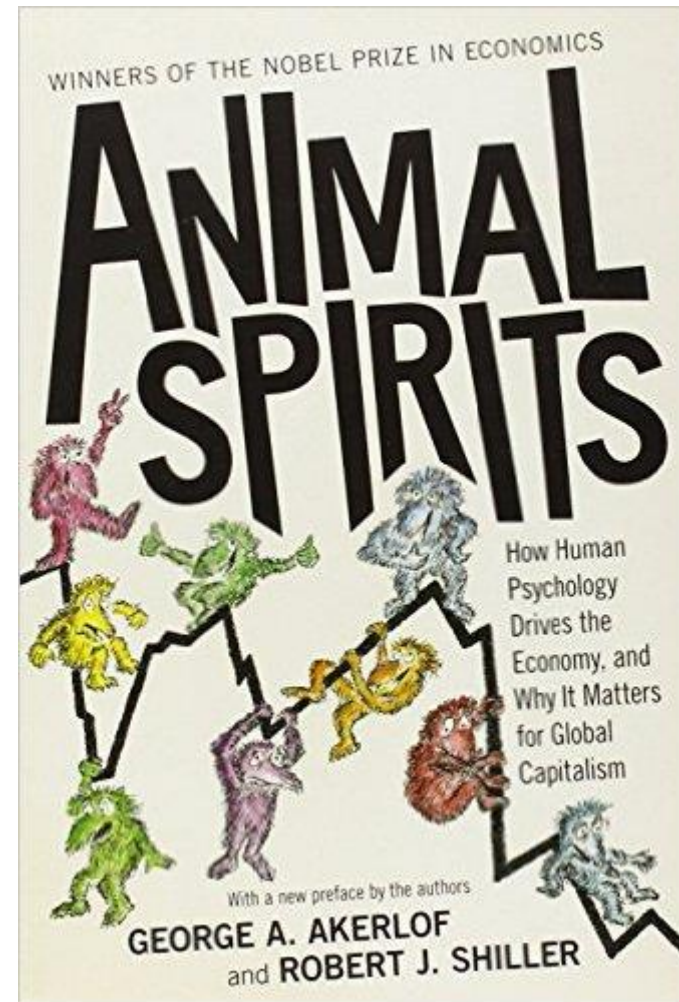
My suggestion revolves around:

# **the power of stories**

and how to harness that power  
for future youth work

## Future thinking scenarios: The power of stories

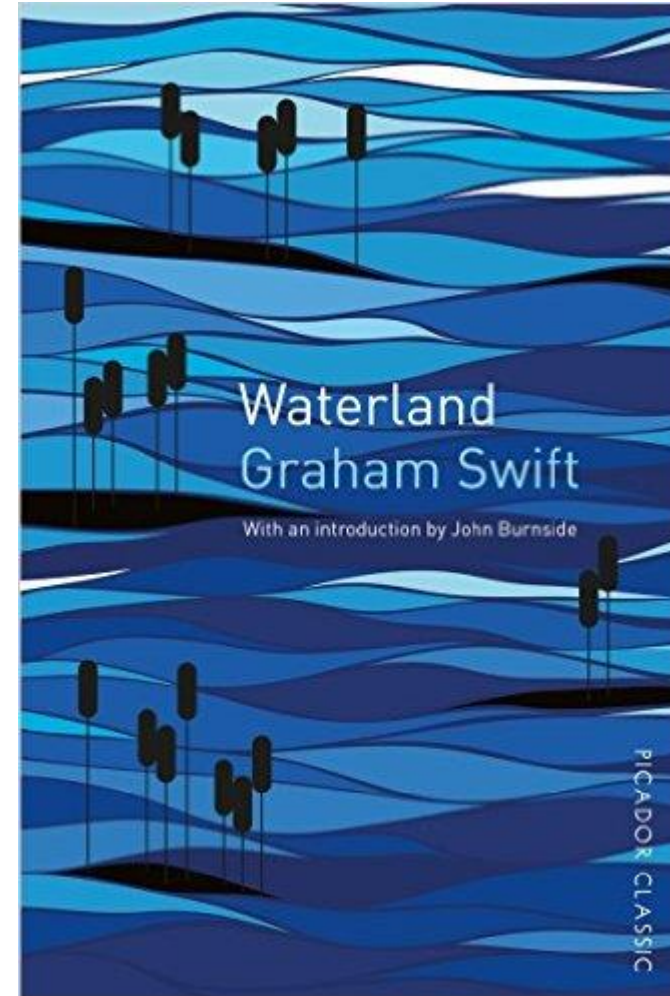
“The human mind is built to think in terms of narratives, of sequences of events with an internal logic and dynamic that appear as the unified whole. In turn, much of human motivation comes from living through a story of our lives, a story that we tell to ourselves and that creates a framework for motivation. Life could be just ‘one damn thing after another’, if it weren’t for such stories”  
Akerlof and Shiller: “Animal Spirits” pg 51



## Future thinking scenarios: The power of stories



"Only nature knows neither memory nor history. But man and women are the story-telling animal. Wherever they go they want to leave behind not a chaotic wake, not an empty space, but the comforting marker-buoys and trail-signs of stories. They have to go on telling stories. As long as there's a story, it's alright."



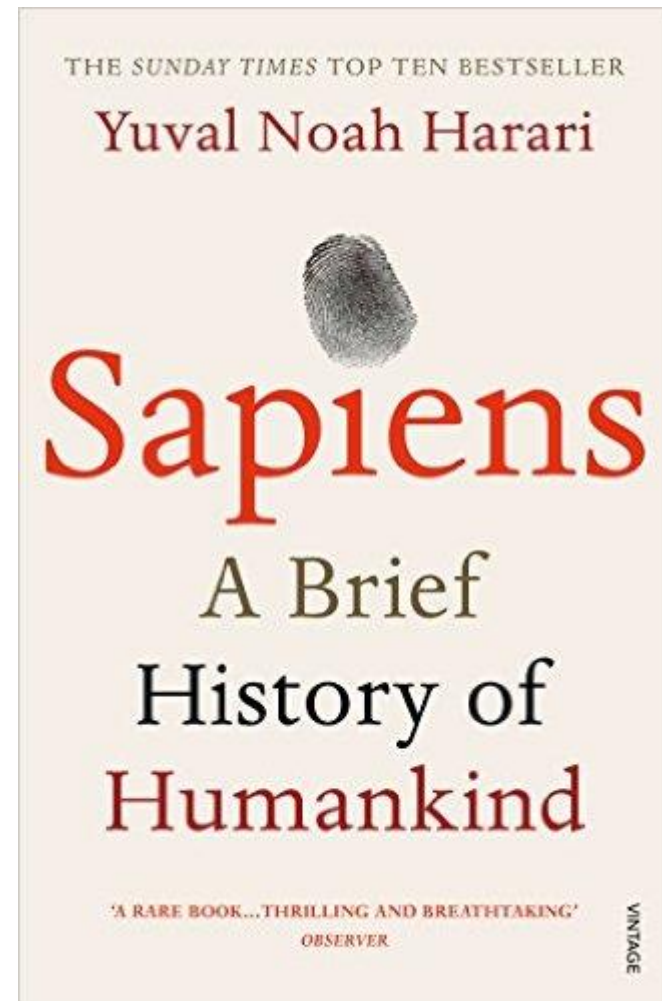
## Future thinking scenarios: The power of stories

“Any large scale human cooperation – whether a modern state, a mediaval church, an acient city or an archaic tribe – is rooted in commons myths that **exist only** in people’s collective imagination.”

Harari: “Sapiens” pg 30

“Unlike lying, an imagined reality is something that everyone believes in, and as long as this communal belief persists, the **imagined reality exerts force in the world.**”

Harari: “Sapiens” pg 35



# Interactive exercise

- 1** You cannot change the facts of your life, but you are free to arrange them to tell one story or a different one.
- 2** Some stories touch the heart, others the mind.
- 3** The stories you tell about the future determine what you do in the present.

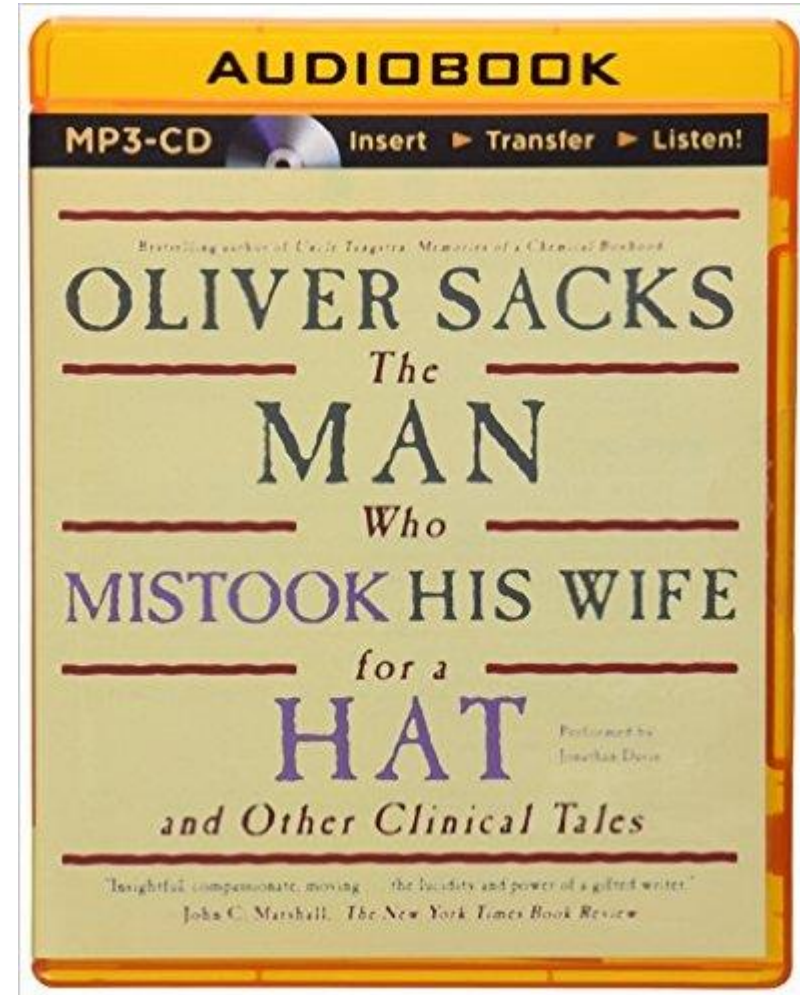


## Future thinking scenarios: The power of stories



“Very young children love and demand stories, and can understand complex matters presented as stories, when their powers of comprehending general concepts, paradigms, are almost nonexistent.”

Oliver Sacks, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat and Other Clinical Tales*



**1** Stories must be created, told and spread by those 'affected'.

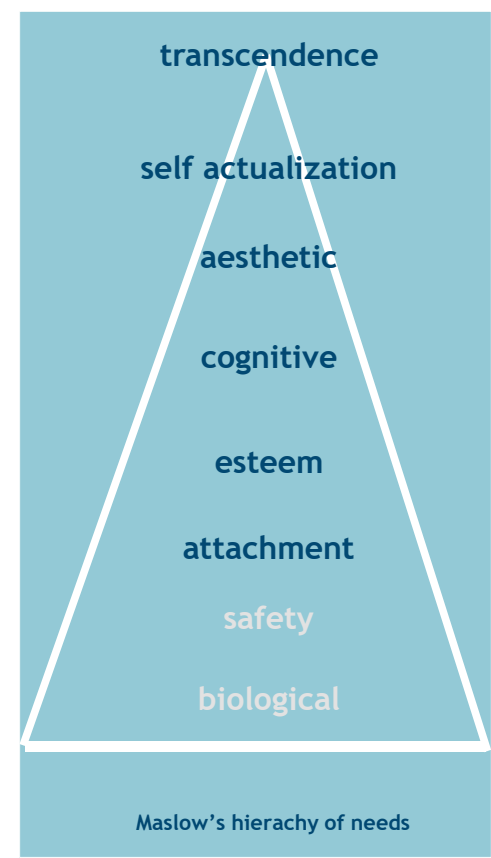
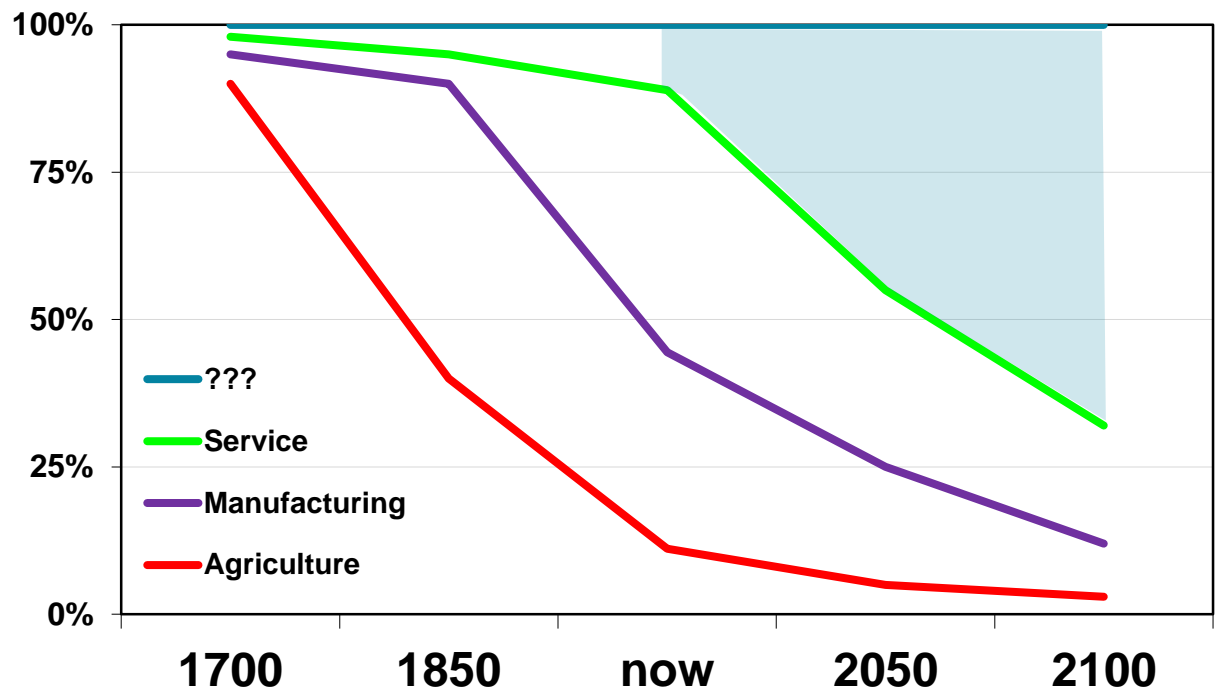
**2** They need to be authentic.

**3** They are negotiated agreements about what could be.

# Future thinking scenarios:

... negotiated agreements about what could be

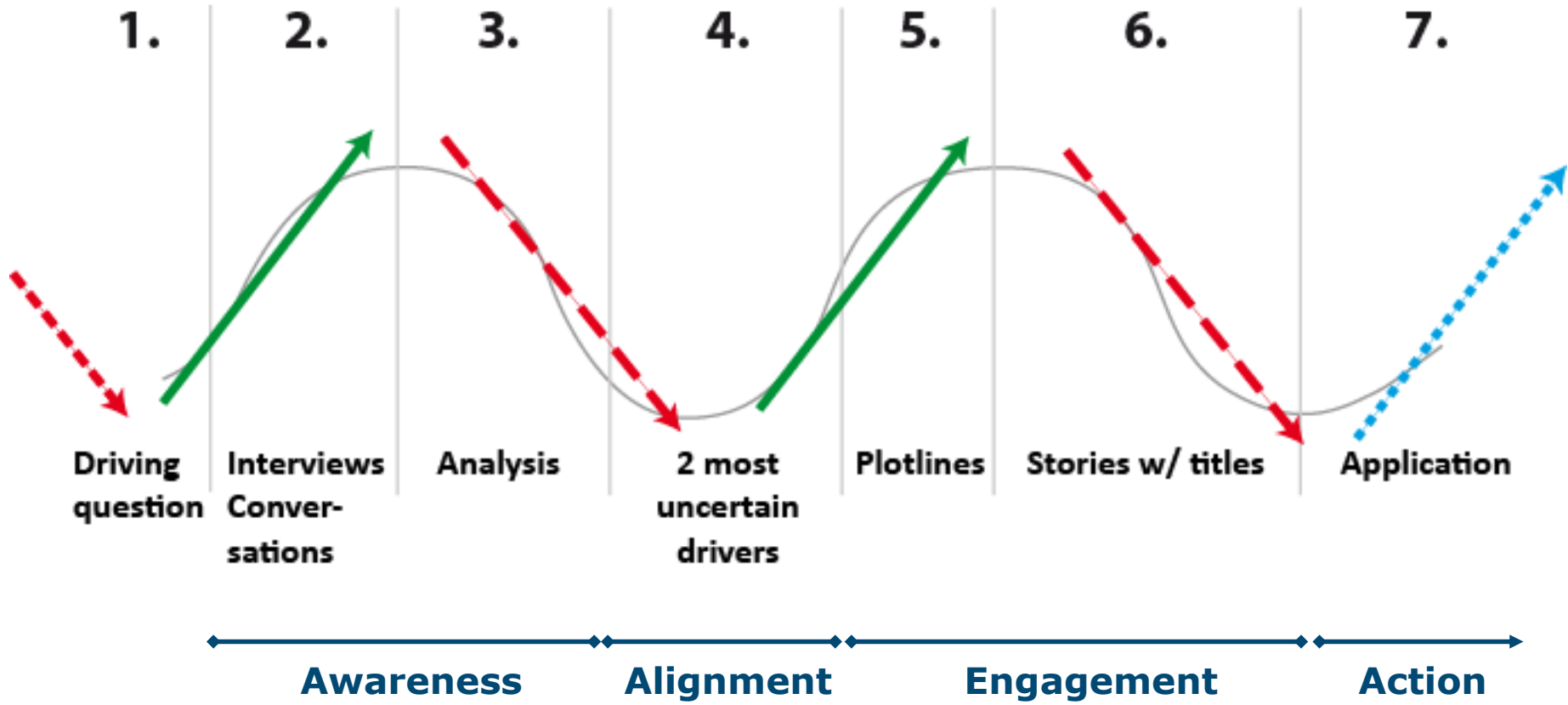
## We're no longer material constraint



Grübler, A, Technology and Global Change, 1998, Cambridge University Press  
 Lebergott, S, Consumer Expenditures, 1995, Princeton University Press

# Future thinking scenarios: Method

## Seven phases of scenarios



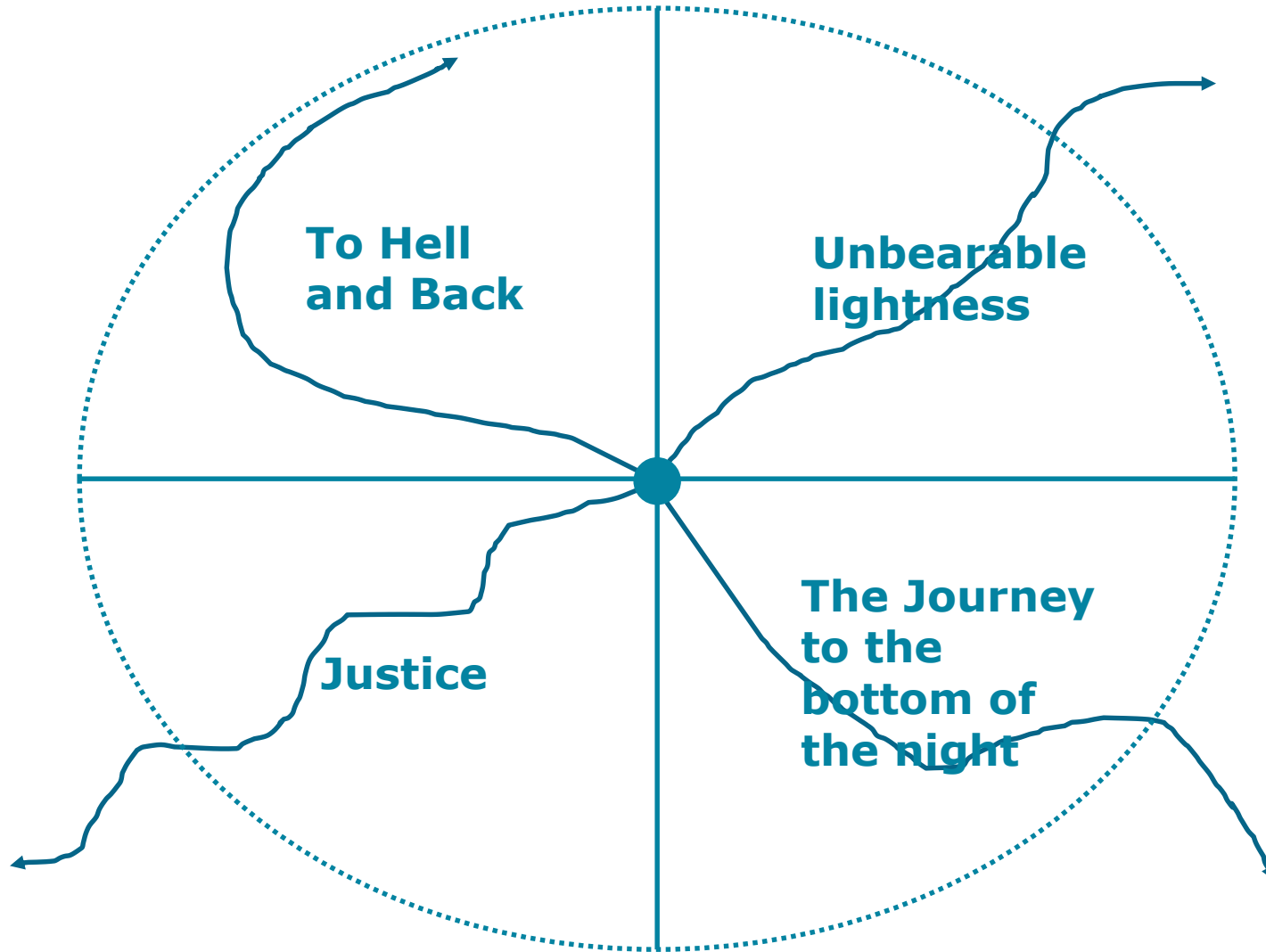
# Create a space of futures

**1** by choosing the two most important and, at the same time, uncertain drivers

**2** then populating the resulting quadrants with stories

**3** and finally using the stories about the future as a sounding board to make better decisions for adapting, shaping and transforming.

# Future thinking scenarios: Method



# Application

Adapting to the future

Shaping the future

Transforming the future

## Application Matrix: Adapt

If I were to take decision 1, how would that play out for me, if scenario A came true?

	Scenario A	Scenario B	Scenario C	Scenario D
Decision 1	++	--	++	++
Decision 2	--	-	-	++
Decision 3	-	-	+	?
Decision 4	?	++	--	+
Decision 5	--	+	++	?
...	+	-	?	+
Decision n	+	++	+	++



## Application Matrix: Shape

If I were to take decision 1, how would that play out for me, if scenario A came true?

	Scenario A	Scenario B	Scenario C	Scenario D
Decision 1	++	--	++	++
Decision 2	--	-	-	++
Decision 3	-	-	+	?
Decision 4	?	++	--	+
Decision 5	--	+	++	?
...	+	-	?	+
Decision n	+	++	+	++

## Application Matrix: Transform

If I were to take decision 1, **would that make scenario A more likely in reality?**

	Scenario A	Scenario B	Scenario C	Scenario D
Decision 1	-	--	++	+
Decision 2	-	++	-	--
Decision 3	++	++	++	++
Decision 4	+	-	++	?
Decision 5	-	?	?	+
...	++	--	+	+
Decision n	+	+	?	--

## Future thinking scenarios: **Process**

# Scenario work

Learning vs. applying; self vs. others

Scalability, minimum effort and  
marginal benefit

Diversity; remarkable people and experts

(Residential) workshops;  $24 \pm 4$

participants; core team: 2-7 people

Writing, communicating

# Scenario work

Isolated 3-4 day events  
empower individuals

Effort to change European policy  
Negotiating a common desirable  
future; creating counter narratives



**“Stop saying young people are the future, they are the present!”**

**Thank you**

**[goluke@blue-way.net](mailto:goluke@blue-way.net)**