

Learning Journey

What is a Learning Journey?

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Learning Journeys get us out from behind our desks and into the field, and let us see and hear from the wider system that we serve. We all see our own roles, wherever we work, through our own eyes and frame of reference. Our intention with Learning Journeys is to give leaders an opportunity to see and hear things through the eyes of others from another point of view, to go beyond the routine formality of meetings to a deeper, more productive dialogue.

Learning Journeys can be taken at any time. They occur when a leader or a team wish to learn something from another leader; when they are ready to open their hearts and minds and listen, humbly, to someone in another part of the system. Learning Journeys range from asking the *'how did you do it'* questions to the *'help us creatively solve this systems issue.'* Journeys can be as creative as the parties wish. They always have a positive intention, and are designed to allow leaders to learn from one another.

Adam Kahane¹ introduced and trained us in the use of Learning Journeys, when we brought him and his team to NZ. Journeys are an integral part of his longer Change-Lab processes - where he brings conflicting parties together to dialogue. He and his team are exemplars in their field. See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vyRV15V9Tgc>

How we use Learning Journeys in New Zealand

New Zealand Leadership Teams have Journeyed to leaders across central and local government; policy and operational departments; to the health, science, justice, academic, natural resources and science sectors. They have exchanged journeys on topics ranging from systems thinking, managing change and stakeholder management. They last from one to three hours and are conducted on the premises of the leader being visited. The intent of each visit differs and is usually conducted to find out more about each other - at a level below the superficial. Journeys are more about heart and passion than they are about facts and analysis. They are honest conversations about hopes, challenges, fears, lessons learned and obstacles overcome, in a complex and changing world.

If you are being visited

Find a quiet space to host your guests for their Learning Journey to you. Share what you wish during the conversation. All that's required is your honest perspective. Your visitors may be interested in what's important to you at this time, in this role, in this part of the system - and perhaps what you've learned along the way.

Preparation by those visiting

Those visiting will have reflected deeply on themselves and their outcome and identified the questions to ask.

Challenging or confirming assumptions

The Journey is a reflective one and designed to surface the mental models, assumptions and beliefs of those taking it. This involves people crafting their own questions, then identifying whether the questions *'confirm'* or *'challenge'* their existing assumptions, prejudices and biases². They may even be un-learning some of their habitual communication behaviours as they take the Journey.

For further information

The intention of a Learning Journey is to challenge ourselves³ - not to change or make assumptions about anyone else. This is the underpinning philosophy of Learning Journeys.

To create or conduct a Learning Journey either within your own organisation or to another - **contact Jane McCann:**

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We are accredited in Adam Kahane's Change-Lab Methodology

¹ Kahane, Adam (2007) Solving Tough Problems: An Open Way of Talking, Listening and Creating New Realities.

² Kahneman, Daniel (2011) Thinking, Fast and Slow, Penguin Group. See his TED lecture.

³ Kahane, Adam (2010) Power and Love: A Theory and Practice of Social Change. See him on Youtube.