

Foundational Undergirding of ICA Methodology

The foundation of all (ICA) methods is the life understanding Soren Kierkegaard wrote in his book, *Sickness Unto Death*.

Kierkegaard "described the self as a series of relationships or awarenesses that observed what was going on in life, reacted internally to those observations, created meaning or insight out of both of these, and drew out the implications or decisions implicit in that insight or meaning",¹ more concisely summarized by ICA in the phrase "The self is a relation, which in relating itself to itself, and willing itself to be itself, is grounded transparently in the power which posited it." It is this phrase which the four arrows and box at the beginning of this collection symbolizes. The methods in the collection are all built on that foundation, and each include the four different levels of that journey.

The process that became known as the "Art Form" methodology was the first process/method based on this life understanding created by Joseph Mathews, to guide a group in reflecting together on some aspect of life, often using a painting or a poem as a starting point, that recreated that journey with the group. It worked well consistently with different groups and leaders using different topics or artforms.

This **Art Form Method** is the **foundation** that all the myriad creative process designs that have emerged in the past fifty years of our work were/are built upon. The four-level ToP Focused Conversation ORID method is a marvelous example of a method (or facilitated process) that grew out of the foundational art form conversation. The process design is what we use to facilitate that journey. In one sense we don't facilitate methods, we facilitate people, groups and individuals, on a journey of awareness about some aspect of life that touches its depth.

This brief description of the development of the Art Form Method is spelled out in more dramatic detail by Brian Standfield in his article, "The Evolution of ICA's Facilitation Methods" which is linked in this collection under Foundational Life Methods>Overview and History, and more in depth in Wayne and Jo Nelson's book, *Getting to the Bottom of ToP* listed in Resources.

¹ From *Getting to the Bottom of ToP*