Empowerment Principles
By Louise Diamond

In our systems terms, empowerment is all about Connecting the Disconnected. To move from a world of fragmentation and separation to oneness and wholeness, we access the Inherent Wisdom and Infinite Potential of the Field, and activate our Endless Capacity for Conscious Choice.

The World Bank, in its empowerment work, uses the following four criteria:
- Access to information
- Inclusion and participation
- Accountability
- Local organizing capacity

These categories are a good way of framing empowerment at every level of scale, from microcosm (internally) to macrocosm (the systems we are engaged with). I have adapted these four as a useful way for us to explore empowerment.

Access to Information
Internally, this means being able to tap into the harmony of the universe through centering, breathing, silence, focusing, listening, intuition, and creativity.

Externally, this means sharing the information you have, making sure obstacles to receiving and making meaning of information are removed, and trusting and eliciting the information in the system (Inherent Wisdom). This information is often embedded implicitly in culture and tradition, even if not apparent in rules and norms.

Inclusion and Participation
Internally, this means connecting mind, body, and spirit; recognizing all the parts have intelligence and need a voice in the system.

Externally, this means identifying and appreciating the differences that make a difference, and making sure that all have an equal place and voice in the circle.

Accountability
Internally, this means taking personal responsibility for your thoughts, words, and deeds, and the effect they have on others, and knowing how and when to forgive yourself and set the intention for ‘better next time.’

Externally, this means holding ourselves and others accountable for their actions and calling for apology, reconciliation, and amends when those actions have created harm.
Local Organizing Capacity
Internally, this refers to the self-organizing principle at work in our own evolution. We reflect on our own journey, understand our patterns, and stay present to what is emerging for our highest good.

Externally, this means trusting the self-organizing principle at work in the system for best fit with the environment and next steps in meeting the needs of individuals and the community.