



Approach

Rita Patel facilitates creative change through structured experiences. The purpose is to collectively build common ground in systematic processes and methods for a sound foundation to work and evolve together. Her work transforms culture and builds intersubjectivity for better relationships. The practices are designed to evoke exploration and discovery in a playful manner. Rita's approach is conversational and starts with bringing to the forefront an understanding of what we all mean when we say the same words. We live in wordsheds and language is how we create the world. Stories are the vehicles for sharing our world and the language of relationships.

By starting with specific words and prompts, people in organizations get at the core of their values and beliefs and can build cohesion and true community that sets the stage for co-creating a larger narrative as well as doing the daily work. Co-creating is only possible when we can meet each other with comfort in situations of uncertainty and unknown. This is achieved in deepening trust and psychological safety that unfolds by participating in the reflective processes. Communication – both listening and speaking – then occurs on a mutual plane leading to inclusion and a sense of belonging. From here, an organization's narrative culture takes a sound hold. The design of Rita's interventions has a systematic, concentric impact on the personal, interpersonal and organizational outcomes.

Background

Rita Patel, CPA, MPH, CWWPM is a visual and relational artist, founder of Experiments in Beautiful Thinking and Relational Waste. As an international speaker, coach and generative consultant, Rita works as a creative ally for individuals, communities, and organizations by designing bespoke projects to shift perspectives, transcend boundaries and reimagine new narratives. Rita's projects are both corporate and community-based inviting people to explore and discover their creative genius for vitality and collective social thriving through new ways and uses of storytelling. Recent examples include:

- 2019 – Upland Hills School, MI, Narrative Approach to Teamwork and Culture Change: Building a core identity and cohesion in culture via the Lexicon Map *"How can we understand what we mean by 'love-based' culture and how does it translate to new structure and communications?"* Coached leaders to guide the organization's understanding of their patterns in actions, experiences, and emotions to set a foundation for growth, internal operations, and external communications.



- 2016-2019 – Henry Ford West Bloomfield Hospital, MI, Narrative Approach to Teamwork and Culture Change: What is Relational Waste and how to reduce it (2016 in progress) *“How can we transform siloed views and foster an environment of belonging, safety, trust and caring that positively impacts patient outcomes and bottom line?”* Implemented a systemic approach of integrating personal storytelling in daily operations tied to metrics.
- 2016-2017 – Detroit Institute of Arts, MI, Daily Retreat: *“How can people transform their experience of time to feel it as expansive while enhancing wellbeing (foundation for public programming)?”* Developed a self-guided program by forming a sustained personal relationship with art as mediator and conversation partner for internal and public programming.
- 2014 – Partners 4 Health (as Subject Matter Expert in Public Health & Wellbeing at Mission Throttle), MI, Cooperative Care Model: *“How can we address the non-health care needs of individuals to improve care, reduce cost and increase self-efficacy?”* Managed process and developed a sustainable business model and multiple stakeholder buy-in through graphic storytelling.
- 2013 – Common Ground, MI, Wellbeing Leadership: *“How can we shift the organization’s strategy and policies, so they mattered on a personal level?”* Increased participation and engagement through personal meaning-making with new policies with individuals throughout the organization to ultimately provide enhanced care for clients in crisis. Foundation was personalization of the linkages between mental and physical health through food.

Rita’s MPH from Columbia University (Effectiveness and Outcomes Research) focused on quality of life. During her time at Columbia, she studied post-apartheid health care transition in South Africa. Rita’s past experience includes Executive Director of Michigan Wellness Council, SME in Public Health and Wellbeing at Mission Throttle and time as a consultant and in business development at Deloitte, Ernst & Young and Hospital for Special Surgery. She is trained in Conversational Leadership, studied Narrative Medicine approach, and is certified in Enchantivism and the Creative Problem Solving method.

Selected Trainings



- *Cultivating Creative Capacity for a VUCA World* – Workshop training to normalize discomfort in volatile, uncertain, chaotic and ambiguous (VUCA) situations and how to cultivate your and your team's generative toolbox.
- *On Play / On Becoming an Artist: Creativity, Confidence, Leadership* – Workshop training on understanding vital nature of play and applying practices of experimentation, divergent and convergent thinking, and sense making - both individually and collectively as a team.
- *Beauty as a Leadership Strategy* – Workshop training to apply practical approach sourced from experiences of beauty as a way to transform the way we see ourselves, our situations and our environments for presence and different decision making.
- *Relational Approach to Storytelling* – Workshop training that evokes experiences through story and narrative for moving from 'what we do' to 'who we are' to build greater understanding, community and cohesion as teams and an organization to impact operations and bottom line.

Selected Presentations

- 2020 - “Conversational Leadership: Cultivating Creative Capacity in a VUCA world” - Cardoner Institute Leadership Seminar
- 2019 – “Reducing Relational Waste to Improve Workplace Wellness”, Health Enhancement Research Organization, Portland, OR
- 2019 – “The Zeroth Waste: What It Is and How to Reduce It”, Michigan Lean Consortium Conference Traverse City, MI
- 2019 – “Reinventing the Annual Report”, Squirrel Advisors CFO Panel
- 2019 – “A Narrative Approach to Teamwork and Culture Change”, America's Essential Hospitals Webinar
- 2019 – “A Narrative Approach to Teamwork and Culture Change”, Henry Ford Quality Expo
- 2018 – “On Becoming an Artist: Creativity, Confidence, Leadership”, Cardoner Institute
- 2018 – “A Narrative Approach to Teamwork and Culture Change at Henry Ford Health System”, Relational Coordination Research Collaborative Roundtable, Harvard Graduate School of Education



- 2017 – "Do You See What I See?", PechaKucha, Detroit, MI
- 2016 – "Beauty as a Leadership Strategy", WIN, Rome, Italy
- 2014 – "Supporting Health Behavior Change for Your Staff and Consumers" National Council for Behavioral Health, Pre-Conference University Washington D. C.,
- 2013 – "Healthcare Reform & Wellness: Role & Opportunity of Community Behavioral Health – A Pilot Program" Michigan Association of Community Mental Health Boards Annual Fall Conference, Mt. Pleasant, MI
- 2013 – "Practicing What You Preach: Ethics and pragmatics in food system work: You can lead a horse to water AND make him drink." AFHVS/ASFS 2013 Annual Meeting Toward Sustainable Foodscapes & Landscapes, East Lansing
- 2009 – "Treasure Chest as social change", PechaKucha, Detroit, MI