



CoCreative

Staying **CALM** in Turbulent Times

*A Framework for Inner Reflection
and Collective Action*



STAYING CALM IN TURBULENT TIMES

The world feels anything but calm at the moment. We're navigating political unrest, cultural polarization, ecological crisis, and uncertainty about the future of our communities and institutions. Amid this noise, confusion, and fatigue, how can we stay grounded, especially when the ground itself seems to be shifting?

For those familiar with our work, CALM is a key framework to support successful collaborations and systems change. At this moment, we are asking people to consider how the CALM Framework—Connecting, Aligning, Learning, Making can help us center ourselves. CALM is about choosing a conscious path through it, one rooted in reflection, courage, and self-care.

Below we offer ways to apply the CALM Framework to support one's own system. To explore the framework as it is applied to advance effective collaboration and co-design, [download our free tool](#).

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CONNECTING: WHO ARE YOU BECOMING



It begins by turning inward, reflecting on, and reckoning with our better angels. Connecting asks us to consider who we really are beneath the roles, noise, and expectations? What values anchor you? What emotions are asking for attention? How does your unique lived experience shape the ground you stand on?

This is a call to connect to your deep self. The self that carries wisdom, wounds, and wonders. These times are revealing who we've been trained to be and inviting us to remember who we truly are so we can show up and connect with our values and purpose more authentically and make our presence known.

Reflection prompts:

- What (emotionally, culturally, somatically, spiritually) have I been carrying most lately?
- What does my body know that my mind has been ignoring?
- What gives me energy? What depletes it?

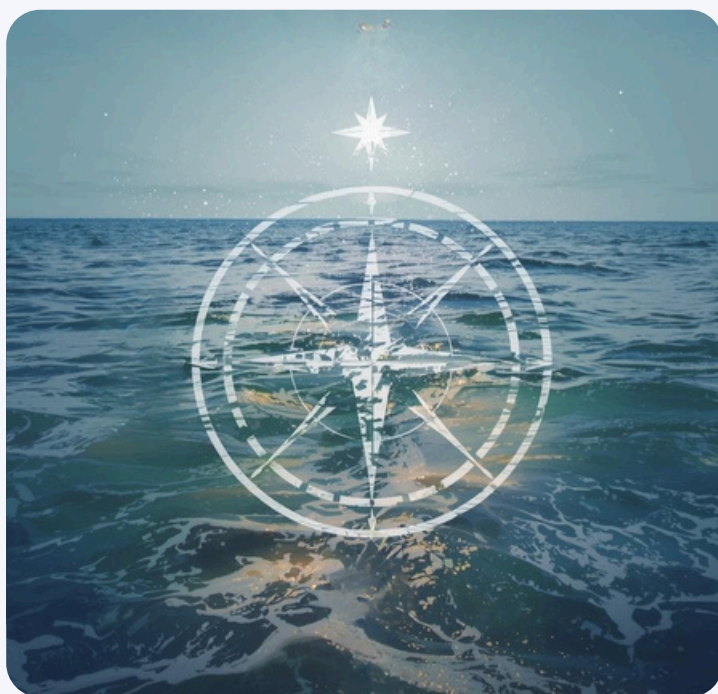
Connection is the first act of resistance against fragmentation.



ALIGNING: FOR WHAT & WITH WHOM ARE YOU WALKING?

Aligning in this context is about holding the larger picture and context in frame, while honing in on what our spirit is attuned to focus on. From a rooted place, we explore the opportunities that allow for a mutual gains approach to collaboration.

It's about using our social barometer and choosing to be in the right relationship with oneself and those around us, even across the traditional political, social, and cultural divides, to explore mutual opportunities for growth and shared understanding.



Reflection prompts:

- What is a/the goal that enlivens my deep self/spirit? What are the underlying interests associated with this goal?
- Who do we want to align with? Who do we need to align with?
- Who can I trust to help me navigate complexity?



LEARNING: WHAT ARE WE DISCOVERING TOGETHER?

In polarized times, learning can feel like a waste of time because we need to act now. However, unlearning and relearning are essential to shared understanding and transformation. Learning in this context means listening deeply—to stories, lived experiences, and truths different from our own—to recognize and adapt to cultural differences.

Reflection prompts:

- Whose voice do I need to hear more of—and why haven't I yet?
- What am I resisting learning about myself, my community, or my history?
- What conversations am I ready to initiate or enter?

Learning invites us into a future that's not yet known but is deeply needed.





MAKING: WHAT WILL YOU CREATE WITH OTHERS?

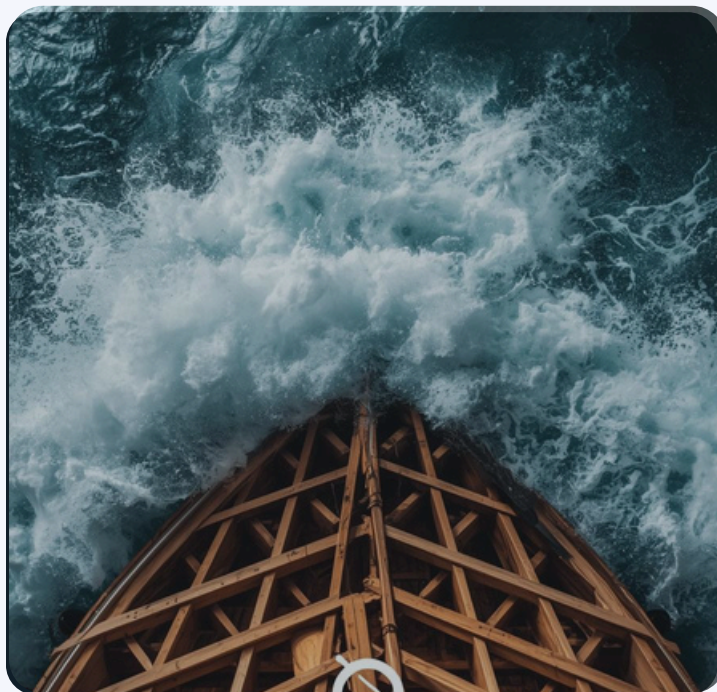
Now we ask: What do we need to build together?

This isn't just about innovation—it's about intention. The making agenda asks us to turn reflection into practice and values into action. It's about prototyping new ways of relating, leading, and living. This might look like community projects, healing spaces, creative collaborations, or advocacy efforts. It might also appear as new boundaries, rituals, or ways of working.

Reflection prompts:

- What am I ready to make real in the world?
- What needs repair before creation?
- With whom do I need to co-create?

Making is the commitment to move from what is to what could be.





FROM CHAOS TO CALM

We can't control the turbulence of these times—but we can choose how we meet them. Applying the CALM methodology invites us to move beyond our discomfort to seek ways of knowing. It's a compass for navigating life with integrity, community, and creativity.

Applying CALM helps people:

- Connect to your inner truth.
- Align with your purpose and those who help you grow.
- Learn from stories that expand your perspective.
- Make what the moment calls for—together.

In a world that feels like it's falling apart, this is how we build what comes next.

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BEING CALM

CALM is a living practice that asks for presence, humility, and courage over time. Whether you are leading a network, participating in a collaborative initiative, or simply seeking steadier footing in uncertain times, CALM offers a way to move with intention rather than reaction.

At CoCreative, we work alongside leaders, teams, and networks who are navigating complexity and striving to do work that matters. Through strategic advising, coaching, collaborative design, and facilitation training, we support people being in better relations with each other and the systems we are trying to change.

[Learn more about how CoCreative can help](#)

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