



TIDEKEEPERS: CO-CREATION FRAMEWORK

A CO-CREATED TAPESTRY:
CONNECTING PEOPLE AND SEA, AS ARCHIVE

SEA FOR YOURSELF: COMMISSION 2

LEILA &

HANNA



What We Believe:

We believe that stories are not resources to be extracted, owned, or polished into neat narratives. They are alive and in relationship with everything and everyone around us.

Some people's relationships to the sea is shaped by work, leisure, care, joy. Others by absence, violence, exclusion, grief, or power. They all hold many truths at the same time as we are curious about and celebrate this complexity.

Tidekeepers begins from this multiplicity. We are not seeking a single story of Plymouth's waters, but a living weave of relationships.

TIDEKEEPERS: AN ETHICAL MANIFESTO FOR RELATIONAL STORYWORK & CO-CREATION



Where We Come From

Our approach is shaped by who we are and what we and our ancestors carry. Hanna's working class roots and lived experience of growing up in care have given her a deep understanding of what it means to have your autonomy over your own life and stories taken from you. This has left her with a fire in her belly for questioning institutional power and who gets to tell their stories.

Leila brings lived experience of growing up amongst languages, cultures, religions and worlds which has given her an ability to deeply listen, work with and build bridges between people. Her experience as a diasporic, Amazigh Algerian British woman informs her approach and how she shares stories. Her family's stories, land and culture have been colonised and erased, leaving her with a desire to honour those stories that have been untold and remain in the body and the voice - kept alive by generations of people.

Together, these experiences shape a shared commitment to welcoming voices that are often unheard, not by naming them as "overlooked," but by creating conditions where people can speak on their own terms and be included.

Our Influences

Our ethics and ways of working do not come from a single discipline or tradition. They have emerged through our lived experience and roots, community practice, radical pedagogy, and land-based knowledge. What connects these influences is a shared refusal of extraction, hierarchy, and disembodied knowledge.

1. Pedagogy of the Oppressed & Radical Education (Paulo Freire and those working in his lineage)

From radical education traditions, we take the belief that knowledge is not delivered from above but generated through lived experience and dialogue.

Key themes we believe from this approach:

- People are not empty vessels - they are already holders of knowledge and stories
- Learning and creation happen through conversation, reflection, and mutual questioning
- Those most affected by systems hold critical insight into how those systems operate and hold medicine and answers they need to the challenges they face in their life
- Co-creation is an act of power redistribution, not consultation

This influence shapes how we work with communities: participants are not audiences, consultees, or “voices to be platformed”, they are co-thinkers and co-authors.

2. Wildworks Methodology

(Care, place, presence, and time)

Wildworks' approach informs how we pay attention and work with people responsibly.

Key themes we draw from:

- Long-term relationship over short-term impact
- Making space for slowness, uncertainty, and emergence
- Attending carefully to place - not as backdrop, but as collaborator
- Allowing work to be shaped by who is present, rather than sticking rigidly to an imposed form

This influence supports our refusal to rush story-gathering or force clarity too early. We trust that meaning unfolds through staying with people and place, not through extraction or efficiency.

3. Care-Centred & Trauma-Informed Community Practice

Our work is grounded in the understanding that people carry complex histories. These can be personal, collective, and intergenerational, and that storytelling can be both nourishing and vulnerable.

Key principles here include:

- Consent as ongoing, not as a one-off
- Choice over disclosure
- Attention to power, safety, and boundaries
- Respect for silence, refusal, and partial sharing

We do not assume that telling a story is always healing. Care-led practice means creating conditions where people can decide if, how, and when they want to engage - and knowing when not to ask.

4. Shamanic & Indigenous Traditions

Our work is also shaped by traditions that understand story, land, sea, and spirit as inseparable.

From these practices we take:

- The understanding that land and water hold memory
- That stories are relational - they belong to networks of people, ancestors, and place
- That preparation, intention, and presence matter as much as outcome
- That creative work carries responsibility

This influence brings humility to the work. It reminds us that we are not the centre - we are in relationship with forces older, wiser, and more enduring than ourselves.

Additional Lineages That Shape Our Work

While not always named explicitly, our practice also aligns with and is informed by:

Oral History & Community Memory Practices

Particularly traditions that prioritise context, relational listening, and narrator agency, rather than archival neutrality.

Feminist & Queer Knowledge-Making

These recognise:

- The personal as political
- Emotion, care, and embodiment as valid forms of knowledge
- The importance of partial, situated perspectives

Decolonial & Anti-Colonial Practice

Including attention to:

- Who controls narrative and memory
- How archives have historically excluded or distorted lived experience
- The need to sit with contradiction rather than resolve it



Somatic & Embodied Practices

Which acknowledge that:

- Memory lives in the body
- Story is not only spoken, but felt, made, and moved through
- Creative practice can be a form of listening

Craft, Making & Slow Knowledge

including textile traditions, communal making, and repair cultures, where:

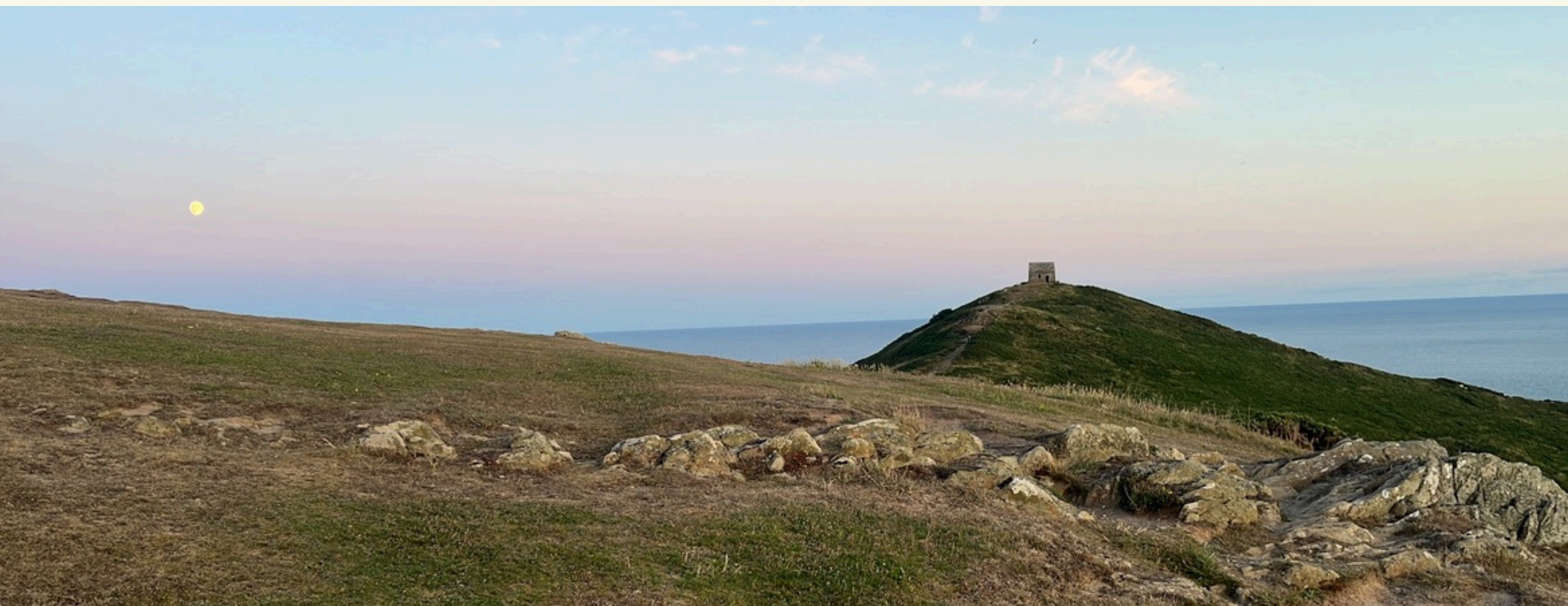
- Meaning emerges through repetition and touch
- Knowledge is passed hand-to-hand, not top-down
- Process matters as much as product

What Unites These Influences

Across all of these traditions runs a shared set of values:

- Relationality: nothing exists in isolation
- Agency: people are authors of their own stories
- Care: ethical practice is inseparable from how we work
- Multiplicity: many truths can coexist
- Responsibility: to people, place, and what is carried forward

Together, these influences shape a practice that is relational, ethical, responsive, and alive — one that treats co-creation not as a method, but as a way of being with others.



Our Storywork Principles

Care-Centred Story Gathering

We listen with attention, patience, and respect. Story gathering is shaped by the needs and boundaries of those taking part.

Consent-Led Storytelling

Consent is not a form, it comes through a relationship. People can change their minds, revise their contributions, or withdraw at any time.

Non-Extractive Listening

Stories are not taken away and processed elsewhere. Meaning is made together and contributors remain connected to how their stories live on.

Reciprocal Storytelling

We do not ask without offering. Exchange, conversation, and shared making are central to how stories are held.



Our Counter-Archiving Approach

Everyone Is an Archivist

We believe:

- Participants are authors of their own stories, and not subjects
- Archiving begins in ourselves - in our bodies, voices, and relationships
- Stories can sit alongside one another in equity, without hierarchy
- No one story is complete; many truths exist at once
- Absence matters as much as presence

Tapestry Storytelling

- Everyone has a story to stitch
- Stories are layered, interwoven, and relational
- Meaning emerges through overlap, friction, and connection
- Nothing is finished or perfect — every stitch marks a moment, a life, a relationship.



A Living Archive, Not a Finished One

Tidekeepers is not about completing the archive.
It is about keeping it alive.

The work has an afterlife and stories remain in relationship with those who shared them, and continue to speak to future audiences, communities, and caretakers.

This is how we feed the land and sea:
by honouring people, memory, and relationship.

How We Work: Co-Creation

Participants are co-creators.

Together, we:

- Share sea stories through conversation, workshops, and creative exchange
- Make and respond through material practices (fabric, sound, text, digital forms)
- Connect lived experience with historic material held in The Box archives
- Shape outputs that live in public space and digital form

Our approach is flexible, responsive, and led by those taking part. Methods emerge from context. Ideas shift. We adapt as relationships deepen.

We are excited by working with people, not setting frames in advance, but discovering what becomes possible together.



Co-Creation in Motion: How Ideas Are Formed and Shaped

Our approach to co-creation is rooted in relationship, listening, and shared responsibility. Rather than beginning with fixed proposals or predetermined outcomes, we focus on creating the conditions in which ideas can emerge collectively. Direction is not imposed; it is discovered through engagement with people, place, and the sea.

We begin by listening. This includes listening to participants' lived experiences, to the social and cultural context in which we are working, and to the land and sea that shape everyday life in Plymouth. Listening is not a preliminary step but an ongoing practice that actively informs the direction of the work. Early conversations, informal encounters, and time spent together help reveal what matters most and the guide us towards our next steps.

Questions play a central role in shaping direction. We work with open, generative questions that invite reflection. These questions are often developed with participants and evolve over time. As questions shift, so too does the focus of the work, ensuring that the project remains responsive to those involved.

Ideas emerge through exchange rather than ownership, and they develop through conversation. No single person or group is positioned as the author of an idea; instead, direction is shaped by what gains energy, what participants return to, and what feels meaningful to continue. We pay attention to patterns and tensions, allowing these to guide the work rather than relying on hierarchy or consensus-driven decision-making.

Making is treated as a way of thinking together. Material practices allow ideas to become tangible and testable. These practices create opportunities for people to respond in ways that do not rely solely on verbal explanation, making space for different forms of knowledge and expression.

Reality-testing happens gently and collectively. Rather than formal evaluation, we engage in shared sense-checking, asking whether emerging ideas feel true to participants' experiences, respectful of the stories shared, and appropriate to the context and place. If something does not feel right, we adapt or let go. Letting go is understood as a necessary and generative part of co-creation.

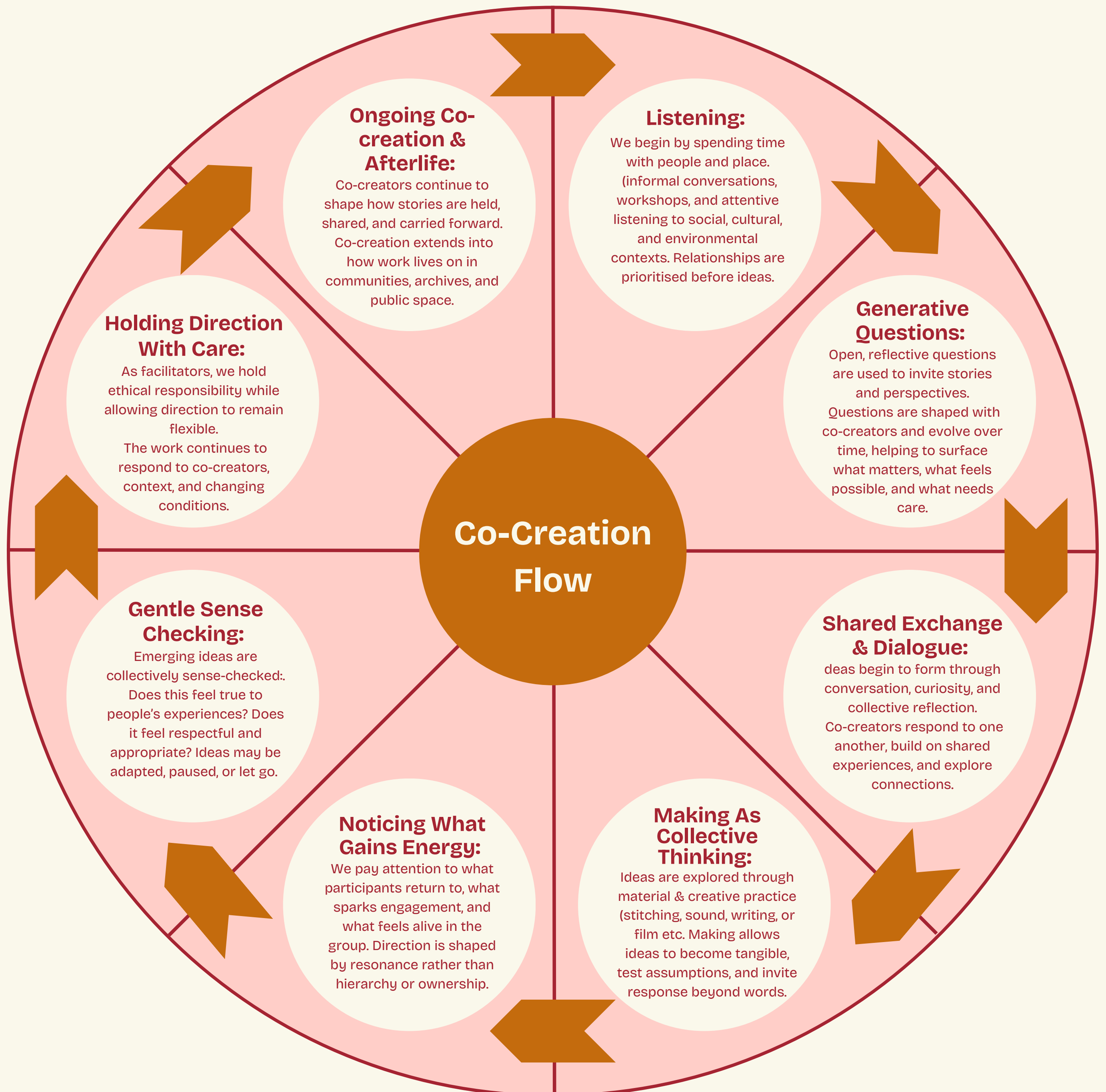
As artists and facilitators, we hold responsibility for maintaining ethical boundaries, ensuring care and consent, and keeping the wider purpose of the project in view. At the same time, we hold direction lightly. Co-creation is not a phase that ends once an outcome is decided; participants continue to influence how stories are carried forward.

Listening → Questioning → Exchange → Making → Noticing → Adapting → Carrying Forward

TIDEKEEPERS WORKFLOW OF CO-CREATION

How Co-Creation Happens: A Working Flow

This flow is not linear or fixed, stages often overlap and loop, but it shows how direction typically emerges and is shaped through the process of co-creation.



Guiding Storywork Principle:
Care-Centred Story Gathering
Consent-Led Storytelling
Non-Extractive Listening
Reciprocal Storytelling

RELATIONAL CO-CREATION AND COUNTER ARCHIVING AS A LIVING ECOLOGY

Tidekeepers works as a relational system rather than a linear project. Co-creation happens through ongoing relationships between people, land, and sea, informed by counter-archiving principles and care-centred, radical pedagogies

