



Engaging The Other

A 55-minute facilitated group Dialogue experience



WELCOME and CONTEXT (15 mins or less)

(Facilitator #1) (One sentence context statement relevant to the group, followed by two sentences about your self, organization, and desire to help people LIVE PEACE in a way most people never do.)

We are discovering that many people “want” peace but they don’t want human relationships. And that cannot be.

It is our experience that nothing replaces face to face relationships and real Dialogue with its new quality of deep listening to learn.

We’ve seen that “an enemy is one whose story we have not heard.”

(Facilitator #2) Another way to say that is that “story is the shortest distance between people” IF communication is good.

There are different kinds of communication – Conversation, Discussion, Debate, Dialogue.

(During the hour, project this graphic found at <http://traubman.igc.org/changechartsall.pdf> . You can also print it as a how-to handout for each participant.)

Dialogue is not:

Conversation – casual, superficial, safe

Discussion – from percussion, concussion – battling around well-formed ideas, waiting for what you want to say next

Debate – with a winner who is elevated, and a loser who is diminished, with the purpose to be right rather than learn or grow closer

Dialogue is so, so different, and involves a new quality of deep listening without “yes, but,” and with the intent to learn.

We listen as if the speaker is an expert who holds the keys to wisdom, the lifeline to our future. That is how we listen in Dialogue.



Usual communication:

100% Attentive (preparing to react) 100 % React

Somewhere along the line, we stop listening and start ramping up a reaction. The intention is often to assert, contradict, object, outdo, win, or dismiss in disinterest.

Dialogue:

100% Attentive (continuing to listen and learn) 100 % Inquire

In Dialogue, the difference is a new quality of deep listening, without “yes, but.” The deep, true intention is the motive to learn, expand one’s world, explore and understand the “other” with inquiry.

To comprehend as if there were to be a test, and the person is the teacher, the expert, the one.

(Facilitator #1) tells her or his story, from birth into a clan to interest in the “other.” (3 minutes).

STORYTELLING-LISTENING EXPERIENCE, introduced by the facilitator (20 mins)

Now you will have an opportunity to listen to another person's story in this way, and to yourself be heard perhaps like you're not used to being listened to.

It will be a very short time – just 16 minutes – and it will pass faster than you can imagine.

Please find a partner of your choice you do not know well, or even may not get along with.

Take one minute to move your chairs to a place you like, and face your chosen partner.

To begin, one will be the Listener and will **only** listen deeply to learn from the partner, the Storyteller, who will speak personally, telling your story – your journey through life that brought you to this place today, beginning with your grandparents, birth, or wherever you're comfortable.

As you speak, **especially include what you were taught to think about the "other"** - people who were not like you, your family, your people.

The first person, the Storyteller, will speak uninterrupted for 5 minutes.

Then for 3 minutes, the Listener will ask a few good questions: inquire, explore to learn more about what had meaning for you or for the Storyteller.

After 8 minutes, the Storyteller becomes the Listener, and the Listener is the Storyteller.

Don't worry about time; I'll watch the clock and inform you at each change-time during these 16 minutes.

Now begin.

ASSIMILATION, described by the facilitator (20 mins)

(Partners either stay in place or return to the circle in their dyads.)

As you're moved, please in pairs share what you experienced.

What was it like to tell your story, to be heard, to listen? What was the experience for you?

FOR THE FACILITATOR

Prepare the people to "begin finishing your thoughts" one minute before the end of each 5- or 3-minute period.

You may choose to walk among the people to monitor how they're doing, even reminding them lightly that "the Listener only listens, the Storyteller only speaks."

If appropriate, you may wish to take photographs to document the experience and pass your success forward to others.

During the closing assimilation, be patient and still while participants take time and slowly gain willingness to share their experiences. . .which they will, with growing confidence and depth as they hear one another sharing.

Ask very occasional, good questions if needed and additive.

At the natural end of the Assimilation, affirm the group and remind them that life in homes, on campuses, at work, and between groups and nations can be this way.

It's within our grasp.

It begins by sitting down with the "other" in a safe place, with a new quality of deep listening, and asking a simple question: "Would you tell me your story?"



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