

OPENING CONVERSATIONS

OBJECTIVE: To open our meeting with everyone having the chance to think, listen and speak. Opening conversations help to shift attendees to being fully present, sharing more about themselves and launching the meeting with deeper connection.



OPENING CONNECTIONS

Total Time: 6 – 8 min
Intention: Open the space, connect the room

QUESTIONS

- 2 min Read question, group writes response
- 4 min Each member shares ~ 30 sec. each

MEDITATION

- 5 min Play or read guided meditation

IMPROVIZATION EXERCISE

- 2 min Explain activity
- 4-6 min Group experience and debrief

QUESTION:

Choose a question from the next page and read aloud. Pause to give people time to think. Read the question again. Ask everyone to write a few notes of what they will say. Top of mind answers are best, don't overthink or analyze. Be sure to set the guideline that only the moderator may ask a question, no Q & A or discussion will be allowed.

When everyone is ready, ask them to shift back to listening and not be in their head shaping their own answer. Give the answer which first came to mind. As each person finishes, the moderator thanks them and invites the next person to share. It is often as interesting to notice and reflect on your own response as it is to learn about others through their responses.

Be sure to manage time effectively; If an answer is too short (one or two words) then encourage more of a response or stop anyone who launches into a long story. Goal 30-60 seconds each.

MEDITATION:

There are several apps you can acquire for your phone (Headspace, Calm, Insight Timer, Aura, Omvana) or you can find words on the internet to read a Guided Meditation to the group. If you utilize an app, the moderator can participate as well rather than just lead the group.

IMPROVIZATION EXERCISES

Many internet resources provide interesting and entertaining ideas for your group to engage with. (<https://www.theatrefolk.com/blog/improv-games-for-collaboration/> , <http://improv.ca/training/warm-ups/>) Standing exercises are helpful for creating energy in the room. They can be effective on retreat, to start a meeting later in the day, shake up the energy after a difficult conversation or recharge after lunch when people are tired.

Lighter Questions:

1. If I had to choose between losing the sight in one eye or hearing in one ear which would it be and why?
2. What are the three things you are trying to change about yourself and why?
3. Where have you achieved mastery in your life? What has that meant to you?
4. Take off your right shoe and tell us the story of where it came from or where it has been...
5. What are three words that you love to hear others describe you as?
6. Who are two people who have been a powerful influence on your life (NOT a parent)?
7. What have you have been working on to become a better leader?
8. Who owes you an apology and why?
9. Who is your favorite sibling and why?
10. What is one activity or distraction that is mostly likely to derail your good intentions?
11. What is the last book you read (to the end) and why did you finish it?
12. Who was your worst hire and why?
13. What is the best way to 'sweet talk' you?
14. Something (possession) I would hate to lose, and why?
15. What happened in last 90 days that you are very proud of?

Deeper Questions:

1. What are three words your father would have used to describe you when you were 6 years old?
2. Who do you still need to apologize to and what's holding you back?
3. When do you feel most lonely?
4. What is a powerful regret you have?
5. What legacy do you fear you might leave?
6. What is an important relationship you need to invest in or improve?
7. If you could know one thing about your next five years what would that be?
8. Whose funeral are you dreading going to?
9. When is it difficult for you to ask for help?
10. Would you rather have an amazing professional life and tolerable private life or the reverse – amazing private & tolerable professional life?
11. What is your strongest drive: learning, belonging, challenge or achievement?
12. What are your beliefs about a 'higher power' or 'spiritual world'?
13. What is too personal to discuss with most people? Why?
14. If you could get honest responses to three questions what would they be? Who would you ask?
15. What have you dreamed of doing that would be 'wild' or 'outlandish'?
16. What art would you most love to develop mastery in: music, writing, singing, acting, instrument, politics, painting?