

Berkshire Youth Development Project's

OPEN SPACE

Talitha Abramsen

It takes courage
to start a conversation.
But if we don't start talking
to one another,
nothing will change.

Conversation
is the way we discover
how we transform our world,
together.

-Margaret Wheatley

TODAY'S FRAMING QUESTION:

**What new conversations
can we have today
that will radically shift
our county's story
and
transform the outcomes
for all young people?**

**A new conversation
is the energy source and lifeblood of community.
In the absence of a new conversation,
we are sentenced
to have the old conversation
over and over and over again.**

***Repeating the same conversation
is the source of our cynicism.***

**A new conversation entails
the pursuit of increasingly powerful
and confronting questions.**

-Peter Block

The History & Simplicity
of
Open Space
Conversations

OPEN SPACE RECIPE

4 Principles

1 Law

3 Roles

1 Surprise ingredient

**Whoever comes
is
the right people.**

**Whatever happens
is
the only thing
that could have.**

Whenever it starts
is
the right time.

**When it's over,
it's over.**

**When it's not over,
it's not over.*

THE 4 PRINCIPLES of OPEN SPACE

- **Whenever it starts is the right time.**
- **Whoever comes is the right people.**
- **Whatever happens is the only thing that could have.**
- **When it's over, its over.**

*When it's not over, it's not over.

THE ONE LAW of OPEN SPACE

The law
of two feet
or two wheels



If people find themselves in situations where they are neither learning anything nor contributing, they are responsible for moving to another place—using their two feet or wheels to find a place where their participation is more meaningful.

The Three Roles in Open Space

Bumblebees:



Take the law of two feet seriously, and by example, encourage movement, cross-pollinating ideas/questions between groups. Ideas are carried from one group to the next to create new ideas.

The Three Roles in Open Space

Butterflies:



Bring the power of observation, silence and new ideas to the group. Not everyone joins the groups in Open Space, some flutter in the other Open Space and form a group of one to contemplate the ideas generated from the agenda. Moreover, leading and/or contributing is not defined as talking (only) within Open Space gatherings.

The Three Roles in Open Space

Turtles:



Rather than moving between conversations, or reflecting on their own, they find comfort in following their one main passion and remaining with that conversation for the entire session. They often add a consistent and grounded energy to the dynamic of the day.

**As we work together to restore hope to the future,
we need to include a new and strange ally –
our willingness to be disturbed**

- Margaret Wheatley

**A future of a community
becomes a choice
between a retributive conversation (a problem to be solved)
and a restorative conversation (a possibility to be lived into).**

**A possibility,
when declared publicly,
heard and witnessed by others
with whom we have a common interest,
at a moment when something is at stake,
is a critical element of communal transformation.**

- Peter Block

The Role of Open Space Leaders

- 1. Extend Invitation**
- 2. Select Location**
- 3. Document What Emerges**
- 4. Return Harvest Sheets**

Next Steps in Open Space

1. Leaders go and stand by topic to gauge how many people are attending your conversation.
1. Other participants shop around to see what conversation is “calling them” to participate and mark your name on the topic page.
2. Leaders then go over to the agenda matrix to select a location for your conversation based on the # of participants and post your conversation topic under the location slot.
3. Lead your group to pick up lunch and head to your location to dive in...

CLOSING CIRCLE: Note to Self....

As a result of today's gathering....

- **ONE** issue, question, or topic you want to **continue discussing** after today.
- **ONE action you intend to take** when you return to the office.
- **ONE a-Ha** (something striking or surprising)