

UU Writers

Embracing Possibility

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Facilitator Guide

Welcome

Thanks for leading your group on this journey. These monthly facilitator guides offer resources and suggestions to support you. You know your group best, so we offer options to choose from. And of course feel free to adapt the material or process to make it your own.

Remember this facilitator guide is a companion packet to the monthly Participant Packets. Much of the material (centerings, warm up prompts & check outs) in this packet is not in the Participant Packet. This gives you flexibility and ensures the material is fresh for your group members.

Finally, we want to acknowledge the gift you are offering your group members. Holding space for and cultivating trust among your group is precious work. Thanks for making those gifts of connection and exploration possible!

Andrea & Scott, *packet creators*

Preparation Tips

- Send out Participant Packets Ahead of Time. Getting them to your group by the 1st of each month is best.
- Send a reminder email about a week before your group meeting. In addition to reminding your group about the meeting day and time, it helps to add a brief personal note about the writing project you picked and why it's been meaningful to you.
- Some groups create a private Facebook page for their group members to connect throughout the month and share insights or challenges they are experiencing along the way. It's a great way for group members to support and inspire each other.

Group Agenda

With options and facilitator tips

Centering

Begin each meeting with a centering using one of the options below. Consider also lighting a chalice. Read the entire piece. You can find it at the link listed below. We can't print the entire piece in this packet for copyright reasons.

Option A: Turning to One Another, by Margaret Wheatley

Full poem at <https://101friends.wordpress.com/2013/10/31/margaret-wheatley-turning-to-one-another/>

Excerpt: *"There is no power greater than a community discovering what it cares about.
Ask: "What's possible?" not "What's wrong?" Keep asking.
Notice what you care about.
Assume that many others share your dreams..."*

Option B: For A New Beginning, by John O'Donahue

Full poem at <https://soulbridging.com/new-beginning-john-odonahue/>

Excerpt: *"This beginning has been quietly forming
Waiting until you were ready to emerge...
It watched you play with the seduction of safety...
Wondering would you always live like this."*

Check-in

Choose the check in option you think will resonate best with your group members.

Invite them to offer only brief responses.

The goal is for this to be a warm up not an extended discussion time.

Option A: "How have you been surprised by possibility lately?"

Option B: "Who taught you the most about defying expectations and unleashing your potential and possibility? How did their courageous living spill over into your own?"

Option C: "What is your first memory of dreaming a 'possible you'?"

Warm Up

- Read the following poem. Read the entire piece. You can find it at the link listed below. We can't print the entire piece in this packet for copyright reasons.
- Invite group members to spend 5 minutes journaling whatever comes up for them in response to hearing the poem. Encourage them to think of it as a free association exercise. Their reactions don't have to be a completed piece, short poetic responses, fragments of ideas or images are just fine.
- Be sure to alert them when about one minute of time is left.
- After the five minutes is up, have everyone take a turn sharing what they wrote or what came up for them *without interruption* or immediate response from other group members.
- After everyone has had a chance to share, open space for reactions to everyone's sharing. If your group meets for less than two hours, we suggest eliminating this response round so there is enough time to share and focus on the core writing projects.

Warm Up Poem:

V'ahavta, by Aurora Levins Morales

Full poem at <http://www.auroralevinsmorales.com/main-blog/vahavta>

Excerpt: *"Say these words when you lie down and when you rise up,
when you go out and when you return...
Inscribe them on your doorposts:
Another world is possible..."*

Project Sharing and Response

- *In the Participant Packets, group members are given 3-4 writing project prompts/exercises.*
- *We suggest using two rounds of sharing.*
- *During the first round, invite each member to take a turn sharing why they choose the exercise they did and then share the piece they wrote.*
- *During the second round of sharing, invite members to each take a turn lifting up gratitude for one or two of their fellow group members' pieces that personally struck them the most and how those writings took them back to a forgotten memory or opened them up to a new insight.*
- *If you want to be less structured during this second round, feel free to just open up time for general and free flowing responses and discussion.*
- ***Important:*** *Whatever approach you use, remind group members that this is not a writing **critique** group. We are not trying to advise each other about how to write better. We are here to witness each other's journey, honor their vulnerability and speak about how the work of others had a personal impact on us.*

Checkout

Choose the check out words you think will resonate best with your group members.

Invite them to offer only brief responses.

Feel free to alter the wording to make it your own.

Option A: “It’s one thing to dream of new possibilities. It’s quite another to commit to making those possibilities turn into realities. As we end our time together, I invite each of us to briefly name one small step we promise to take to begin making our hoped for possibility a reality.”

Option B: “To honor the gift of our time together, I invite each of us to briefly name the dominant emotion/feeling you came into our meeting with and then the emotion/feeling you now are experiencing because of the sharing we’ve done.”

Closing Words

Option A: Suggested words by Soul Matters Team

“The minister Nadia Bolz-Weber writes, ‘There is more to see in myself than just what I look for. There is more to see in my enemies than just what I look for. There is more to see in this country than just what I look for. I need this to be true.’ As we part, may we honor the pieces of ourselves that also need this to be true. And as we allow ourselves to be surprised, may the doors we have shut be opened anew.”

Option B: By Rev. Scott Tayler, with use of and inspired by a quote from George Eliot (“It is never too late to be what you might have been.”

“May we always remember that it’s never too late
to be what we might have been.
May we have the vision to see the possible
in what others call broken, or hopeless.
May we truly trust that a new day can dawn,
as long as we travel together,
and remind each other of our dreams.”

Option C: The Humanity, Bravery and Goodness Calling Us Forth, by Rev. Sara LaWall

“When the pull to disappear takes hold
with all its harsh realities
May we conjure up that fierce love
to bring our hopeful vision into being,
Discovering the humanity, bravery, goodness
still calling us forth.
May we breathe into that story and make it come alive.”



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