



### **How to Plan for a One-day meeting and sustain the IV of hope conversations**

1. The role of the core team
2. Great questions
3. Commitment of a full day
4. Open Space methodology
5. Communication Architecture

#### **The Role of the Core Team**

It takes a close and committed core team to hold the focus of a sustained conversation. The role of the core team involves:

- Recruiting/inviting people to the conversation who are interested in or at least available for this conversation. Remember that powerful movements rarely start with the current establishment. They almost always start with visionaries at the periphery. (At one point Bill Gates, Lech Walesa, and Ted Turner were all dismissed by IBM, the Soviet government, and CBS respectively.)
- Holding a welcoming space conducive to in-depth conversation.
- Keeping in touch with participants before and after the conversation.

A strong core team emerges most often from regularly scheduled meetings over a number of months. During these meetings the team develops a deeper understanding of the subject, resources, related issues, Appreciative Inquiry methodologies, etc.

#### **Great Questions**

Dave Cooperrider, creator of Appreciative Inquiry is fond of saying, "We live in worlds our questions create." Great conversations are generated by powerful questions that elicit positive history and invite participants to look at the inner qualities they want to conserve and expand in the world.

The questions for the 2001 summit addressed the umbrella question: "What would it be like if Media were an agent of world benefit?"

AI questions do not ask, "how did it get so bad?" "What is the cause of our fear?" etc. The principle here is that whatever we ask about (how it got bad, fear, etc.), we get more of that.

## Commitment of a Full Day

This is probably the biggest leap of faith. Remember with IV of Hope, our intention is transformation. Transformation rarely takes place during a short post dinner conversation. It begins because people have an experience that moves them. Many of the most powerful conversations (The Summit, the Santiago retreat, Rhode Island), were at least a day long.

The schedule for one day might look like this (although if you have more time for walking and reflection, it will make for a much nicer day!):

**8:00** Breakfast  
**9:00** Opening remarks  
**9:30 - 11:00** Interviews  
**11:00** Break  
**11:30 - 12:30** Small groups introduce partner, talk about themes  
**12:30 - 1:30** Lunch  
**1:30** -- Plenary session to hear from groups  
**2:30** "open space" - people post ideas they want to work on  
**3:30** Groups gather around ideas they want to work on with others  
**4:30** Break  
**5:00** Present ideas to plenary  
**6:00** Final chance for groups to plan next steps, exchange contact information, etc.  
**6:30** or 7:00 Close

An alternate design incorporates aspects of the "World Café" model of conversations, but using strength based questions. In this design participants sit at tables of four for several rounds of conversation. At each round they either take up the same question or a new strength based question. While they are talking, they take notes / sketch on big sheets of paper provided. After each conversation, one person stays at the table as the host of the next conversation and everyone else moves to a new table. A one-day agenda might look like this:

**8:00** Breakfast  
**9:00** Opening remarks  
**9:30** 45 minute round of conversation  
**10:15** 10 minutes of plenary conversation  
**10:25** Participants switch tables  
**10:30** Tea break  
**11:00** 2<sup>nd</sup> round of 45 minute round of conversation  
**11:45** 10 minutes of plenary conversation  
**12:00** Lunch  
**1:00** 3<sup>rd</sup> round of 45 minute conversation  
**1:45** 10 minute plenary  
**1:55** 5 minutes to shift to new tables  
**2:00** 4<sup>th</sup> & final round of conversation  
**2:45** 10 minutes of plenary  
**3:00** Tea break  
**3:30** Open plenary about the big ideas in room and time for any invitations to action  
**4:30** Closing remarks by everyone  
**5:00** Close

Support for a day such as this requires:

- Copies of questions for each participant
- Worksheets for task groups (copied and distributed with one extra copy for a core team member.)
- Flip Chart paper and markers for open space (2 to 3 large pads is best)
- Core team agrees to follow-up with different members supporting different groups.
- Create and distribute contact list.

## **Open Space Methodology [www.openspaceworld.org](http://www.openspaceworld.org)**

In a traditional AI intervention in an organization, the core design team will work with the organization to create a dream and an explicit design to transform the standard practices and systems of the organization. In a "public conversation" people come from various sectors of a community because of a shared commitment to a bigger idea. The diversity of these groups requires that they have time to begin to create rapport and share some ideas so that a clear direction can be formed. Open Space methodology provides a way for this to happen.

In Open Space methodology, each person who wants to champion an idea writes it on a flip chart and announces it to the room, inviting others to join him/her in a specified location in the room. If there are too many ideas, time is allowed by those convening others around an idea to broker among themselves as to how to combine similar ideas so as to have a larger group to work on each idea.

The group is given a generous amount of time to talk through the idea and a task sheet to fill out that captures key points.

When the group has filled out the task sheet, a member of the support team makes enough copies for each person in the group and one person from the core team and hands them back to the group leader to distribute. This assures that everyone in the group is on the same page as they make their plans to go forward.

### World Café Methodology [www.theworldcafe.com](http://www.theworldcafe.com)

As a conversational process, the World Café is an innovative, yet simple methodology for hosting conversations about questions that matter. These conversations link and build on each other as people move between groups, cross-pollinate ideas, and discover new insights into the questions or issues that are most important in their lives, work, or community. As a process, the World Café can evoke and make visible the collective intelligence of any group, thus increasing people's capacity for effective action in pursuit of common aims.

### **Communication Architecture**

The key to sustaining these conversations is providing a support for their ongoing communication. Some aspects of this are:

- Genuine interest, outreach, and participation by a core team member.
- Creation of a listserv to facilitate communication among the group. (listserves are sometimes a part of a website package.)
- Follow up meeting dates for groups to meet.

Some unseen aspects of a successful conversation;

- The use of silence (short, reflective spaces) in which people can internalize what is going on for them.
- The use of films and art to deepen the experience.
- Time for the group to engage socially and to network with one another
- Reading materials that may deepen their understanding of a subject.
- There is a network of AI consultants around the world who may be willing to make themselves available to help with your conversation.

*Please keep us informed of your progress!*