

After the Dialogue: Reading, Reflecting and Acting Fear+Lessly

The Praxis of Fearless Dialogues: Where Theory Meets Practice

Creating unique spaces for unlikely partners to have hard, heartfelt conversations is the cornerstone and niche of Fearless Dialogues. In order for authentic and meaningful engagement to occur, spaces for lasting transformation must be created with intentionality, creativity, and purpose. The dialogue you just experienced was a model for the types of spaces we challenge you to create in your own contexts—three feet at a time. As you convene others in reading and reflection on the book *Fearless Dialogues: A New Movement for Justice*, here are some best practices to engage in daily, to ensure that you continue to see, to hear, and to bring change within your three feet:

1. *Embrace experiences of unknowing and the possibility of failure as a gateway to discovery*
The fear of the unknown is grounded in a lack of information, which can often breed suspicion. Invite participants into a space of mutual discovery in which the unknown becomes a mystery to be collectively experienced.
2. *Stimulate the senses to enhance learning receptivity*
Embodied learning invites participants to take the journey from head (cognition) to heart (affection). Create a space in which you utilize various senses in engaging the text (i.e. playing soft music in the background as participants enter, or lighting incense in the space).
3. *Transition those gathered into an atmosphere that transcends time*
Fearless Dialogues teach us that powerful transformation can occur in as little as 42 seconds, if we are willing to focus on the quality of interactions, as much as the quantity of our interactions. Invite participants to pause before or after you engage the discussion questions, and to *see* one another.
4. *Incorporate disparate, dominant, and marginalized voices, sources, and resources*
There are gifts hidden in plain view, which require intentionality to uncover. As you read the text together, mine the group for those gifts.
5. *Recognize that the entire ecosystem in your community is a teacher and can release the imagination*
What would your community look like, if belonging were the cornerstone of the membership, and if all took to heart Parker Palmer's words to connect "soul to soul, and not role to role"? As you read the text, cast a vision with all members of the group that transcends the difficulties of your community, and embraces the possibilities and opportunities already existing in your community.

Reading and Leading Fear+Lessly: Guiding Questions for Reading, Reflection and Action Groups

Chapter One: Introduction

1. Now that you have experienced a dialogue, what truths will you establish as the guiding principles of your Reading, Reflection and Action Group?
2. How can you translate these truths into best practices in your community (p. 3)?

Chapter Two: The Fear of the Unknown

1. What critical pieces of information does your community need to access in order to raise levels of trust and confidence?
2. How do you balance the need for mystery with the need for assurance?
3. How can you translate “country dark” into a mystery rich with discovery in your community (p. 16)?

Chapter Three: The Fear of Strangers

1. Who are the strangers in your community? List them.
2. When have you been a stranger in your community?
3. How can you embrace crisis as the conduit of familiarity between strangers (p. 52)?

Chapter Four: The Fear of Plopping

1. Share an experience during which you plopped.
2. In what ways is plopping a cultural norm in your community?
3. How can you create space to receive the gifts and contributions of all the members of your community, even when those gifts and contributions are not requested, agreeable or even desired at the moment (pp. 81-84)?

Chapter Five: The Fear of Appearing Ignorant

1. What is the difference between the fear of the unknown and the fear of appearing ignorant?
2. Rather than filling space with empty words, in what ways can the art of questions guide your community when you are confronted with the fear of appearing ignorant?
3. Develop a set of three guiding, open-ended questions regarding the most pressing issue in your community.

Chapter Six: The Fear of Oppressive Systems

1. Who are the people in your three feet who require your care and attention? List them.
2. When you completed your 3-Feet Challenge following the dialogue, what did the three people you engaged teach you about yourself?
3. What is the systemic issue with which your community is contending? Locate the issue in the processes of nonresistance, resistance and confrontation from pages 137-140. If none of these processes (nonresistance, resistance, and confrontation) will lead to sustainable change in your community, what alternatives must you imagine and create instead?

