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PACING & TRANSITIONS PRACTICE

Instructions

The following are designed as "quick response" interventions, on the theme of pacing and transitions while facilitating. The way i run this is to get the group into small groups of 3-5 people, so you'll want to print sufficient packets for each group to have one. The packets are designed to be printed out and cut into quarter sheets, then compiled with a paper clip.

Give each group a full packet. Designate one person to start. Then have the person on their right read one of the slips aloud. The person whose turn it is then says what they would actually say (or do) in that moment as facilitator. They don't talk *about* what they would say, instead they say it *as if they were actually at the meeting*. Then the person to their left does the same thing, offering an alternative response to the same challenge, and so on around the circle until everyone has had a try at that scenario.

The group can have a bit of feedback and discussion if there's time and everyone is willing, but be careful to avoid spending most of your time in analysis instead of in practice—actual practice is generally more useful and fulfilling. For the next turn, the packet shifts to the left, so that the person who answered first becomes the next reader (and answers last).

I wrote the 8 scenarios below, and would be delighted to receive any more that you write. These scenarios are mostly oriented toward community living groups, but you could rewrite as needed to adapt for many other groups, as the basic facilitation challenges are similar. Enjoy!

The “Green It Up” committee is presenting their proposal for a new green roof on top of your common house/complex. Mara who is presenting is going into a lot of technical detail and you can tell that some of the audience are starting to tune out. What do you say or do?

(a)

It’s that time of the year again: the annual budget meeting. It went along ok at first, but now a few members are involved in an earnest conversation regarding one controversial line item and it feels to you as if that conversation is starting to go on too long. What do you say?

(b)

An ad hoc committee was formed by request of community meeting a few months ago to review how the participation system is going and make recommendations for potential changes. Now Sky is presenting the results on behalf of the committee. The presentation is moving along rather fast and you’re concerned that some members probably aren’t following all of what’s being said. How do you respond?

(c)

The meeting went long on one item early in the meeting agenda so now things are running behind schedule. You have two agenda items remaining that were supposed to get 20 minutes each and there’s only 20 minutes of time left. What’s your response?

(d)

Time has run out on the current agenda item but half the group still wants to talk about it. What do you say/do?

(f)

The group is doing some visioning and Lou volunteered to lead an interactive exercise as part of it. The group was a little unsure about doing the exercise to begin with, and then Lou's explanation was kinda confusing, so now some definite resistance is setting in. What do you say or do?

(e)

The group just had a tough discussion where a proposal someone was very invested in did not pass. Now they are done and it's time to move on to the next item, while your sense is that it would probably be better to take a break instead. What do you say?

(g)

The maintenance team has just presented a proposal about how contractors will be hired, and answered questions about it to most people's satisfaction. Time is nearly up on the agenda item and most of the group is ready to say yes, but Karen (who is smart but tends to process things at a slower pace than many people) still has more questions. How do you respond?

(h)