

Adding movement to our meetings

More than physically moving our bodies, adding movement to your meetings can be done by moving mentally, socially, emotionally, spiritually and physically. And a meeting isn't necessarily referring to something you do at the office, it is when a group comes together. For the purpose of this posting I've focused on traditional meetings.

Here are a few ways that I've added movement to meetings, experienced and/or seen it done...

Physically:

- Different perspectives: stand up and view the mapping chart or flipchart, lie on the ground, on a patient's bed, meet looking away from each other (back to back to back), change seats for a new view, stand on balance boards, sit on teeter totters at the playground. Constant attention to physical movement engages different physiological responses
- Senseless - close your eyes to 'see' differently, use ear plugs and listen with your eyes, wear mittens so you can't write. Use senses you normally don't: hold hands or stand shoulder to shoulder to create physically connectedness, heat and energy transference (hugs can work or not, as a greeting, parting, show of support, belonging...)
- Hang out in the kitchen or coffee room: have food and drink, healthy and local of course! Where do great parties always end up?
- Stuck in your chair or on an issue? Go for a walking meeting or host a standing meeting, no chairs makes for shorter meetings
- Use activity to heighten kinesthetic stimulation: do a modified New Zealand Haka, a yoga pose, stutter steps to invigorate, wake up, break patterns

Mentally

- Assume your assumptions: identify individual and team assumptions and test them as you work together. Share learnings and reflections to provoke new learning
- Tease brains with mental competitions, teasers, puzzles, case studies. Work cooperatively and use a sliding scale to reward the collaborative answer or for individual competition the best get rewards (could be professional development dollars).
- Put yourself in someone else's shoes: think like a super hero, a politician, a community member, a child, a competitor, a friend, a colleague (channel someone, thanks Barb!). Each person attending could be given or choose a hero/competitor/alter ego to participate as.
- Add process to your teleconference meeting such as ACE-it
- have everyone share learnings and reflections to provoke new learning

Spiritually

- Clear a space for everyone to be present: take 1 minute of silence to start the meeting focusing on personal connection, contribution and commitment to outcomes. Encourage everyone to be mindful in each moment rather than reacting immediately, have breath breaks.
- Value check-up: include individual reflection time on values/beliefs matching. Discuss personal values and organizational values, are values being displayed, are they congruent with the organizations?
- Encourage the inclusion of spirit: by sharing your own practice, asking about others'.

Socially

- Include group cohesiveness as one of the outcomes for all meetings: all wear the same thing to work. If you're a virtual community you can still do this and have fun with it, you may all choose to wear pajamas!
- Celebrate every time you meet: there's always something to commemorate it could be shared accomplishment or new beginnings. Do it uniquely by writing a poem with words you've collected from previous meetings (or the one you're in), hold a swap and save where everyone brings a 'gift' from home (nothing new, great way to re-gift) to give, draw a map of your collaborative journey and frame it, everybody gets to keep it for a week/month/year or you could make copies for everyone if it's a masterpiece.
- Play quick collaborative games: get people smiling and socializing.

- conversation not presentation, a one way street is not conducive to creating collisions, collisions (of ideas, cultures, processes, interests) are where conversations get interesting
- honour each individual's presence in some way
- listen and focus on the common – outcome, goal, connection, value. There is always something in common, even if it's that you're in the same room.

Emotionally

- Include laughter to: break tension, ease pain, enforce ideas, create new perspective
- Come with compassion: check in to see what emotions are being brought to the table (each person one word on how they are feeling, draw it, use emotion cards, act out one emotion and have others guess)
- Use art, culture and heritage to evoke emotion: use pictures, paintings, sculpture, dance, music to connect emotion with ideas and action.
- Involve cultural traditions and history: create a group 'family tree' (families draw emotion) to build emotional connection. Pot luck it with traditional dishes to share.
- touch on each person's passions to involve emotional exchange and engagement
- common emotion – find one?, talk about one you'd like to be common, bring one to the table and debate or dissect it with feelings and emotion

fourward ~ Karen Driedger, 2009 ©