

Gathering for Attention

This Gathering has suggestions for introducing sections. Some sections use a timer / clock.

Words of the Day

As people arrive, ask them to write the Words of the Day and put them in the basket.

I would like to pay more attention to ...

Opening

Chalice Lighting *“We’ll begin with the chalice lighting.” Ask for a volunteer.*

At a certain point you say
to the woods, to the sea,
to the mountains, the world,
Now I am ready.
Now I will stop and be wholly attentive.
You empty yourself and wait, listening. . .
Annie Dillard

The Basket *“Now we’ll read the Words of the Day. I’ll start and pass to the right (left).”*

Being Together

Sharing of Joys and Concerns *“Now we’ll share joys and concerns. I’ll begin and we’ll go around the circle. Will you go next?”*

Silence, holding each other in support *“Now a few minutes of silence” (2 or 3 minutes)*

Shared Readings *“I’ll start the first Shared Reading. Will you go next?”*

Attention without feeling, I began to learn, is only a report. An openness – an empathy – was necessary if the attention was to matter. *Mary Oliver*

To give one’s full attention is to look closely, to linger upon, to delve, to immerse oneself into something that at first seems “other” but soon seems “one with.” To give attention, in the end, is to be grasped. *David Seaburn*

I have always seen it as a kind of parental duty to show my own children beautiful stuff, and in so doing reveal to them an alternate world. *Nick Cave*

If we want to support each other’s inner lives, we must remember a simple truth: the human soul does not want to be fixed, it wants simply to be seen and heard. *Parker J. Palmer*

Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.
James Baldwin

Suppose people everywhere, simultaneously, stopped what they were doing and paid attention for only as long as it took to recognize their shared humanity. Surely the heartbreak of the world's pain, visible to all, would convert everyone to kindness. *Sylvia Boorstein*

What is this life if, full of care
We have no time to stand and stare.
William Henry Davies

There is no more time for pretending that everything can be all right without your care, without your attention. *Rev. Theresa I. Soto*

He's not the finest character that ever lived. But he's a human being, and a terrible thing is happening to him. So attention must be paid. He's not to be allowed to fall into his grave like an old dog. Attention, attention must be finally paid to such a person. *Arthur Miller*

That which you seek, you are. *Huston Smith*

Deep Listening and Sharing

Round 1. Deep Sharing. *“Now we share reflections on Attention and the preparation.” Begin, or if you're not ready, ask who can go first.*

Round 2. Responses and Comments. *After all have shared or passed, check the time. Say “We have about __ minutes for a 2nd round.” Begin your response or ask who can start.*

Closing

Closing Circle *“We'll go around the circle and say a word or sentence about what we are taking away from the session. I'll go first, and would you be willing to go next?”*

Chalice *“We will extinguish the chalice.” Read in unison or ask for a volunteer.*

We extinguish this flame and we remember the warmth of our community, the light of our wisdom, the generosity of our sharing. We keep these in our heart until we meet again.

Song/Chime *Ask for a volunteer.*

Announcements

The Covenant

I commit myself:

- to come to meetings when I possibly can, knowing that my presence is important to the group
- to let the facilitator know if I will be absent or need to quit
- to share responsibility for good process by watching how much time I take to speak, noticing what is going on for others, and considering problems if they occur
- to do the reading and thinking about the topic ahead of time
- to not gossip about what is shared in the group, and tell only my own story to others
- to honor the safety of the group by listening to what others share with an open heart
- to refrain from cross-talk, judging, giving advice, or advocating a specific view
- to share as deeply as I can when it is my turn and to stay on the “I-message.”