



PYE Third Thursday Assembly

April 21, 2016

* [Nilisha Mohapatra](#)

Dear Assemblers.. WELCOME to this wild, wonderful, and collaborative platform. We love how the the gatherings have been so far - full of wisdom, loads of goodness, touching stories, endless inspiration and SO much fun! Today is yet another opportunity to make it happen all over again.

Our topic for today is the personal journey of a facilitator. I truly believe it is one of those fields of work where the personal deeply impacts the professional, and vice-versa. It's a slow, sweet tango, with a fair share of twists and turns! We are excited to hear of how your journey has been so far.. what makes you tick.. how do you bring both aspects of your life together?

The GOALS, AGREEMENTS and CHECK-IN are posted below. I'll be facilitating this session for 90-minutes, but you're most welcome to share your thoughts even after that time. There will be a PDF transcript of the session, which we'll put up after a few days. Let's dive into the questions and case-studies. Let the magic begin!

* [Nilisha Mohapatra](#)

GOALS

- 1) To explore how personal practices impact our facilitation skills.
- 2) To support each other in strengthening/building a bridge between facilitation and our life.
- 3) To share some of our favorite practices that have helped us grow as a facilitator.



PYE Third Thursday Assembly

April 21, 2016

4) To connect, reinvigorate and have meaningful fun online

In order to achieve the goals (posted below), here are some suggestions for agreements to make our time together flow really well.

AGREEMENTS

1) No put downs of self or others. Keep a positive, lift-up vibe.

2) Share at your level. Everyone is welcome, no matter their level of experience as a facilitator or community organizer. All questions are important, and all answers (or further questions) are valuable. It is also okay and important to respectfully disagree with each other.

3) Show your presence, by LIKING and by responding to keep the flow. Ask questions, make comments, and connect. The technical trick for this format is to REFRESH your browser fairly often.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Barb Applepieski, welcome!

*[Nilisha Mohapatra](#)

CHECK-IN:

You are standing in the center of a room, and radiating a light that engulfs the entire space. What is that light like? What does it do? Describe it to us please 😊



PYE Third Thursday Assembly

April 21, 2016

[Nesreen Ali](#) The light is bright orange, with tinges of white and yellow. The light inspires everyone to get up, dance and hug! and we all get super excited about making shit happen.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Welcome, Nesreen! I love how warm and sparkly your light feels!

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) I'd say my light is sort of a mint green, with some blue stars! It energizes everyone, prompting them to engage in deep, meaningful conversations. And sing! Loads of singing!

[Nadia Chaney](#) Mine is mint green sparkles today. Soothing and energizing at the same time. Wish I could join you all today! Have a great assembly, Nil!

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Heyy! Same pinch on the mint green! Love it! Thanks for dropping by 😊

[Nadia Chaney](#) Whoa. That's something. That kinda blew my mind. We wrote that at the same time.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Sync zap! Looks like we are in the same minty zone today 😊

[Shilpa Setty](#) Thanks for your presence Nadia Chaney it did give a great start 😊

[Amber Hescocock Johnson](#) blue and shimmering as if reflecting light from a nearby pool or body of water

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) What does your light do to others?

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Welcome, Amber! That's sounds so serene!

[Barb Applepieski](#) Iridescent pearl blue, the inside of an oyster shell. It's a low-level shine today 😊



PYE Third Thursday Assembly

April 21, 2016

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) welcome, Barb! Thank you for showing up exactly as you are. The color does feel safe and cozy 😊

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Question 1 and 2 are up, peeps!

[Shilpa Setty](#) Mine is more of a mild white and it makes people around embrace in love for themselves and for each other

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Welcome, Shilp! So good to see you here ❤️

[Arindita Gogoi](#) Some kind of a white light which is making the space cooler; it could be because I am braving the New Delhi summers and anything that makes me remind of snow is dominating my thoughts smile emoticon

[Mayan Patel](#) A low burning ember.. Orange and woody.

* [Nilisha Mohapatra](#)

QUESTION 1:

What do you believe about your journey as a facilitator? What's it all about?

[Barb Applepieski](#) I believe I'm happiest when I'm helping people to realize and celebrate their creative potential, recognizing that this is emerging and changing moment to moment. For me this is about seeing and celebrating all aspects of myself in them. Each group like a prism or multifaceted gemstone.



Partners for Youth Empowerment

PYE Third Thursday Assembly

April 21, 2016

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Thanks for getting us started, Barb. I am enjoying the metaphor of a gem stone, and you finding yourself in your participants. What helps you keep up with the changing nature of groups?

[Barb Applepieski](#) a good co-facilitator who can roll with the changes, and a flexible toolbox of activities to draw from smile emoticon but most important: knowing where i believe the group can get to, and believing in that.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Barb Applepieski Ah! Holding out the vision for the group..knowing what they are capable of. Thanks for that powerful reminder. I'd really like for you to look at Question #3, and give us some pearls of wisdom 😊

[Shilpa Setty](#) It's a journey of becoming a better person always, to be accepting of myself with all my strengths and shortcomings and being open hearted to new learnings. It's like sailing on the river which takes us through all kinds of surprises

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) LOVE the sailing! Tell me you embrace both the flow and the choppy parts. Thanks, Shilp. What helps you meet the surprises?

[Shilpa Setty](#) An open heart; and I have come to know that I have become who I am now to who I was before only when I have been able to accept both the high and low moments of life

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) I believe facilitation is all about reaching real deep, loving everything we find or realize, and making it our gift. Going with the theme of metaphors today, it is about exploring the 3/4th of the ice-berg that we don't see. And all surprises turn pleasant!

[Shilpa Setty](#) I so agree with "all surprises will be pleasant"😊

[Nesreen Ali](#) my journey as a facilitator has helped me learn about human connection in a deeper way. as well has enlightened me to the value i can bring to groups looking for the answers -t hat are usually within themselves!

[Nesreen Ali](#) it's all about the good vibes.



Partners for Youth Empowerment

PYE Third Thursday Assembly

April 21, 2016

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) YES! all in the energy and connection! Love your perspective. What helps you find answers within yourself?

[Nesreen Ali](#) hmm - within myself? lots of meditation, writing and just observing the world around me in general outside of a facilitation environment.

[Nesreen Ali](#) building SHARP awareness is the linchpin of good facilitation.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Nesreen Ali That's a great range of practices.

[Arindita Gogoi](#) Sorry for the delayed response; I believe my journey as a facilitator is like that of an enabler - enabling mobility of mind and body of individuals that I work with. I seek positive transformations for people; happiness, self assurance and empathy. And what I receive in return is a reminder in humility since each day is a new day of learning.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) So glad you're sharing your thoughts now! 😊

[Mayan Patel](#) My journey as a facilitator is both my means of creating impact in the world and a pursuit of personal development. I grew up shy, quiet and was never comfortable the centre of attention yet I loved sharing knowledge. Over the years dancing and the arts my expressive voice grew viably strong enough to be an alternative to self doubt. That journey is something that I'm compelled to share. In the hip hop community we had a saying "each one teach one". In that rather than a top down approach we all hold wisdom to grow together.

For me facilitation is also a beautiful insight into individuals and shared humanity. It's worth it because I'm moved by the compassion, conflict, celebrations, risk taking, human experience in each other's presence.



PYE Third Thursday Assembly

April 21, 2016

*[Nilisha Mohapatra](#)

QUESTION 2:

Do your personal experiences impact your facilitation? Or vice-versa? When did you realized the connection between the two? How do they affect each other?

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) I'm curious about this question. I truly think we're going to find some gems through the sharing.

[Nesreen Ali](#) TOTALLY impact my facilitation. this happened the other day. it's good and bad. personal experiences of being exposed to different kind of people, art and food can be REALLY great for understanding the nuances of peoples responses. alternatively, bad connections or weird judgemental experiences can have a really challenging impact to your ability to focus on a group's needs. they can be good and bad!

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Lot's of insight. I hear the conviction in the 'TOTALLY'.

[Shilpa Setty](#) Yes, my personal experience affect my facilitation

Sometimes for good and sometimes for bad

When I have had a great experience in a particular setting or an activity, my belief is very strong and passes over to the group which has an additional affect to it.

But, in a way I'm restricting the group to have a certain outcome that I have experienced, and would not notice what actually is happening in the group, and bring it to their notice and I am also losing an opportunity to learn a different perspective

So I feel, It's very important to be aware of our experience to what happens in the group, so that it lets the group flourish to it's maximum potential



Partners for Youth Empowerment

PYE Third Thursday Assembly

April 21, 2016

[Barb Applepieski](#) Shilpa Setty this resonates with me! Many times I set limits based on how far *I* can go, to the boundaries that I have tested. I wonder how to build trust in myself to hold space for journeys that are unfamiliar to me...

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Woah you two! I am so enjoying the depth and awareness of the sharing. It's heartening to see that even a positive intention can be limiting! How have you been able to shift that?

[Shilpa Setty](#) Thank you Barb Applepieski, even I am finding ways to work with it 😊. One thing that has helped me is being curious and open to see what's happening and being okay with saying even I don't know but "let's talk about it to find out more"

[Barb Applepieski](#) I think it's also important to recognize that we may not be able to hold space for all journeys, but we can go on at least *this* one and ask the group... what tools did we use to make this journey work? how could these tools help us go on these other journeys?

[Shilpa Setty](#) And I have seen most of the times I am surprised by how the group gets what it needs

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Shilpa Setty ...and ends up providing a learning edge for the facilitator.

[Shilpa Setty](#) That's true Barb Applepieski I agree with you

[Barb Applepieski](#) Ah, thank you Shilpa Setty I will remember this - the innate strength and wisdom of the group, with all its skills.

[Shilpa Setty](#) Yes Nilisha Mohapatra that too 😊

[Shilpa Setty](#) Most welcome Barb Applepieski I got a few questions to reflect on as well

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) I am so grateful how you both are holding each other in this learning journey. And me! It's a precious moment. The depth of the connection between personal and professional experiences, is urging me to ask Q 4. Let's check that out 😊

[Barb Applepieski](#) My greatest strength is my history, and I try to make sure I let participants know that they do not need to compare themselves to me, but that their history is, equal to



PYE Third Thursday Assembly

April 21, 2016

mine, and their greatest strength. I believe we leverage our histories by being good storytellers and I hope that I can show them some tools to get their stories out there!

[Amber Hescoc Johnson](#) I love this!!

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Barb, that's beautiful! It has such a safe impact on me. I feel respected, acknowledge, and invite towards a meaningful experience.

[Arindita Gogoi](#) My personal experiences impact my facilitation a great deal. More the wide range of experiences in my personal life, more I am able to empathize with the group I am working with and also understand perspectives. It helps me be non-judgmental. Sometimes it helps me cite examples and narrate stories that may be different from their primary experience but holds an important thread in bringing in a new insight.

It has rarely affected my practice negatively...thanks to many of my mentors who have constantly checked me on restrictive perspectives.

[Mayan Patel](#) Yes. If I have the decision making power my choice of content and inquiries are ones that have given me personal insight. I pose themes or questions that are relevant to my life (and our lives) today. When I'm a participant I like to know the life application or why we are doing something.

*[Nilisha Mohapatra](#)

QUESTION 3:

Where does the source of your personal power lie? What feeds it? How do you access it during facilitation?



Partners for Youth Empowerment

PYE Third Thursday Assembly

April 21, 2016

Nilisha Mohapatra Nesreen Ali, linking to your previous response, what do you do when you realise you're facing a challenging moment with a group? How do you access your experience?

Nesreen Ali the group when they are being challenging typically feels like they have more POWER than you which can be really intimidating. grounding, breathing and mentally checking in for strategic ways to re-direct and/or close a conversation so there isn't that icky "unsettled" feeling at the end is important. i still struggle quite a bit with this, so i am always trying to understand how to manage that in a conversation.

Nesreen Ali i don't have much experience to draw on, which is part of the challenge
wink emoticon

Nilisha Mohapatra All experience is great experience! And i'm with you on the struggle sometimes. It's real. We had a powerful third Thursday gathering on the 'presence of a facilitator'

Here is the link to that: <http://pyeglobal.org/.../pye-third-thursday-assembly-a.../>

PYE Third Thursday Assembly: A Facilitator's Presence - Partners...

pyeglobal.org

Barb Applepieski I like to think I have great empathy or ability to "listen" to the unique reality of participants, but I know that it's always framed by my socialization and personal truths. To counter this, I use the trick of imagining each person as a very young person (five to seven years old), and then a very old person (over eighty), to simply see them as simultaneously emerging and wise beings. Cuts down on the socialized noise 😊

Nilisha Mohapatra That's a very unique approach. Positions me to view their strengths. I think I'm going to use this one personally, when I find myself stuck in moments.

Shilpa Setty Love the approach 🙌 Im totally using this approach

Barb Applepieski Practice when you are on the bus, or in any public space! It's fun 😊

Nilisha Mohapatra My personal power actually lies in my own journey.. of my first taste of facilitation, and when I am today. The message that constantly rings in my mind, is "It's



Partners for Youth Empowerment

PYE Third Thursday Assembly

April 21, 2016

possible" .. to find strengths, courage, and a compassion. It's pretty much a motto I repeat to myself, and turn my focus towards the center of my body. I feel most energy there.

[Shilpa Setty](#) My personal power comes from the courage to be vulnerable sometimes and to see my own flaws and work towards bettering it.. I must say, also patiently waiting and looking for my answers has helped a lot.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) This reminds me of the saying "Good things take time 😊"

[Shilpa Setty](#) About accessing my strength, i feel my strength is being who I am, that's all I can think of

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Perfect!

[Arindita Gogoi](#) My source of personal power lies in the 'belief' that this interaction is happening for a reason.

The reflections, participation of the group in myriad ways and their insights feed that.

During my facilitation I access that belief right in the beginning when we are discussing about agreements and intentions. Intentions allow me to have an access to the need and desire of the group and that further strengthens the belief.

[Mayan Patel](#) My Personal power is trust in myself and the groups wisdom.

The more I surrender to the ride and encourage us to be active, responsible and intentional the more powerfully alive I feel



PYE Third Thursday Assembly

April 21, 2016

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QUESTION 4:

Considering the deep connection how do you maintain boundaries between your personal experiences and your professional experiences?

[Barb Applepieski](#) My boundaries look like: plenty of time to rest and recover after a workshop (I am privileged to have this time and space), and finding time with friends to play and have fun, where I am not in a position of "leading". I sometimes use a journal to "vent" so I don't burden my partner too much, but I do need to talk about workshops after they happen.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) I echo a lot of what you're saying. Sleeping, is one of my favorite ways to separate all my worlds. I also often try to take the nugget out an emotional experience. More like, what am I learning here.. What is important here? It helps me keep the emotional overwhelm aside.

[Shilpa Setty](#) I do relate to both Nilisha Mohapatra and Barb Applepieski my personal favourite is talking about the workshop, spending time with my darling daughter, and reflecting on my learnings through the workshop and my next edge

[Arindita Gogoi](#) For me, if I am not able to talk to a like minded person, then writing down thoughts...some amount of silence works well for reflection. I also have been lucky to have an extremely patient and accommodating friend who listens to me patiently for about half an hour over green tea 😊



PYE Third Thursday Assembly

April 21, 2016

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QUESTION 5:

What are some of your go-to practices? Share a brief example of how you've used them, or parts of them, while facilitating. Though we've had a wealth of techniques shared across the other threads, I'd love for this thread to become a rich resource.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) A lot of doodling and splashing colors work like magic, for me. And running. I find it extremely freeing.

[Shilpa Setty](#) I love doing my spiritual practice, listening to music, and reading helps me as well

[Arindita Gogoi](#) Listening to music, walking through a busy street, and lying on my back on green grass staring at the blue sky work like magic for me!

* [Nilisha Mohapatra](#)

CLOSING QUESTION:

Tell us a song that describes your personal journey as a facilitator. Feel free to make it fun, or even share your own song!

[Shilpa Setty](#) "Quit playing games with my heart ❤️" 🎧 not sure if it's from boyzone or backstreet Boys



Partners for Youth Empowerment

PYE Third Thursday Assembly

April 21, 2016

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) HAHAHA! That's fantastic Shilp! For some very strange reason, I am now reminded of a Spice Girls number "Tell me what you want"!!

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) But otherwise, it is always this song that Charlie Murphy taught us during a 'Catch the Fire' training- "I will believe the truth about myself.. no matter how beautiful it is" ❤️

[Shilpa Setty](#) Nilisha Mohapatra I would love to learn it, any link to the song??

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Shilpa Setty I'm not sure. It's just this one line. I can send you a voice note of the tune 😊

[Shilpa Setty](#) Awesome!! Will wait to hear it 😊

[Amber Hescoc Johnson](#) Staying alive (I guess because I'm just starting to learn about facilitation and getting the basics)

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) YEAHHHH Amber!! I'm with you on that! I'd pick that song each day of my facilitation journey 😊

[Arindita Gogoi](#) I learnt these lines at Power of Hope 2015 and they've not left me since: Now I walk in beauty, beauty is before me, beauty is behind me above and below me!

[Padmaja Nagarur](#) For me it's this song from Pocahontas
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HvvZ1TEQRB8>

Pocahontas - Colors of the Wind (Disney Song)



Partners for Youth Empowerment

PYE Third Thursday Assembly

April 21, 2016

*[Nilisha Mohapatra](#)

Alright, beloveds! Thank you thank you thank you for this profound and lively session. I am in awe of all the gifts, strengths and generosity each of your brings to our gatherings. Our official time today is up! Sending lots of love and light your way. Feel free to keep sharing. We'll put up the transcript soon. Until then, have a great great day, and keep singing the songs we shared in the closing questions! ❤️

[Barb Applepieski](#) Thank you for guiding us!

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) It's an honor!

[Shilpa Setty](#) Thank you Nilisha Mohapatra for such an awesome session 😊 loved the sharings from everyone