



Facilitating Activism

3rd Thursday Assembly

Nadia Chaney: WELCOME to the PYE 3rd Thursday Assembly good people! To begin, and as people begin to head over to this page, please answer today's 3 PART CHECK IN QUESTION:

1) WHERE ARE YOU FROM? This is not an easy question for everyone. Please answer any way you like. Where you are from could be the place you live, the place you were born, the place your ancestors were born, the place your heart belongs or anything else that feels like YOUR answer.

2) WHAT IS ONE THING YOU LOVE ABOUT WHERE YOU ARE FROM?

3) WHAT IS ONE THING YOU WOULD CHANGE ABOUT WHERE YOU ARE FROM?

Nadia: I'm from Canada. I was born in Saskatoon, and now I live in Ottawa...but part of my heart will always belong to Vancouver. 2) One thing I love about Canada are the trees. TREES! I love their generosity, their protection and stature and especially I love how they grow and take the shape of their lives. 3) If I could change anything about Canada it would be to have a much more fair, just, and consistent recognition of native sovereignty, meaning recognizing the rights and priority of the ways of life that are traditional to this land before colonization.

Katie Jackson: Hello marvelous and creative people everywhere, I am from London and I love the energy and buzz of this city, but if I could I would change the fact that we all tend to exhaust ourselves all the time and there is a bit of a cult of 'being busy'. It feels like taking time to rest is a hard won privilege sometimes.

Amanda Milson: 1) I was born in Ottawa, Ontario Canada. I consider my being in this world, however, more than just a process of conception and birth into a geographical location. My heart belongs to all aspects of life everywhere. 2) I love the familiarity of Ottawa, I've spent the majority of my time here connecting with people from all over the world. 3) In my grandest ideals I would change the economic and political flows from what they are currently, to include a more sustainable way of distributing resources to the people in order to strengthen communities and opportunities.

Nadia: Hi Amanda! Great to see you here. I loved your poem at Words to Live By the other night

Amanda Milson: Thanks Nadia, I just love the spoken word community here in Ottawa

Tammy Lea Meyer: I am from Canada, I was born on the unceded Coast Salish Territory of the Matsqui Band, a member of the Stolo, in the Fraser Valley near Vancouver. I have lived all across Canada, but have spent most of my time in Vancouver, which feels like 'home'. What I love most about where I am from is the diversity, and the upswell of activism that is present in the communities I am a part of... It feels like so many people are working on so many important issues. The one thing that I would change about this place is a deeper sense of connection and an active development of the interconnectivity of the work we are all doing in an effort to work together more broadly on the work of changemaking.

Thomas Arndt: 1) I'm from Kirkland, WA. 2) I love the smell of pine trees flowering in the spring. 3) I'd help the people who got moved out for the new condos come back home.

Nakinti Besumbu Nofuru: I am from Bamenda, Cameroon. I love the hard working nature of the uneducated women of my community. These women toil in their farms/gardens all day everyday just to supplement their family's income, and to educate their children. If I have to change one thing, it will be making women to be proud of themselves.

Silvia Giovannoni Webster: 1) Hi everyone. I'm from Brasil, born in Rio. Brazilian blood runs strongly through me but I love the international life I've led and the opportunity to live in different places. 2) I love cycling through London, specially this time of year when winter starts to ease off and there are signs of spring in the air. 3) I would change the way urban land is used and get all local councils to increase the number of community gardens.

Cristina Orbe: I'm from the East Coast of the US. I don't know if I love anything about it. I do like the culture of directness. I live in Seattle now. If I could change one thing it would be the racism mixed in with the gentrification.

Roshini Bolar: I was born and raised in Montreal and Ottawa. I've traveled and lived in different parts of Canada. I've been living in Vancouver for the last 9 yrs. Part of me feels very Canadian and part of my Soul feels like it belongs to the world. I feel myself in different parts of the world especially Europe, the 'Middle East' and India. My ancestry is Indian and I feel very much Indian deep down in my genes. I need to be nourished by this culture often otherwise I don't feel quite right. What I love about Canada (but sometimes hate when it's in extreme) is how generally safe I feel. As a woman I can move around freely without fearing being harassed for the most part which is different than many parts of the world that I've travelled. And yes, like Nadia, I LOVE our trees and land. There is no place on earth I would rather be in the summer than in this country. It is extraordinary:) What I would change is oh, so many things.. I would have people be much more open to each other. We would not be so much 'strangers' to each other...It need not be so awkward...We could see past our differences in culture, background, persona...I would also just generally like to see more consciousness and desire to be awake and face our darkness within so that we may come back to balance within ourselves and hence within the world.

Amanda: That's very eloquently put, Roshini. Lately, I realized I spend entirely too much time in solitude. Although it's a struggle financially, with time, and other demands, it is so essential to become an active part of the world outside the 'daily grind'.

Tiffany C Purn: I am from Oregon, USA. I love the trees and high desert and ocean and beauty of where I live. And struggle with how far away from the rest of the world it feels at times.

Michele Health-Promoter: Hi Everyone - I'm Michele currently living in Toronto but originally from Trinidad. I'm a mixed race, bi-gender, queer identified person. I love what T'dad has given me culturally - creativity, music, language, passion but I wish I could change the inner critic that this place has ingrained into me. I'm not the most tech savvy person.

Sally Goodwin: I was born in Baltimore and I love that it is an urban outpost full of dilemmas of modern life embedded in the wild and vast Chesapeake Bay ecosystem. I wish I was from a place that was not based on invasion and colonization.

Eliza von Baeyer: I was born in Toronto, raised in Ottawa and lived in England, Germany and Sweden for periods of time. Said I would never live in Ottawa again, but here I am. Just about to be here 10 years since leaving for my undergrad. I love that cities can change. The Ottawa I live in now is not the one I grew up in...a much better place now! One thing I would change...for winter to be shorter!

Shalini Bai: Roshini Bolar - very well articulated. I so connect to what you like to change bit, thank you.

Neema Namadamu: I am from Bukavu, DRC. Bukavu is on a very large lake, surrounded by mountains, 2 degrees below the equator, at a mile in elevation, and is 82 degrees almost every day of the year. If I could change anything, and I will, it would be men's perception of women, and women's perception of themselves.

Nadia: Welcome Neema! Nice to meet you!

Neema: Nice to be here with you all. Found out about it by World Pulse.

Amanda Milson: It is certainly important to regard the everyday work we do, in all gender categories, as meaningful and fulfilling to our purposes in life.

What do you think are some important questions or thoughts to consider when starting this conversation with youth?

Nadia: Great question, Amanda Milson I'm going to start a thread on that topic.

Neema: Our activism is revealed as an expression of what is driving us inwardly. We don't have to "do" anything (though we do, do things) but the way we talk - how we say what we say - and the things we talk

about - the things we are passionate about - those things perhaps define us by others as activists. Just being yourself labels you an activist by many. It is who I am, what I am. It is normal behavior to me.

Michele Health-Promoter: @ Amanda: I think we need to acknowledge and validate that youth struggle to find acceptance and understanding not only from their peers but their communities around gender. That there are gender independent, trans, gender fluid folks in the space who might test us as facilitators to see how safe the space will be to have nuanced conversation about gender identity. That our approach about how to hold each other accountable has often been to silence and shame someone who has made a mistake rather than really using that moment as a teachable moment.

Nadia Chaney: Michele Health-Promoter the question of "testing" and the ways that people have to try to try to figure out if they are safe in a particular group is very interesting to me. I wonder when you have seen that kind of testing, and how a facilitator can accept, acknowledge and work with it?

Michele: Because my gender is so confusing to so many I tend to get tested between the time I first walk into the room and within the first 1/2 hour on average. It usually comes in the form of a joke or a question - sometimes "What are you?" or "I thought a woman was coming to speak to us" etc. (because I work in sexual health) I have also seen testing in terms of outright transphobic or homophobic comments. Sometimes it's hard to decipher where the comments is coming from but I usually try to address it in the same way. Seeing, and hearing the comment and thanking the person for raising a mis-conception etc that many people have and then addressing it with the group without shaming the person who made the comment.

Sounds like... "Thanks for raising a belief/a misconception/an idea etc. that so many people have." Then I ask a question "How many of you have heard this also?" "Do you believe this is a fair/unfair; true/untrue; problematic/not problematic idea/value/thinking etc". Usually there are quite a number of people responding and I ask " What might the problems with this idea etc be?".. Before you know it we're having a conversation about people's experiences, personal challenges etc and it isn't till the end of the conversation that I bring up the words transphobia or homophobia or racism or sexism etc.

Nadia: WOW. Thank you for sharing that with this group, Michele Health-Promoter. It's incredible how exposed and brave one has to be to hold space for this kind of change-work sometimes. Big respect.

Amanda: It's the process of trying, doing, and speaking that will help us travel the long road of reconciliation and relinquishment.

Nadia Chaney: In order to achieve the goals for this session (posted below), here are some suggestions for agreements to make our time together flow really well. We are still experimenting with this form, so be sure to add what you need or want AT ANY TIME DURING THE PROCESS.

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, connect. The technical trick for this format is to REFRESH your browser fairly often. Also, answer any questions in the COMMENTS below the question to keep the conversation organized.

4) You can come and go as you please, take as long as you like to respond, and basically enjoy the text-format to make this work no matter whether you are just waking up, just going to bed, or on your lunch break (time zones unite!!)

Nadia: So I think we're in good time to get started. We have about four or five people around, and hopefully more will join us soon. As you join us, please be sure to answer the check-in question below. Here are the goals for today's session. Please post any questions or comments you have about them:

1) To explore the idea of FACILITATING ACTIVISM. What are the principles, practices and tools that we can use to facilitate change-making and activism in our communities and in the world?

2) To build an understanding of how the Creative Community Model can help groups and individuals find and develop as activists. What are the strengths and what are the challenges?

3) To share activities and games that help groups find and develop their ability to take action in their communities and the world.

4) To connect, reinvigorate and have meaningful fun online.

Nadia Chaney: Here is the first discussion question (if you are just joining us, please check in, and read the Goals and Agreements below): What brought you to this discussion? What is your particular interest in facilitating activism?

Katie: I am really interested to learn more and more about how people around the world are using facilitation skills to give people a voice and to spark that passion in a person that leads them to want to stand for a cause.

Silvia: I'm interested in hearing from what everyone else is doing to facilitate social change (this is my interpretation of activism) and particularly working to change some of the patriarchal paradigms that affect teenage women and the way they relate.

Amanda Milson: I have wanted to 'get more involved' and 'be active in change' for a very long time. As Katie was saying, most of us live within a culture of 'busy-ness' and I have found it very difficult to make any progress outside of my daily sets of responsibilities. That said, I am a current student of anthropology, I find the world generally a fascinating place that has so much potential to give us meaning. My ultimate goal is to

work within communities to find sustainable solutions to long-standing issues of inequality. I find sharing knowledge, perspectives, and ideas to be one of the best ways of moving towards this goal.

Katie: I have a question - I am often frustrated by the fact that in my cultural context so many of my friends have a culture of being quiet because they feel that to be 'polite' and they don't like to make waves or rock the boat, but that silence is so harmful in so many ways. How do you really take the first steps in lighting that spark to tell people that speaking up when you hear something you don't agree with is ok? It's not rude, it's not reckless, it's actually quite necessary. I often fail to get my point across on that front and I feel that I need more tools to empower people to identify and express their own opinions.

Tammy Lea Meyer: I am lucky enough to be surrounded by activists, and incredibly motivated to engage in changemaking. I am inspired by this forum, and have always been inspired by Nadia's work in the world, both as a peer and a friend. I am interested in sharing stories of what people are doing in the world of activism, changemaking, and in socially conscious business models... I think that through us sharing our stories we can see that there is an emergent meta-story about a global shift of consciousness that is happening that is inspiring all of us based on our own interests, intentions, passions and the needs we see around us. I am most interested in hearing and sharing what people are doing so we can be inspired by each other, and can help each other to leverage our collective story into creative action.

Michele Health-Promoter: I am always so inspired by what folks outside of North America are doing with such limited financial resources. I learn and am learning so much about art as activism and trying to apply this in my work with young men.

Nadia: Katie that is such an important question. How CAN we have tough conversations and tell hard truths when there is a strong value on POLITENESS and MANNERS...sometimes I notice that people are made to feel like they are rude or annoying or wasting time when they bring up issues of justice or equity in a group.

Silvia Giovannoni Webster: Agreed! I feel this happen to me many times as a Brazilian living in London where the social norm in these situations is so different. How does one begin to effect change when there are such deeply ingrained cultural norms? Or even begin to see them?

Cristina Orbe: I work at FEEST and we cultivate youth to be leaders and advocate for health and equity in their communities. We do it in the context of joy and celebration. We aim to connect youth directly with people in power so they are influencing policy and using their stories to change the way the issues in their communities are seen and therefore the approach to solving them.

Nadia: Cristina do you have a link people can go to to learn about FEEST? It's such a fantastic model for sustainable community activism.

Cristina Orbe: www.feestseattle.org or https://www.facebook.com/feest206?hc_location=timeline

Roshini Bolar: Love what u said Katie. We are conditioned for the most part to NOT stand up for ourselves or 'talk back' to authority in any real kind of way. We are also brainwashed as a society for the most part to believe the people in power are out to protect us and have our best interests at heart. I am interested in learning how to stand up for myself in a way that feels good, while still be aware of how my inner conflict/darkness may be manifesting on the outside so it does not just become a blame game..

Katie: through PYE I have met loads of very inspiring people who model standing up for what you believe in in the most gentle and unaggressive way imaginable. I think that is a good start, making sure your tone is loving and caring rather than tinged with any self-doubt or anger.

Cristina: I think it's baby steps. You have to create a safe container for people to say and feel things without being shamed for differing opinions. I think if working in certain refuge communities you have to be aware that speaking up sometimes led to horrible things happening. It's often about slowly healing the willingness to speak.

Nadia: Yes, thank you Cristina. What do you think is the most important step to take to create that container where people aren't shamed for their opinions?

Cristina: At FEEST one way we keep it safe is no emotion is off limits...anger, sadness fear etc. You can express whatever you experience.

Katie: Interesting Cristina - I am sure that is brilliant in the right context and if set up well.

Cristina: Our community agreements keep it safe for all kids of all backgrounds and our staff models them in action and interrupts things if they are violated...we also train our youth leaders to do the same. Sometimes being nice is another way of creating silence.

Nadia: "Sometimes being nice is another way of creating silence." That's a keeper, for me.

Cristina: Katie, it takes a well trained staff with a deep understanding of social justice and building a strong enough vibe and community that everyone seeks to maintain it.

Katie: I am an introvert by nature, but if I ever feel reluctant to speak up I think about this quote: "In the End, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends." - Martin Luther King, Jr. Sometimes the silence of those listening is more powerful than the words that are spoken.

Shilpa Setty: Hi everyone, what brought me here today is curiosity to understand activism and see different activists and learn from them.

Nadia: Hi Shilpa. Great to see you again

Tiffany C Purn: My particular interest is how we stay connected as activists and facilitators. How do we continue to learn and grow and support each other so we have the courage to continue? How do we come together so that we are stronger in numbers? This is something I am always thinking about.

Nadia Chaney: **Discussion Question number 2: What are the most IMPORTANT QUESTIONS to ask when designing workshops or activities to facilitate activism? (if you are just joining us, please read the Goals and Agreements for this conversation below)**

Tammy Lea Meyer: Some of the most important questions to ask are: How can we bring people into the room in such a way that they can really contribute? What activities will this group engage with that can help them to get outside themselves and connect with others in a way that gently pushes their limits and is interesting/fun for them? What activities can be crafted to best activate the skills and intentions of the group so we can bring people onto the same page together? How can we make sure that divergent thoughts and opinions can be heard, especially those that ask the hard questions?

Nadia: Yes Tammy! Do you have a link to the "in the room" session that you facilitated, so people can learn more about the action you've taken to answer these questions?

Tammy: <https://soundcloud.com/tammyleameyer/intheroom>

Tammy: I am conscious that I am in a conversation with amazing facilitators...but I have not done a ton of facilitating in the traditional sense, although I have done some in my communities... and some of the challenges I have are in how to do activities that don't feel like too much of a stretch for people in community gatherings.

Nadia Chaney: Ah, that's a great Q, Tammy Lea Meyer. One thing I like to remind myself is to do my best to make offers that are fairly low-risk first (like check ins using simple metaphors, or artistic nametags) so people learn whether or not they can trust the group and the facilitator. Then I slowly add a higher and higher level of risk, as the group is responding.

Nadia Chaney: **Oh let's add to the wildness of an online convo! Here's the third question. Don't worry about answering them all, or answering in order. But if you are new to the conversation please be sure to read the Goals and Agreements below.**

"Never simplify what is complicated or complicate what is simple. Respect strength, never power." Arundati Roy

Do you agree with this quote? How does this quote apply to your experience of facilitating activist DISCUSSIONS in groups?

Tammy Lea Meyer: Yes! I think one of the things that stymies discussion is this urge to simplify things, as a result of our broad cultural training of the 'soundbite'. As an aside, often in group discussions one person will make an assumption about what a person has said, or be triggered by it, and not be able to hear what was

actually said. One of our biggest challenges I think is even being able to understand what someone is trying to communicate. That said, the culture I emerge from oversimplifies things to a detriment; we want to boil it down, and most things are quite complex, and of course interconnected with everything else. On the simple side of things, fundamental values and intentions are simple, pure, and don't need to be complicated! As is love. I also love where 'Respect strength, never power' takes me.

Amanda Milson: For me this quote surfaces much of the 'property' discourse present today. For example, the intensification of land was meant to simplify property rights. As we know, this seemingly simple construct overlooked the inherent complexities present in the land. To take this a bit further into the second sentence, surely it is the strength of an individual that ought to be respected in producing food, rather than the mechanized/industrial production methods present in contemporary agriculture. If we go back to John Locke's description of resource distribution, he says that it is appropriate to enclose land and intensify it as long as the products of the land do not spoil. This man's writing occurred during the conception of capitalism, and may now be used to dispel foundation of it.

Nadia: Amanda that is something I will chew on for a while.

Cristina Orbe: Ahhhh---how about deconstruct power. We talk about the different power that is in the world. Power over, creative power, spiritual power/universal essence....I work with so many people who are disempowered and saying something like don't respect power doesn't capture the nuance or the paradox. I'm a bit conflicted with the quote...but I love Arudhahti Roy.

Amanda: Good point. I too feel quite disempowered at times...I constantly have to remind myself that I'm doing the work now.

Eliza von Baeyer: I have always loved the writings of Arundati Roy and that quote speaks volumes to me. So eloquent and powerful in its simple message.

Roshini Bolar: I strongly believe that change must be healed and transformed deep from within our individual and collective consciousness in order to make a lasting change on the world at large.

I feel that many of us 'know' this but still fight and stand up against our own reflection. It's so tricky when we feel oppressed and need to throw this energy off of us, and yet cannot see ourselves in this negativity at all.

This is a Spiritual viewpoint, but I believe our problems stem from a deep Spiritual imbalance.

The disconnect between the inner and outer is part of what has kept me from actively going out there to fight it. I am in a different place now and I am exploring what my role can be as far as standing up for myself on the outside while still doing the work within to the best of my ability.

Amanda Milson: Another idea that has me captivated! I'm absolutely loving this model of expression! In terms of communication and technology on the rise -I believe- it creates one of two realities for the people immersing themselves in it. Either you find a way to use it to grow closer to others, or you use it to escape a reality you are not comfortable in. The same might be said for spirituality and religion. Or, quite possibly anything else. Acceptance of negativity is but one step towards a solution. In the conscious continuum of human thought and emotion, one must have acceptance of negative experience, as well as the love we feel deep within. It's bringing that inner creation out into the world that ignites the fire of the soul in others. The more reflections of yourself you can access the greater the insight you can attain. I believe in the power of transformation, and most recently I like to refer to it as shadowlight. This created term makes me envision a surface on which the sun is pouring through the leaves of a tree dancing in the wind. Multiple elements in combination, providing a naturally beautiful display of life. We ought to pay more attention to the ubiquity of life rather than fall prey to mass produced items of consumption. This begs the question, if humanity and the world had not reached this point of destruction, would we reach this point of engagement? What will be the outcomes? Will it be a benefit, or a loss? If we truly find meaning in this engagement, and pursue it with dedication everyday, it will result in something beautiful. Something known as Schumpeter's Gale is another notion I like to think about in terms of social movement and change. We ought to feel comfortable with the things we create and the things we destroy.

Like burning a forest to enrich the soil. Or more contemporarily, ending wealth accumulation in order to create a more equitable distribution of resources...

Nadia Chaney: Question four (no need to answer in order, but if you are just joining us, please read the goals and agreements): What kinds of tools and activities have you used to facilitate activism in groups or gatherings. Where did you learn these?

Katie: At a Power of Hope camp this summer a facilitator led a beautiful session with a group of young people in which she used this Power Flower activity. I was struck by how simple it was and yet how eye opening:
<http://www.pyeglobal.org/.../29/workshop-games-power-flower/>

Nadia: A classic! I like activities like the "Web of Voice" where you have a long string or elastic, and as people speak, they pass the string along. So we can see who is speaking, who isn't, and be more aware of the space we are taking up in a room

Katie: That's really interesting Nadia Chaney. It's so important to hear every voice in the room and not to ignore the fact that people have different comfort levels in terms of speaking up in a group. It's great to highlight that.

Nadia: Yes, and when using the "Web of Voice" it's important to make it clear that it isn't a way of forcing any one to speak, it's more about asking the questions WHEN and WHY are we able to speak in different situations.

Tiffany: I've seen theatre as such a powerful tool for facilitating activism. Have learned a lot through other facilitators, but also reading folks like Paulo Friere. I also feel like with the right framing, dance, singing, art are powerful tools. Allowing participants to choose the tool that most speaks to them personally...or in small groups...all focused on a similar goal. Oh - and poetry! So powerful.

Cristina: Milling, community mapping, grandmas plate, 9 pens, ---there is an incredible woman - Walidah Imarisha - who is using sci-fi as a way to build activism plans with youth and community...its amazing...she's doing a workshop in Seattle this month. I also learned stuff thru YPQI, POH, and taking books and adapting activities to what you are doing.

Nadia Chaney AND the next discussion question (just answer and chat about the ones that interest you. If you are just joining, please see the Goals and Agreements below): What are the benefits and challenges when using the arts (in particular the Creative Community Model) to facilitate activism? If possible, please answer with a short story.

Silvia Giovannoni Webster: In my recent experience running a camp with 4 different Favela communities from Rio, I was reassured about the power of the arts to empower. In other words - to provide a platform and a springboard for oppressed communities to not only create their own culture, but also to be witnessed and heard by mainstream government, media etc...The dances, music, and particular cultural arts movements that began in the favelas have today spun off to become so much more than that and this is so empowering and can potentially influence real political change.

Some of the favela activists that came to camp are creating better waste management alternatives in their communities for example, other community leaders are lifting young people out of poverty via music and street art - and the Rio government is paying attention (albeit it sometimes with dubious intentions...)

Nadia: Oh that does bring up an interesting question: what about when activist art is co-opted or used by government or industry in ways that don't empower the groups it comes from?

Silvia: That's a tough one! It takes so much resilience...

Cristina: I think arts/creativity creates the possibility for everyone to contribute and create something together. It also can stoke the imagination and get people to come up with amazing new ideas together. We use experimenting and the idea that there are no mistakes and the results are amazing.

Silvia: Nadia - your question also makes me wonder about how 'smart' activist movements need to get in order to effect real change. How much do you need to play along to change things from within? Systemically?

Roshini Bolar: I think using the arts can bring an individual's deep feelings to the surface in a fun, revealing and imaginative way that can both inspire the individual and others. I mean look at some of the great musician activist like Bob Marley or John Lennon- we are still singing their songs and they are inspiring new generations

still.

It can be used negatively when it is used, bought and sold by the negative powers as a way to manipulate, control and disempower us in a very slimy underhanded kinda way that can often go unrecognized.

Tiffany C Purn: Nadia - this is such a great question you're asking re: co-opting. It takes so much courage to say - this is mine. You can't take my art, my voice, my story from me. How do we continue to cultivate these discussions and awareness?

Nadia: Tiffany C Purn, Tammy Lea Meyer has some really interesting ways to think into saying "this is mine" in a constructive way that builds solidarity. Tam, if you catch this, would you say a word or two on that?

Tammy Lea Meyer: Totally, and first off I just want to say I'm super excited about this forum and process... and I'm freakin' out over here with inspiration from what I'm reading, and I can't believe there are only 5 minutes left. Oh gosh. So here goes: I'm inspired to riff on what it is to 'own one's own voice'. This means looking at copyright, and doing some critical thinking and re-imagining about what that can look like in our digital world in particular. We could make community agreements around how we share content we produce, whether that is written, pictures, audio or video, so that we always have agency as to what happens with that media after it is produced. This forces (in an excellent way) collaborative storytelling, and gives us an opportunity to take more ownership of the material we produce, and even more exiting, to really land in our authentic voice.

Katie: Let your network know that we run these assemblies every month - let's get as many voices in this assembly as possible

Amanda Milson: I've been considering similar questions recently. I am a firm believer in using parts of the publications from the institutions you want to evoke change in, in order to help others see there are different ways of conducting themselves. I like to couple their own information with a logic that speaks to their pursuits, as well as to the pursuit of the people.

Tammy: I have been carrying around the charter of rights and freedoms for a while as inspiration... our first fundamental freedom here in Canada is our conscience, and freedom of religion. Second, we have the freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication. We also have the freedom of assembly, and the freedom of association. I think that these fundamental freedoms need to be lived, and we don't live them as widely and broadly as we should. I think this gives us a springboard to engage in activism, in the power of the voice, and to be a banner holder for the types of freedoms that are incredibly needed to be seen and heard.

Amanda: Some simple and very powerful foundations that ought to be evoked everyday! Thanks for sharing that Tammy.

Michele Health-Promoter: Using the arts is still fairly new to me and I am just now applying the CCM (learned in Creative Facilitation 1 & 2 this year) to a young men's digital storytelling project that I am running right now but already the benefits I am seeing is, greater engagement, a deepening sense of who participants communities are, more laughter in program, more creativity, more risk taking in ways men are not encouraged to take risks with each other, more participants taking up oppressive material in really positive and heart-centered ways, a greater belief in who they are (so more than just a young man struggling and living in a shelter) and what they can accomplish and I have been told by my beloved that I am a much more pleasant person to be around (less self-involved and more present when I am at home) while deep into running program. So the benefits are both personal and as a new practitioner of using the arts and in the communities I serve. So far the challenge has been convincing my team that this model is one we should use in ALL of our programming. I have a chance at our team retreat next month where I will be presenting on the CCM .

Nadia: Michele have you heard that PYE founders published (at last!) a book on the CCM last Dec?
<http://www.pyeglobal.org/catchthefire/>

Michele: I have heard. That is what I'm using as well. I won a copy of the book and it was the best Holiday Present I ever received in the Mail. Also Nadia, the shifts in my work toward building confidence leading arts based activities is a direct result of CF 1&2. This with "Catch The Fire" is totally transforming the way to structure programming. So thank you and PYE!

Tammy: Some more thoughts: We stand on the shoulders of greats. And while we have original thought and work, nothing is created in a vacuum, and our work and thoughts are inspired every day by the people we see and know, and all of the people who have done good work that inspires us and has done the deep work of change already. So one question we can ask ourselves, I think, is can we - and how we can we - shift the idea of ownership to one of co-development, collaboration and cooperation while honouring everyone's contributions? What is mine, anyways? How can we help each other out? What resources do we have that can help to leverage another's work? So in this conversation today, we are inspiring each other to think thoughts together, and in this I am forever changed.

Part of it is that I have new information, and I have heard some new stories today that have initiated thought processes in juxtaposition to other thoughts I have been having, and then each participants' thoughts as they emerge inspire even more...certainly I am involved in that, as a member, but I am swimming in the awesomeness of what it is that everyone is thinking and saying together...so for me there is a blurring of what is mine in this, both in my internal world as well as that which I put out as my 'own' thoughts. I would like to be able to better frame and articulate the structure and purpose of collaboration and cooperation, as it is fundamental to the movement work we all do broadly. The shift for me is exactly here, with ownership, and with the dominant paradigm that stems from our societal 'agreements' around ownership and control. We need to be able to keep jumping out of the boxes we become aware of as we do, so we can continue to widen the context of the conversations we are having.

Michele: Tammy - I love what you are invoking here - I think everything I know comes from the generosity of those who shared and continue to share what they know/have learned/or are being thoughtful about. I didn't learn this generosity in school. I learned it from working class members and activists in my communities and for this I am forever grateful.

Katie Jackson: Does anyone know of any books/ online articles that they would recommend to learn more in this area?

Nadia: One very classic must-read is Anne Bishop's Becoming an Ally. And Bell Hook. And Paulo Friere's Pedagogy of the Oppressed.

Katie: Thanks Nadia - I will update my good reads list. It's always growing!

Nadia: But those are a slightly older discourse. What is being published presently that people are liking?

Eliza von Baeyer: A great anthology is Readings for Diversity and Social Justice 2nd edition - Maurianne Adams, Warren Blumenfeld, Carmelita Casteneda, Heather Hackman, Madeline Peters, Ximena Zuniga (Eds.)

Cristina Orbe: Augusto Boal

Katie: If anyone else has any books to recommend/ articles to read I would love to hear about them. Thanks everyone.


Roshini Bolar: I really enjoyed a film called 'Taking Root: The Vision of Wangari Maathai.' It's fantastic. Super inspiring empowering story on how woman can create positive change. Check it out:
<http://takingrootfilm.com>

Nadia: Wow. Thus endeth our magnificent hour together! THANK YOU all for a wild and wonderful conversation. It DOESN'T have to stop here. The page is up, and it stays up, so we can keep chatting now and also pop back into the convo anytime. But this is the official end of the facilitated part. Next month we will be discussing "HOW TO DESIGN AND CREATE ACTIVITIES FOR GROUPS." It's going to be a slightly different format, more of a lab and a game So stay tuned for that. THANK YOU THANK YOU for your wisdom and insight. Katie Jackson will post the transcript of this conversation soon. WITH LOVE AND RESPECT.

Silvia: Thank you all. Do stay in touch!

Michele: Gosh, one hour is just not long enough. I'm still trying to get through folks' comments and suggestions and your questions. Nadia, thanks so much and everyone also - Thank you! I feel renewed and excited to be here.

Nadia: You're right Michele. Thank goodness it stays on and active. So grateful for everyone's amazing energy. It's a new form, and it has it's wildness, but I love it.



Tammy: Thank you all so much for this!! I am super looking forward to continuing the conversations, and really appreciate the inspiration.

Amanda: Feeling more inclusiveness from a mere hour of my time. That is some powerful movement! Gratitude to all, you have my word I will keep working towards social equity. I like to remind myself that these actions are present in our everyday, so no matter how mundane life feels at times, remember why you're doing it!

Eliza von Baeyer: I'm sorry I could only jump in at the end...