



Empathy

What is it for?

.....
To consider that others lives are as rich in experience, desire, loss, joy...as yours.

Time & People

.....
20 - 30 minutes
Any number of people

Materials

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None

Source

.....
David Robinson, Seattle, USA

And...

.....
This is a deep dive, a very vulnerable exercise. We usually use it in sequence following Mask Mingle.

The debrief can happen in a number of ways. We often let participants spend a few moments with their partners informally debriefing, sharing experiences. Then we either instruct them to sit with their partners to share insights, experiences, stories followed by a group debriefing, or we sit and as a group hear the insights. This debriefing session is more about processing the experience than about identifying lessons or abstracts.

Set Up: Generally, participants have just moved through and exercise that included greetings or some physical awareness around communication. Then, participants stand facing each other (in pairs) and I leave them there long enough to be self aware and a bit uncomfortable. I ask them to close their eyes, which is usually a relief.

The Sequence:

- With eyes closed, I am going to ask you to remember 5 things but I want you to remember them through your senses, how they felt, smelled, tasted, etc.

With each instruction, allow them time to be in the memory, a few minutes before moving on.

- Remember your favourite childhood game. How did it feel to play? What were the sounds? Smells? Textures?
 - Let that go.
- Remember a sanctuary, a secret place, a place you go to rejuvenate or escape. How does it feel to be there? What are the smells?
 - Let that go.
- Remember your first love...
 - Let that go.
- Remember your greatest loss...
 - Let that go.
- Remember your most potent learning. What is the greatest lesson you ever learned? How did that come to you? How did it feel?....
- Open your eyes and look at this person facing you. Recognize that their memories were just as potent, just as specific, just as rich as were yours - and that is true of every human being you pass on the streets every day.