

CORNERSTONE 2020 RESOURCE

OHM! *Evening Experience*

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SUMMARY:	A full-body reflective and meditative (in equal measure) experience facilitated to open and release the mind from drudgery and rumination so that we may all realize our potential and our abundant source of creativity, exploration, and wisdom. Participants will dance, sing, make noises, and build meaning, physically and metaphorically, to capture and organize their creative energies. - <i>Submitted by Josh Friedman</i>
TOPIC(S):	Full Body Meditation & Expression, Allegorical Reflection
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	Participants will walk away feeling relieved, able, energized, and inspired to share their internal reflections and connected experiences with others. They will attempt to connect to others in similar ways, and to create for others the same quality of powerful experience just encountered.
AUDIENCE:	All ages, those willing to unleash their inner selves in a group context, and those seeking and searching for meaning in their work to power and motivate their energy.
TIMING:	75 minutes
APPENDICES:	Words

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<p>MATERIALS NEEDED:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Printed out and laminated Words appendix. - Long lengths (30'+) of webbing (flat straps) of various colors (at least 3 separate coils), one long enough that if tied in a circle, every participant would have space to hold on to it comfortable. - Post-It Notes (at least 2-3 for every participant), 8x11 sheets of blank paper (1 per participant), pens, & dry-erase markers - Speakers / stereo system loud enough to blanket the room in music. - 1 standard sized balloon for every 2 participants or so. - 1 standard sized light up balloon for every two participants. - 1 prussik looped rope, or a length of rope tied in a small circle (about 1' diameter). - The following materials are more optional-ish and can be substituted with nearly any novel object, but these are suggested and known to work well: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 1 GIGANTIC plastic clear inflatable ball (taller than an average person), o 4 smaller but still large plastic clear inflatable balls (about thigh high on the ground), o spools of yarn / cord / twine, o tape, o scissors, o neon / glow necklaces, bracelets, doo-dads, ornaments, etc., as long as they light up - glowproducts.com o Enough Bubble Wrap to lay out on the floor through the entry way and then some. o Gifts: something small, to remember the experience by, easiest suggestion is a thin rope tied into a prussik loop (bracelet size).
<p>SET-UP DETAILS:</p>	<p>Should take place in a room with the highest ceiling one can find that is still able to become nearly completely dark (no emergency lights or un-curtained windows and a closing, preferably non-glass, door). The room should also have enough space for all of the participants to dance together in a circle.</p> <p>Initially, the space should be set up so that the music can be heard loudly in every corner, and the floor is clear. Then, before participants arrive, the facilitator should lay out the longest webbing length, tie water knot into it to create a circle, then lay that circle on the floor. In the middle of that circle place the prussik loop. On top of the prussik loop goes the biggest clear plastic ball, with the smaller ones spread around it on the outside of the webbing. With dry erase markers, on the largest ball, write the phrases "I was...", "I will be..." and "I fear..." with equal space around them. On the smaller balls write "I bring...", "I have...", and "I give..." Then, place the bubble wrap in the entry way, turn on some light upbeat music for people to walk into, and then recruit a participant to hand out a Post-It note & writing utensil to every participant who comes through the door to write down and complete the following phrase: "I am...."</p>

SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

- 5 Minutes – Introduction, Welcome, Funny Noises, Greetings, & Notes
- 10 Minutes - Stretches
- 5 Minutes – Circle Dance
- 10 Minutes – Partner Circle Dance
- 5 Minutes – Partner Circle+ Dance
- 5-10 Minutes – Partner Eye Contact
- 5 Minutes – Words Map & Share
- 10 Minutes – Gentle Balloon Pass
- 10 Minutes – Creation
- 5-10 Minutes – Dancy Boots, Debrief, and Gifts

5 Minutes – Introduction, Welcome, Funny Noises, Greetings, & Notes

Facilitator (FL) will welcome participants (PPs) with a big smile, high fives, high energy, and invite them to come in, complete the phrase “I am...” on their post-it notes and to complete the other phrases written on the balls around the room until we get started. FL will then continue to play music, greet people, and make loud funny random noises to no one in particular.

Once everyone is in the room, FL will invite PPs to put their notes in their pockets and come stand around the circle (should look like a target symbol, though it works in the shape of a heart or star, etc. as well). FL introduces and frames the activity in words given above, that the PPs are here for themselves tonight, to shake off everything else about their lives and to let their creativity, their energy, their identity in the world be expressed and shared with themselves and the other brave and beautiful people around them.

10 Minutes – Stretches

(It should be noted here, for this and the following, variations are strictly welcome and encouraged, we were all born to create experiences, this is one suggestion).

FL will first roll the balls out of the way, then, FL will instruct PPs to take the webbing up in their hands and hold on to it without yanking it, etc., and will then conduct a series of warm-up stretches in a progressively additive order (adding one new thing each time, but performing the whole series up until the new addition every time): 1) everyone squat down together at the same time; 2) everyone stand up together at the same time; 3) everyone take one hand off the webbing, and keeping feet planted, reach over the head and to the outside of the circle; 4) same as before with the opposite hand; 5) everyone point to someone who is doing a great job; 6) point to someone else that’s doing a great job even more emphatically; 7) point to everyone around the circle in a sweep of recognition; ask if the crowd has one, time permitting.

Music: Fun, not so loud that FL can’t be heard

5 Minutes – Circle Dance

FL will instruct the PPs to stretch out the webbing into an even circle, and then lay it on the ground. FL will instruct PPs to turn to one side, and invite them to move and dance with the music now that everyone is warmed up and doing a great job. They should stay moving around the circle until given further instructions, dancing as they please. FL should encourage energy here, but not too emphatically, only positively. FL will also introduce a noise that means a thing: turn around, for example, and dance the other direction.

Music: Upbeat, happy, loud enough to drown out the internal voices

10 Minutes – Partner Circle Dance

FL will invite each PP to dance near someone else, so that they are side by side but still facing in the direction of the circle dance. Music continues, dance continues, partners are encouraged to emulate one another, dancing in rhythm with each other. FL will introduce new noises to mean partner switch, solo dance, and partner up.

Music: same as before, maybe some more “hits”

5 Minutes – Partner Circle+ Dance

At some point in the process, FL will pull the other two long strands of webbing into the middle of the circle and across to the other side, perpendicular to one another so that a + now lays on top of the circle. FL invites PPs to dance down the line in a sort of soul train style, partners or otherwise, by role modelling it themselves.

Music: same as above, this time playing a big hit that gets people going, i.e. Uptown Funk.

5-10 Minutes – Partner Eye Contact

While the music is still playing, FL will encourage all PPs to find a partner, and dance down the soul train line. Sometimes it works beautifully, sometimes a little f'nagling is necessary, but eventually, all PPs should be looking across one straight line, face to face with their partner (specifics don't matter so much). FL then invites PPs to make eye contact, to connect deeply with their partner, and to attempt to have grace, acceptance, and love emanate from their own selves. FL will suggest that if the giggles erupt, partners should take a step back from one another, recollect themselves, and try again. It's okay if it takes a few tries, and FL will keep time while PPs maintain eye contact (2-10 minutes depending on the group)

Music: soft, ambient, warm, and not overwhelming, at a light volume.

5 Minutes – Words Map & Share

FL will invite PPs to spread back out into a circle. Based on the themes so far displayed and the goals overall for the session, FL will share some Words and create a narrative that describes as close as possible the energy of the room, the goals of the session, and the potential avenues for learning for each individual there, using the Words from the Appendix and laying them down within the circle spread around all it.

FL will then invite PPs to find a place in the circle to stand based on where they feel they belong right now. FL will then invite PPs to turn to someone nearby them, explain why they are standing where they are, and to share, if comfortable & desirable, what they wrote on their notes and what they wrote on the balls around the room.

Music: even softer, more ambient, warmer, and even less overwhelming, at a light volume.

10 Minutes – Gentle Balloon Pass

After a decent time, FL will invite PPs to form a circle once again around the webbing. FL will then challenge the group to close their eyes, summon the gentleness and serenity within them, breathe, breathe easily, and upon opening their eyes, help to keep the balloon (just 1, given by FL to a PP) softly up in the air. FL will slowly add a few balloons around the circle, hand out all manner of light up toys, bracelets, objects, etc., and when there is enough light around the circle, turn the lights off. FL will then turn up the music, start passing out light-up balloons, and continue to gently encourage PPs to serenely pass the balloons around while keeping them in the air.

Near the end of time for this section, FL will roll the giant ball into the center of the circle, the big balls around the edges as they were in the beginning, and then turn down the music for a moment to describe the next section.

Music: even softer, more ambient, warmer, and even less overwhelming, first light, then louder, and when the lights go off, at a loud volume.

10 Minutes – Creation

FL will invite PPs to create something, to take what they have been given (+ any and all other materials not yet given from the optional-ish supplies) and to create something with everything and everyone, whatever they feel so inspired to create.

Music: friendly, warm, potentially a bit pop-y / bubbly

5-10 Minutes – Dancy Boots, Debrief and Gifts

FL will congratulate the PPs on their creation, on bringing something(s) new into this world, and then challenge them to bring something new into their world: PPs will sit down anywhere they like, with lights on / off depending on ambient light, and write down on the 8x11 sheets what they just experienced: what they noticed, what they learned, what they want to take away / remember, what they would do next time if they did it over again, etc.

FL will then frame the experience in terms of preparation / stretching our current states; coordination / balance with our space and our community; creating from a balanced standpoint something new and useful; and then compiling the experience into who they are. FL will provide a bit more time after this to finish / continue to be continued notes on their sheets.

FL will then invite PPs to get up and dance one more time: Dancy boots is a concentric circle dancing activity where a single person is in the middle, 5-6 people are around them in a small circle, and everyone else is around them in a large circle. Everyone starts in a “knee” position, and the person in the middle gets up and dances first, the small circle gets up (at FL signal) to dance what the middle person is dancing next, and finally the third circle gets up and dances what the rest are already dancing.

Music: a pop-y hit, something everyone knows / loves / laughs at together.

After the song is over / energy is kaput, FL will come around with takeaways / gifts to remember the experience by, and to thank each PP for contributing their energy.

ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP:

Literally anything is possible with this activity. I never know exactly how or where it will go each time I lead it. Sometimes there is time for everything, other times only a few pieces. My recommendation is to remember the key phases: Stretches / Orientation; Coordination / Balance; Creation of some product; and reflection / sharing about what all of it means, with music maintaining energy throughout. The specifics beyond that, matter very little, with the exception of physical limitations: if you want to use light-up objects, you need a dark room, etc..

Modifications may be music themes, dance themes, more intensive creative projects, more / less structured dancing (though maintain the coordination with others), etc.

Above all else, make sure that you are clear in introducing / offering the activity to others that it is not a typical activity. In either the language used (make it abstract, purposefully vague yet intriguing), or bar set (prepare for a challenging / vulnerable but endlessly rewarding and memorable experience), make sure that PPs are aware that they are stepping outside their comfort zone if they come to your activity. When this is not made clear, the overall effect suffers.