

CORNERSTONE 2022 RESOURCE

Kvetching Our Gratitude

Wind Down Your Day

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SUMMARY:	In this session we will: find gratitude in the face of that which seems to be most challenging us, supporting each other to approach our most burning problems, challenges, and frustrations with an attitude of care, love, and openness.
ABC GOALS:	<p>Affective: Participants will feel....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grateful • Refreshed • Connected <p>Behavior: Participants will be able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encounter their challenges in new ways • Slow down • Connect with their own and others' problems appreciatively • Practice appreciative listening <p>Cognitive: Participants will know...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New frameworks for understanding their challenges • What challenges are alive for them in a closer way
AUDIENCE:	Fellows and supervisors, ages 18 and up, groups between 5 and 25 people, people who are ready to share and use gratitude to work with their frustrations
TIMING:	45 minutes
APPENDICES:	
MATERIALS NEEDED:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Large sheets of paper (blank, chart-paper-sized) - Scissors - Markers - Talking pieces (stones, gems, other natural objects) - Blankets - Chairs - Any leaves, plants, flowers I can collect

SET-UP DETAILS:

This activity should take place in a large open space, indoors, with locations for small groups of 3-4 to break off.

Set-up includes writing impactful quotes and mantras on the papers, putting them up on the wall as detailed in the outline, and setting up space for the small groups by placing chairs and blankets around the room with talking pieces and the plants.

SESSION TIMELINE

- 00:00-00:02 – Arriving
- 00:02-00:05 – Introduction
- 00:05-00:15 – Community Welcome
- 00:15-00:40 – Small group portion
- 00:40 – Closing check-in

SESSION OUTLINE:

00:00-00:02: As participants arrive, they are greeted by the facilitator, who invites them to explore the space around the room and consider the prompts/quotes on the wall. The walls hold quotes and prompts designed for stimulating thought on gratitude, challenge, and community, written on chart paper. Markers are available next to each prompt for participants to respond in case participants arrive early and want to participate already.

00:02-00:05: Participants form a circle.

The facilitator invites them to move their eyes around the room and appreciate each other. Looking around the room, try sending appreciation to someone with a smile or good energy. After a half-minute, continue moving your gaze around and connect with others, sending them appreciation as well.

Each person introduces themselves around the circle. The facilitator may share a brief story about challenge and gratitude (this story can be from their own life, a myth, a creative story, etc.)

00:05-00:15: Community Welcome

The facilitator, using their own personalized community welcome greeting, shares statements welcoming different beings into the room and acknowledging who/what is present. (e.g., “To the newt who sometimes crawls into our space these last few days... we say: welcome.”) Everyone takes turns reading a welcome statement from the facilitator’s community welcome sheet, and at the end of each line, the whole group together says “welcome”. After the initial sheet is read, the group can take some time to add their own welcome statements for anything and anyone that was not mentioned initially, following the same pattern. The group can take some time to share how they might welcome their community into space, and how to create a welcoming space for activities.

00:15-00:40

The facilitator introduces the next activity we will be doing, giving credit to the storytelling training seminar *Storytelling Beyond Words*, which this next part has been adapted/inspired from. Then, participants are numbered off into groups of three to five.

Each participant will have the opportunity to choose a frustration or series of related frustrations we are facing in our journeys as camp community members, Fellows, and Supervisors (e.g., we have the same co as last year and in our previous experience with them was that we worked poorly together). Pick a frustration that you are willing both (a) to share with others, as well as (b) to play with and explore what other insights we might be able to see. For each person, one at a time, they will take 2-3 minutes to vent as much as they want. They can lean into just what is frustrating them so much and kvetch, kvetch, kvetch! The other participants' role is to listen and hear what the speaker is saying.

When the speaker is finished, they sit palms open and the listeners respond. The listeners' role now is to find beauty/opportunity in and around the frustration/challenge: they validate and share insights to the speaker about what might be beautiful or blessed possibilities might exist. They validate and then can start by saying "What may be beautiful is..." or "You are blessed..." For example, if the speaker shared the example of struggling with a co, the listeners might say "thank you for sharing how you are feeling, that is so real. And also, wow, what a beautiful opportunity to discover a whole new working relationship with this person and see what might be possible now". The speaker's role now is to respond, if they feel inclined, by acknowledging the beauty or blessing however that arises for them (e.g., "I am blessed", "I see the beauty", etc.) This process repeats for the next 2-3 minutes. Very importantly, the listeners' role is *not* to invalidate the speaker's challenges or to say "but you are blessed". They are *adding* to an understanding of the reality, *not* taking away, as these challenges may be very real. Both the listener and speaker are, in a sense, giving each other a gift: the listener gives the speaker the gift of listening and a perspective of beauty, while the speaker gives the listeners a chance to tap into that feeling of openness and gratitude. And it is okay for the speaker to laugh at how ridiculous it feels! It can absolutely be funny to say "I see the beauty" in process with something that has been paining you :-)

After 2-3 minutes of the listeners responding, the speaker may return to being a peer and can share for 2 minutes how they are feeling in that moment and how the process went for them. Then, rotate who is the speaker and repeat the process until everyone has had a turn. Participants may use the talking pieces if it feels grounding for them in their sharing.

00:40: As each group wraps up at their own pace, the facilitator goes around to each group to check in. How are they doing? How did it go for them? What might they need now?

BRINGING IT TO YOUR CAMP:

- Consider space as you bring this session back to camp. What room at your camp is able to both (a) create a feeling of vulnerability and care, (b) be able to be decorated with quotes or flowers or whatever else you might use to make the space feel warm, and (c) has enough room for people to break off into small groups?
- Consider the story you share: have you ever had a moment or encounter that has widened your perspective on a personal experience, challenge, or opportunity? Is there a story from your community or tradition that could be a gift to share with your participants?

CORNERSTONE 2022 RESOURCE

- How would you want to be welcomed into a space like this? Consider the possibilities of using what is around you at your camp as people walk into the space so that they feel invited and embraced by the environment.
- With more time, you might consider having a discussion later about where participants struggled in the activity (as it can be a challenging one), giving them space to unpack this together
- This activity can be incredibly beautiful, and is also at risk of becoming one of toxic positivity if facilitated without delicateness. This is important to keep in mind throughout planning, facilitation, framing, and choice of audience.
- Keeping all the above in mind, this activity can be tricky to facilitate right so that the participants overcome their skepticism and get on board with trying it out (after which it usually works out from my experience). Participants may not want to engage in the activity, or in certain parts of it, and it is really important that they know that is totally okay. Communicate to them that this activity is for them, not for you, so you want to totally shape the activity such that it works best for them. If a participant or group is struggling, check in and make sure you are flexible as you chat with them about what is coming up for them and together design an activity that works best for the group.