

WORLD CAFÉ QUOTES

Studies have found that, when faced with a difficult decision on a complex issue, people don't try to simplify the matter, as is usually assumed. They do just the opposite. They expand their focus and look for connections: they reexamine many of their concerns as they take into account their varied experiences. This is the way they learn. David Mathews, *For Communities to Work*

Speak to the center, not to each other — create a pool of common meaning.
Bill Isaacs, MIT Dialogue Project

“You see,” she mused, “conversation *is* action. You can think things and you can feel things but it doesn't become ‘real’ until you express it. Then it begins to germinate. Other people hear it, other people begin to feel it, you share ideas together — and if it's important enough, relevant action becomes just a natural thing that happens.” Juanita Brown's 84 year-old Mom

Creativity requires asking genuine questions, those to which an answer is not already known. Questions function as open-handed invitations to creativity, calling forth that which does not exist. Maurice Goldberg, *The Art of the Question*

As an individual draws up the boundaries of his soul, he establishes at the same time the battles of his soul. Ken Wilber, *No Boundary*

WORLD CAFÉ RESOURCES

Brown, J. (2005). *The world café: Shaping our futures through conversations that matter*. San Francisco, Berret-Koehler.

www.theworldcafe.com



Learning for life

Adapted from materials by Annie Jones, Associate Professor, Kenosha County UW-Extension



Would you like to learn more?
Email me!
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Drooling for more???

THE TECHNOLOGY OF WORLD CAFÉ



Transformation through dialogue
“Doggie bag”

a take-home reference

WHAT'S THE STORY BEHIND THE WORLD CAFÉ?

The World Café is not a technique. It is an invitation into a way of being with one another that is already part of our nature. The World Café was developed by Juanita Brown and is based on systems thinking.

By combining the following simple principles:

- Setting a context (like transformational education or poverty)
- Creating a hospitable space
- Exploring questions that matter
- Encouraging everyone's contribution
- Connecting diverse perspectives
- Listening together for patterns and insights
- Sharing collective discoveries

Creating an atmosphere that allows people (with *many* different perspectives) the opportunity to tap into their collective unconscious, people are able to think together as a living system - allowing generative solutions to emerge!

TIPS FOR CONSTRUCTING GOOD QUESTIONS:

Resist building a “container” with your questions. The more that one attribute or aspect is emphasized, the more the other aspect becomes uncertain or less visible. Attempt to create a question that is as open-ended as possible - avoid having people simply list things. Create a context with your first question, scale up or down with the second question, and look at underlying beliefs and assumptions with the third. Create as many questions as you'd like!



WHAT DOES THE WORLD CAFÉ HAVE TO DO WITH SYSTEMS THINKING?

Systems thinking includes methods and concepts for explaining interdependence among people, institutions and their environment. Systems thinking allows us to rise above and understand complexity so we can focus energy where we have the most leverage to create and sustain long-term positive change.

A system is a combination of related elements that are organized into a whole. Our bodies are systems, so are families, water cycles, schools, communities and organizations. Systems thinking is much more than the “sum of parts” - systems thinking examines the *interaction of the parts*. It is understanding both the fox (who is detail oriented) and the hedgehog (who knows one BIG thing) *Archilochus*.

An ability to understand parts, the big picture, and the interaction of parts is essential to critical thinking. “Parts,” are also mental models or perspectives. The World Café offers a way to create connections among many perspectives. That way, we can think critically - beyond events, into patterns, then deeper into structures, and finally into the assumptions that shape our mental models. At this point, transformation can occur!

QUICK TIP FOR LISTENING:

When we “listen,” many of us are thinking about what we will say next or how our view differs from the speaker's. Encourage people to listen for what they have in common, instead of how they are different.

