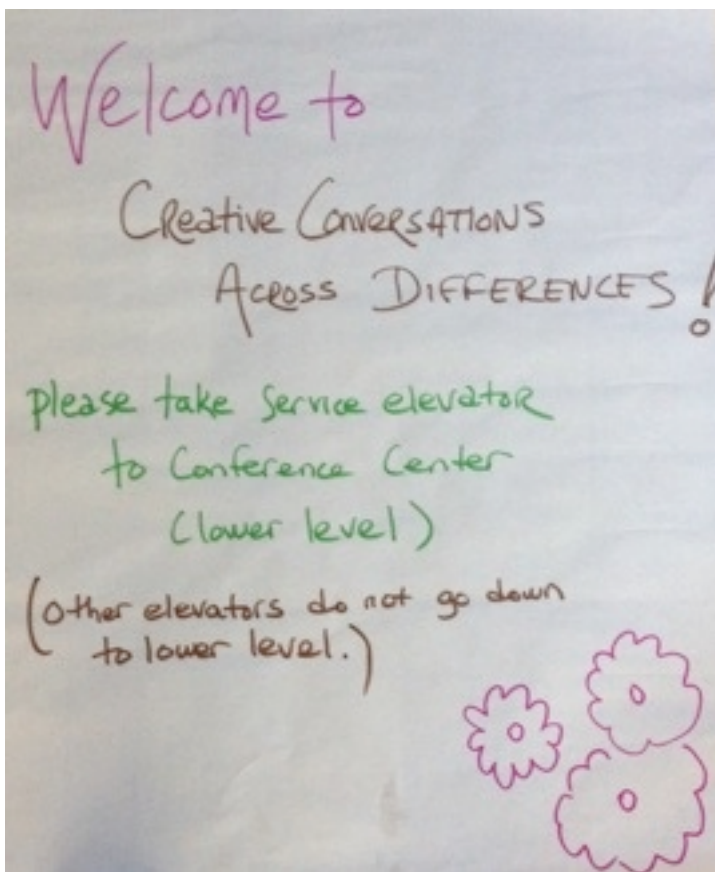


**Harvest from**

**Creative Conversations Across Differences:**

**an experiential introduction to**

**Dynamic Facilitation and Dynamic Inquiry**



**June 19th, 2015**  
**9 am to 5 pm**

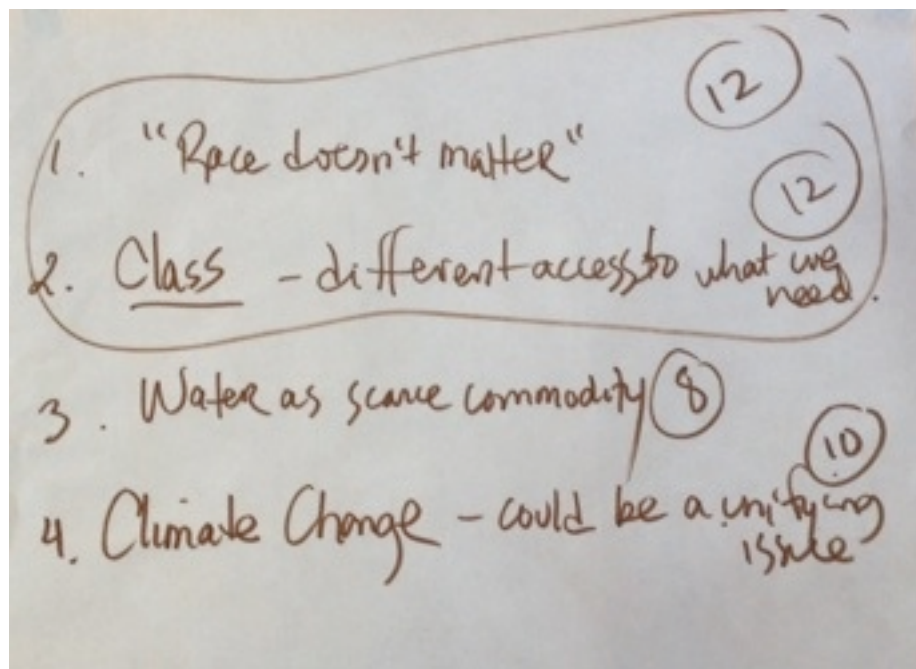
**The Grove Arcade**

**Asheville,**  
**North Carolina**

## Morning Session

After our initial circle where we shared personal introductions (see pages 5 & 6), we chose a topic for the demo. The different possibilities offered by participants included race, class, future water shortages on the planet, and climate change.

We chose to combine race and class together for our starting point.



Next, we created the container for the Dynamic Facilitation process by introducing and exploring our shared role agreements. (See appendix for these.) Afterward, we dived into a free-ranging conversation on our topic....

Part of the facilitator's role in this approach is to record the gist of each participant's contributions onto three charts: Data/Perspectives, Solutions, and Concerns.

Data/Perspectives  
 here in Anchorage AK

1. 85% black pop in poverty  
 small black middle class.
2. System is designed to make it hard to get out of public housing  
 costs rise steeply
3. Some of us want inclusive integrated  
 city, where poor welcome and  
 able to take adv. of resources & opportunities
4. Attitudes / o of situations both problematic  
 rubber band that spring back

Solutions

1. Put more \$ into RAD
2. Work with landlords, neighbors  
 re section 8; to help create more  
 welcome.
3. Warning of public hearing files to  
 help them feel safe re moving.
4. Have more conversation about  
 real position & wealth, access to resources
5. Create opps for ppl to speak for  
 themselves - for ppl of low wealth  
 to be seen
6. Support low wealth  
 people to be seen & involved in  
 decision making.

Concerns (about solutions)

1. Team Halls - often don't have  
 conversation. become shouting matches  
 > little understanding  
 over
2. if we don't do prevention  
 afterward, costs are greater.  
 pay me later with h-h-g.
3. What some ppl's see as  
 hard earned wealth, others of us  
 see as ill-gotten gains.

What you see in the photos, are only the first few pages: during our morning conversation, we ended up with many pages for each category. We had 25 items on the Data/Perspectives chart and 14 on the Solutions chart...

When it was time to pause, we all looked over the Solution Ideas to collaboratively create a fourth chart called Problem Statements (aka Creative Design Challenges.)

Problem-Statements.

1. How do we create an inclusive, integrated city, where everyone feels welcome, & on the adv. of resources & opportunities?
2. How do we raise awareness about <sup>across the span</sup> privilege & inequality & availability of resources?
3. How do we ensure that low wealth ppl's voice is heard?
4. How do we distribute resources in our community equitably, <sup>how do we ensure</sup> ~~that~~ <sup>that</sup> ~~we~~ <sup>we</sup> ~~participating~~ <sup>participating</sup> in the design of it?

Creative Design Challenges

5. How do we build in strategies to help level the playing field?
6. How do we protect health?
7. How do we encourage self-reliance?
8. How do we teach people the value of work?
9. How do we protect ppl's hard earned wealth?
10. How do we help people be successful?
11. How do we help people to visualize the injustices that are built into the system?

12. <sup>PROB START</sup> How do we heal the historical hurts in this community?  
 Undigitized pain

Afterward, these Problem-Statements or Creative Design Challenges were used to sort and organize the information that we had originally generated in a very creative and free-flowing manner.

In the next few pages, you'll see this "light sort" of our morning conversation. Participants' contributions have not been changed; everything that was recorded on the chart paper, was included.

## Asheville "Creative Conversations Across Differences"

### Draft notes from our morning "deep dive"

***A. How do we create an inclusive, integrated community where everyone feels welcome and is able to take advantage of resources and opportunities?***

#### *Background data and perspectives*

1. 85% of the black population here in Asheville is living in poverty. We have a very small black middle class. \_
2. The system is designed to make it hard to get out of public housing, because once you do, your costs rise steeply.
3. There is a program currently in place where public housing is now shifting to RAD.... this is an effort to disperse the population of low-income people across the city by creating more section 8 housing.

#### *Initial solution ideas*

1. Put more money into RAD.
2. Work with landlords around section 8 to help them be more welcoming.
3. Work with people who currently live in public housing to make them feel safe to move into different housing neighborhoods.

#### *Concerns about solutions*

1. A neighborhood is not something that someone should be put "out of".
2. On the other hand, some of us see public housing as a reservation; a concentration camp waiting to happen. Should be ok for people to leave if they want to.

***B. How do we raise awareness across the spectrum about privilege, inequality and availability of resources? How do we work with people's internalized attitudes?***

*Background data and perspectives*

1. Attitudes and objective situations are both problematic; if you just work on one and not the other there may be a rubber band effect that springs back.
2. One benefit of class, is that it allows us to hide our "stuff".
3. Many people have judgments about people who go for assistance, especially if you are home schooling family. Some people feel that if you are poor you don't have a right to educate your own children. If you are in poverty you don't get to have privacy, eat shrimp or even have kids.

*Initial solution ideas*

1. Have more conversations about our position of wealth and access to resources.

*Concerns about the solutions*

1. Often town halls are not about conversations, but become a shouting matches instead. They become dysfunctional conversations with little understanding of conditions.
2. We need to have well-facilitated conversations.

***C. How do we ensure that low-wealth peoples' voices are heard? How do we distribute resources equitably, and have a whole spectrum of participation designing those new systems?***

*Initial Solution Ideas*

1. Create opportunity for people to speak for themselves; for people of low wealth to be seen.
2. Support low wealth people to be seen and involved with decision making.
3. Become invited in, to help support people of low wealth in creating an inclusive process; support them in strengthening their container so they can invite others into their process of self direction and self-determination. Make the process self-governing and self-replicating.

***D. How do we build in strategies to help level the playing field?  
How do we help people be successful?***

*Background data*

1. Some of us feel we are working hard as teachers, home-schooling our children. We feel that we do have a job already, we are just not getting paid. Instead of job or school, we are interested in the question, "Can you help me build a business?"
2. Many lives are not conducive to 9-5 jobs; yet there are other alternatives beyond school and work.
3. Some of us want to teach people to fish, and not just give them fish.

*Initial solution Ideas*

1. Pour money into business development for people experiencing poverty.
2. Offer opportunities for mentorship and coaching all along the way, not just money.
3. Help set people up for success, by offering not just money but also support, recognition and coaching.

***E. How do we encourage self reliance? How do we teach people the value of work? How do we protect peoples' hard earned wealth?***

*Background data*

1. Some of us feel that we worked really hard and don't understand why other people can't do the same.
2. Some of us who are white feel that we were the target of abuse from blacks when integration happened in our early school years.
3. Some of us feel we have been placed at a disadvantage by affirmative action.
4. Not everyone subscribes to "I am my brothers keeper" philosophy.

*Initial Solution Ideas*

1. Reduce welfare aid and allow people to figure it out on their own.

*Concerns about solution ideas*

1. If we don't do prevention beforehand, the social costs are greater on the other end.
2. What some people see as "hard-earned wealth", others of us see as ill-gotten gains.

## ***F. How do we heal the historic hurts (undigested historical pain) in the community?***

### *Background data and perspectives*

1. Some of us white folks here have come from elsewhere, including NYC. When we arrived here, we felt a huge disconnect here between whites and people of color.
2. Over time, we've learned more about the sources of this disconnect. We've learned about the history of Asheville, and how Urban Renewal and Negro Removal was put in place. People who owned their own homes were moved out by the government to create new roads and expansion.
3. Some of us are white and have privilege yet feel very uncomfortable here with the huge class divide. It can be hard to witness disparity in privilege and see our neighbors struggle.

### *Initial solution ideas*

1. Host Truth and Reconciliation Forums where everybody can come to table. Do this at the Biltmore!

This is where we stopped for lunch.

A few notes on the process: Some of the differences in perspective were intrinsic to the group. However, since we wanted to explore even greater differences, some participants volunteered to "real-play" by taking on the persona of someone they knew.



## Afternoon session

In our afternoon session, we explored the "theory of change" behind Dynamic Facilitation. We did this by inviting folks to reflect on one of their most significant learning experiences, and then do a "pair share" with a partner (5-minute listening turns telling a partner about this experience.)

Afterward, we met again in a larger circle to share our insights about what makes for powerful learning experiences.

Here are some of the comments that were offered during this exploration:

### **We learn best when....**

--We have the opportunity to be in an experience, and then reflect about it afterward.

--Someone is drawing us out, helping us WANT to learn, by feeling valued...

--There is a strong connection between student and teacher.

--We feel seen.

--We are allowed to "be lost", AND, we have someone right next to us, who isn't "rescuing" us, just being present...

--We have the opportunity to SEE what we are learning, by having it modeled.

--When there is PLAYFULNESS!

--When we do not feel judged.

- We get to learn at our own pace
- The person who is helping us learn, is always positive.
- We are empowered, but never abandoned.
- We get to work with others as a team.
- The learning opportunity is not set up where some will pass and others will fail, but instead designed so that everyone can succeed.
- Everyone is included.
- There is an environment of learning together.
- There is space for personal discovery.
- There is synergy: new possibilities emerge from everyone's unique contributions.
- There is mutual support.

In Dynamic Facilitation, much of the above is included in one of our key principles:

“maximizing creative tension while minimizing interpersonal anxiety”.

That's the intention of the role agreements (see appendix) and also of the format, where we initially invite each participant to participate in “mini-fishbowls” with the facilitator. This allows each person's perspective to be reflected back and faithfully recorded.

After wrapping up the exploration of our “theory of change”, we dove back into the topic of our earlier conversation...

## **Draft notes from the afternoon session**

### ***A. How do we help shift people's attitudes regarding "the other"?***

#### *Background data and perspectives*

1. There is a widespread problem of seeing people as "other".

#### *Initial solution ideas*

1. Have people pair up with others; have 1:1 conversations with people who are other/different to create opportunities for more understanding.
2. There is a library in Toronto where you can "check out" a human to have a 1-on-1 conversation with someone.

#### *Concerns about solutions*

1. What are we looking for? Would we be looking for differences, or for similarities?
2. We need to appreciate more than just the interpersonal; need to also understand & appreciate systemic factors that affect people's lives. Even if we develop relationships, we may still not understand or address the systemic issues that create the larger context. We don't always understand what people have experienced that has led them to feel the way they do. We can miss seeing the privileges or difficulties in others' lives.

### ***B. How do we help people understand how racism is institutionalized?***

#### *Background data and perspectives*

1. Racial Equity Institute (REI) is coming to Asheville in the fall.

#### *Initial Solution Ideas*

1. Have all citizens go thru the REI training.
2. Amplify what is happening; share visuals via social media.

#### *Concerns about solutions*

1. Without the right tools & skillful & thoughtful communication, social media has the potential for outcomes that are manipulated, polarized, unproductive and brutal.

### ***C. How do we get people with privilege, to look at these issues?***

#### *Background data and perspectives*

1. The system is keeps us apart by stratification, damages to our ability to understand one another. There is a great cost to everyone's humanity, including to the privileged.
2. From one perspective, the behavior of people in privileged groups tends to be more constrained than those in less-advantaged groups.
3. Some researchers have found that most "white" people have had early childhood experiences of being threatened with being "outcast" from their tribe if they "crossed the line", got too close to people of color.
4. White people can't just opt to go to the other "tribe".
5. We are connected in a real way. The homeless person is a continuous reminder to people with privilege that if they don't play the game, that could be them. Most of us are in fight or flight all the time.
6. Some of us have learned about our own privilege only recently. Some of us wonder, where can people with privilege go, to have conversations about this, and learn about the privilege they have and what it means?
7. When we experience oppression, we have a clear felt sense of it. But by definition, we don't have a felt awareness of the areas in which we carry privilege. Part of what privilege means, is the opportunity to remain unconscious unless we choose not to.

#### *Initial Solution Ideas*

1. Create an ad campaign that says, "Privilege has a cost to our humanity. Doorway into not keeping things quite as separate.
2. Form authentic relationships w/others based on our common humanity. Undo our socialization.
3. Have conversations about "whiteness" before talking about "blackness".
4. Offer workshops to help people of privilege understand their position; privileged people can get together and have conversations about diversity.

5. Conduct poverty simulations. Very experiential way for people to learn about what it's like to live without privilege.
6. Have conversations about the realities of life for people without privilege. This is something that can happen to anyone.
7. Learn ways to talk about these issues and be heard, so they are not glossed over.
8. Create a reality show about "Life Swaps" between people who are privileged and people who are not privileged.

### ***How can we make a real difference on these issues?***

#### *Background data and perspectives*

1. Many of us feel deep emotional pain whenever we witness humans being mistreated and humanity being wasted. We need a place where our hearts can be cared for, and our pain can be held.
2. Our passion is powerful.
3. At same time, so many layers of mistrust have been created by all the "isms".
  
4. Until we shift the way we allow money and power to influence behavior, we won't have real social change.
5. Time banking is non-monetary system where everyone's time is valued equally. A chiropractor contributes an hour, can receive an hour of landscaping. Local time banking system is being developed by the Transitions group.
  
6. In many ways the system is self-replicating.
7. We need to crack the system, show how it is broken.
8. The system is broken for everyone.
9. The system is hollowing out and falling apart.
10. There are people all over the world trying to change the system, but we tend to be in separate silos.

### *Initial solution ideas*

1. Those of us who want to be allies, need to be willing to learn from the people we want to help, about how they want to be helped.
2. Change attitudes and laws together. Shift how we allow money and power influence behaviors.
3. Create an alternative to the current system.
4. Do more “time banking” where everyone’s time is valued equally.
5. Connect the WEB of all of the positive efforts going on in the different silos.

What a conversation... Again, much more could have been explored, but it was time to call it a day and have our closing circle.

Note: the problem-statements for the afternoon were generated afterward by the facilitator, as we did not have an opportunity to do this collaboratively at the end of the session, as we had for the morning session.

However, all of the data, solutions, and concerns in this section reflect what was recorded on the charts from participants’ contributions during the afternoon conversation.

A great big thank you to all of our participants... Their names, along with some of the skills, tools, and experiences they brought into the conversation, are shown in the next few pages.

Susan W. recreational therapy  
 experiential ed  
 ReImagine non-profits on playgroup therapy  
 Aging - community development  
 Nancy Walters - process consultant,  
 natural resources facilitator + trust service  
 Tracy Kunkler - consultant facilitation  
 non-profit & community orgs. Circle Forward...  
 Sociocracy. Circle Governance  
 Deb Scott - life coach & community  
 theatre practice. Playback action agency  
 story-based improv theatre

Susan Wrzalinski -- Reimagine Aging project. Recreational therapy, experiential education, non-profits on playgroup therapy, community development.

Nancy Walters -- process consultant and facilitator, natural resources and Forest Service.

Tracy Kunkler -- consultant and facilitator, non-profit and community organizations. Sociocracy, Circle Forward, governance.

Deb Scott -- life coach at Community Action agency. PlayBack Theatre: story-based improv theatre. Sees parallels between Playback and DF.

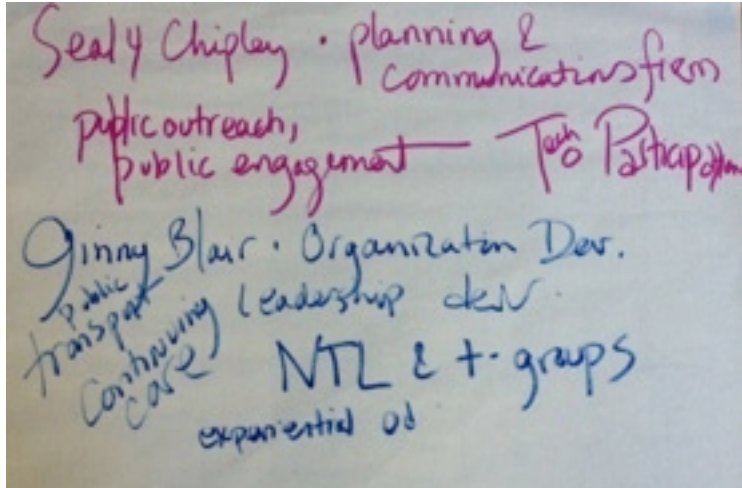
Susan Michael -- organized Wisdom Council in Asheville. Technology of Participation, Playback, Focusing.

Kathryn Liss -- conflict resolution, mediation, diversity work, co-counseling, NVC. Life as a spiritual journey of relationship.

Ayanfe -- circles & collectives. Spiritual healing, women's birth circles, primitive skills, food security, governance, alternative forms of decision-making.

Dana Roberts-- physics, nuclear engineer, mountaineer, executive management consultant & facilitator.

parallels betw Playback & DF  
 Susan Michael - wisdom council  
 ToP, Playback, Focusing  
 Kathryn Liss - conflict resolution,  
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 alternative forms of decision-making  
 Dana Roberts - physics - nuclear engineer - mountaineer  
 executive management consultant  
 facilitator



Sealy Chipley -- planning & communications firm. Public outreach and public engagement. Technology of Participation.

Ginny Blair -- Organization Development, leadership development, in public transportation & continuing care. NTL & T-groups, experiential ed.

Also, a GREAT BIG THANK YOU to the organizing team and to the hosting team: Susan Michael, Dana Roberts, Ty Hallock, and Deb Scott.

MANY THANKS to Susan Wrzalinsky for typing up the charts.

Workshop was designed and led by Rosa Zubizarreta of DiaPraxis.

Harvest compiled by Rosa Zubizarreta.

For more info about Dynamic Facilitation and Dynamic Inquiry, please visit [www.DiaPraxis.com](http://www.DiaPraxis.com).



## Creating the Container

- 1) My role is to listen well to each person.  
For that, I need to ask if you can speak one at a time.  
Are you willing to do that?
  
- 2) In a creative process, your role is to contribute your unique voice & perspective. Especially when you feel you are “out in left field”, it’s particularly important that you NOT stifle yourself. Are you willing to do that?
  
- 3) Whenever we have differences, it's natural (yet unhelpful) to try and get others to see our point of view. To help create greater understanding, I'd like to invite you to speak to me directly, especially when you have a very different perspective from that of another speaker. (Physically demonstrate what this looks like.) Is this ok with you?
  
- 4) Creative process also means that it can feel a bit messy at times (jigsaw puzzle analogy.) There is no particular sequence for solving the puzzle, but the more pieces are placed, the clearer the larger picture will be.  
Are you willing to "hang in there" with this?
  
- 5) The charts belong to the group – would you be willing to help make sure that they reflect your contribution accurately?
  
- 6) The intention here is for everyone to have a voice. Would you be willing to help with that?

**DiaPraxis:  
Our basic principles**

- **Human beings are a gift.** As humans, our natural tendency is to care about one another and to want to contribute. Of course, whenever we are hurt, frustrated, or burnt out, we tend to hide how much we care.
- **Each person has a valuable contribution to make.** We are all continually trying to make sense of the world around us, given the information we have available. Yet if feeling threatened, we can become protective and defensive.
- **Divergent perspectives are essential for creative breakthroughs.** Yet differences can also threaten relationships when not handled well. We work to “maximize creative tension” while “minimizing interpersonal anxiety”.
- **As humans, our gifts flourish when we are “listened into being”.** Creativity and authenticity flourish when we feel supported instead of judged. Witnessing and mirroring one another, allows each of us to connect more deeply with our own experience.
- **Whenever we experience a shift in perspective, new possibilities become apparent.** As Einstein said, “We cannot solve our problems by using the same kind of thinking that we used when we created them.”
- **We can all learn how to create a space in which “shift happens”.** In a safe environment, people spontaneously care, connect, and work with divergent perspectives to make meaning together.

for more about our work,  
please visit [www.DiaPraxis.com](http://www.DiaPraxis.com)