

Learning activity

Radical Imagination

TIME: 90 min - 120 min

LEARNING AIMS:

- Enhance ability for raw imagination and letting go of predetermined markers of thinking and imagination pathways
- Increase understanding of the strategic importance of visioning and radical imagination
- Acquire skills to future thinking, including methodology around visioning
- Enhance curiosity for other people's realities
- Increase active listening skills
- Reflect on personal patterns and trajectories in future imaginaries

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 12-60

PREPARATION AND MATERIALS: Prepare a circle set up with paper and a pen in front of every participant (different colors are of importance). Prepare the room for a cozy set up for the visioning exercise in the beginning. After the drawing exercise, prepare the room for a double circle - participants facing each other (on cushions or chairs).

FRAMING:

Introduce the importance of getting out of your head - into the body, into the subconscious, the political importance of radical imagination, the importance of listening and creating a collective story - understanding people through their visions for the future. Coming to terms to the stuckness within the possible and daring to reach for the impossible. Getting a glimpse into how different narratives of the future influence each other but also of how difficult to truly adjust ones - deeply manifested in one's thinking and acting.

FACILITATION:

Step 1. Opening the activity (5 min)

Introduce the aims of the exercise, provide a framing, and brief explanation of the different steps.

Step 2. Visioning/ Dream Journey (10 min)

- Invitation to get comfortable

- Reading of the Dream Journey (Depending on the group setting, choosing a format that allows for a basic setting in an alternative reality)
- Arrival back in the space

Step 3. Raw Drawing Exercise - Subconscious Engagement

Framing: Invite people to switch off their associative urges and shake of direct connotations with color, shapes and assemblages. Instead, invite them to draw intuitively with whatever comes up first or follow the movement or drive of the body and pen. Be responsive but don't overthink.

Setting up for the raw imagination exercise: A circular set up (with a clear passing order) is important for the exercise. Give every person a pen (colorful) and a paper. Technical framing: You will hear a prompt and respond to the prompt on the paper in front of you, in less than a minute. You can use colour and shape but no writing. The facilitator will then encourage you to pass the paper to the left. This procedure of passing will continue for a while.

Start - prompts below (invitation to adjust the prompts for the exercise to the group setting and needs)

- Close your eyes – which color do you see /whatever colour your pen is draw a little dot somewhere in the picture. This is exactly the colour you imagined. *Pass to the left*
- The dot becomes a flower. *Pass to the left*
- Where is the flower located? Draw where it is placed. *Pass to the left*
- What does it smell like? – draw. *Pass to the left*
- What does it feel like? - draw. *Pass to the left*
- There is also some water in the same space – where is it? *Pass to the left*
- Water becomes a river. *Pass to the left*
- River becomes the ocean. *Pass to the left*
- Look there is an animal in the ocean. *Pass to the left*
- It is making a sound – draw it. *Pass to the left*
- Now it is waving at you. *Pass to the left*
- Oh, look - there is a letter in its hand. *Pass to the left*
- What does the letter say? - Draw. *Pass to the left*
- Whisper to the person to your right what the letter says. *Pass to the left*
- This person can now draw how the letter changes the image in front of them
- Take a moment to appreciate your story and the story unfolding on the paper in front of you

Instructions: Without further side conversations - move to the set up for the future vision scenario.

Step 4. Ancestor Encounter - Radical Imagination Scenario

Framing the world in 100 years from now You (future being) talking to your ancestor (you – having passed already). The person on the inside is the future being (in 100 years) talking to their (passed away) ancestors on the outside of the circle. The person listening (the ancestor) is moving after each round of prompts (approximately every 3-4 minutes). After the full round the set up switches and the ancestor becomes the future being. The future being remains telling their story sitting at the same place, encountering another listening ancestor. We are doing an exercise in active listening, so while you can look and perceive the person, you cannot verbally engage with what they are sharing. Keep an open heart, ears and mind. For this activity there are two options (depending on time availability possible)

- Option 1. Running two full sets - at the end of each full set, invite for a moment of appreciation of sharing and advice the ancestor might have for the future being.
- Option 2. Running the first set with the inner circle speaking and the second set with the outer circle speaking. Also advantages in terms of overstimulation or influence by previous stories and thoughts heard. In this option, the appreciation and advice will run after each set, so both groups of people have the opportunity to appreciate and offer advice.

Set One: Setting

- When you walk out of the door what do you see/ smell hear/ feel? *Move 1 left*
- How does life look like in your community? Can you describe a usual week in your life? *Move 1 left*
- Can you share a bit more about how the world is organized beyond your community? *Move 1 left*
- How do you and your people interact with the world around you and non- humans? *Move 1 left*

Set Two: Processes

- Do you remember what happened when you won? *Move 1 left*
- Who were the actors /friends /comrades involved and what did they do? *Move 1 left*
- How did the people and the world respond? *Move 1 left*
- What was challenging in the process? Is there any lesson you would like to share that you wished you knew back then?

Moment of Appreciation and Advice

- Silent Movement in Space
- Reflection - small group or pairs

Step 4. Plenary reflection

Sharing in the larger circle about the power of reclaiming imagination and working with radical imagination praxis in our political work.

SOURCES:

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