



The Art of Conversation

Behaviors that help take conversation to a deeper realm:

- 1- We acknowledge one another as equals
- 2- We try to stay curious about each other
- 3- We recognize that we need each other's help to become better listeners
- 4- We slow down so we have time to think and reflect
- 5- We remember that conversation is the natural way humans think together
- 6- We expect it to be messy at times

"Listen for what surprises you. Notice what disturbs you. If what you say surprises me, I must have been assuming something else was true. If something you say disturbs me, I must believe something contrary to you. My shock at your position exposes my own. These moments are great gifts."

"We know how to have deep conversations, but we sometimes have to let go of our modern ways of being in meetings to get past the behaviors that keep us apart. We have cultivated some bad behaviors – speaking too fast, interrupting others, monopolizing the time, giving speeches or pronouncements. Many of us have been rewarded for these behaviors. We've become more powerful through their use. But none of them lead to wise thinking or healthy relationships. They only drive us away from each other."

- Margaret Wheatley *Turning to One Another*

When we talk about that which will sustain and nurture our spiritual growth as a people, we must once again talk about the importance of community. For one of the most vital ways that we sustain ourselves is by building communities of resistance, places where we know we are not alone.

bell hooks – Teaching to Transgress

Community Agreements (an Invitation)

- 1) **Show up (or choose to be present)**
- 2) **Pay attention (to heart and meaning)**
- 3) **Tell the truth (without blame or judgment)**
- 4) **Be open to outcome (not attached to outcome)**

Adopted from Angeles Arrien: "The Way of the Teacher: Principles of Deep Engagement" in Schools with Spirit edited by Linda Lantieri