

## WORKSHOP PROGRAM – A day of connecting

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**Time:** 10.00 – 17.00

**Audience:** People who already know each other with a desire to deepen their connection.

**Aim:** Intensifying connection, gaining better knowledge and understanding of each other

### Meeting from a place of vulnerability

We can only truly meet each other on a deeper level when we dare to be vulnerable. When we show parts of ourselves that we usually keep hidden on a day to day interaction. We often have no clue what goes on in the other person and have many assumptions and judgement that barely (sometimes not at all) coincide with reality.

Today you'll be working with the 'Lifeline'. The participants take a symbolic walk along their life and pause at the events that had an impact on them and that have shaped who they are today. Sharing these experiences ensures that the participants get closer to one another. There will be recognition, emotion, awe and compassion. For the narrator it will be valuable to look back at their life and be heard in their story.

It's also scary to truly show yourself. This is why it's crucial for you as a trainer to know how to create a safe space. This starts with taking a free of judgement attitude yourself. The calm you ooze. Welcoming everything this day brings in a calm manner. As well as the request towards the participants to leave that which is shared today here and not share it with anyone else. That which is shared within the group, stays within the group.

### 10.00-10.30 o'clock. Reception with coffee at the outdoor location

- Short introduction round:
- What is your name and how are you feeling at this moment? (2 min p.p)
- Short explanation of the day's program.
- Bathroom break. At the latest meeting 10.30 outside.

### 10.30-11.00 o'clock Walking meditation (approximately 3 km)

**Aim:** Grounding. Relaxing. Connecting to the present. Connecting to the source.

- Narrate: We purposely walk at a **slower pace** and bring our attention only to our feet for a while. Be very aware of every step you take.

- **Remain silent for 3 minutes...**
- **When thoughts arise, that is completely fine.**
- As soon as you notice this, bring your attention back to your feet again.
- **Remain silent for 3 minutes...**
- Then **slowly and at your own pace** move your attention upwards. Via your calves, knees, thighs...
- Keep an open and curious mind. **All the sensations you encounter** in your body are welcome. Also the absence of feeling, or feeling distracted is welcome.
- **Remain silent for 3 minutes...**
- Now we bring the attention to the belly...chest.. lower back...upper back...shoulders.
- **Remain silent for 3 minutes...**
- And then your arms...hands...and finally your neck and head.
- **Remain silent for 3 minutes...**
- Then we become aware of what **sensations and emotions** we can register. This is a neutral observation. Nothing needs to go away or be different, or bigger or smaller. Everything that occurs we observe with a loving kindness. You simply let everything rest in itself.
- **Remain silent for 3 minutes...**
- Once we're able to fully embrace that which presents itself, **we bring our attention outside of ourselves.** With awareness we connect to the wind on our skin, the smells and sounds around us and we look at our surroundings with an open and curious eye.
- **Bring the meditation to a close with a few minutes of silence and allow to feel attentively.**
- How are you standing here now?
- What's it like in your body right now?
- How is the connection to your surroundings?
- **Once more: all feelings that surface are welcome. As well as the absence of feelings, or any feeling of restlessness.**

*Note: Make sure to face the group when you offer guidance, to make sure they are able to hear you. Sometimes you'll need to wait for the group to assemble before doing this.*

*Experience the meditation for yourself as well to avoid giving directions too hastily and to allow yourself to slow down together with the group.*

*When you notice some participants going too fast, kindly invite them to be curious what would happen when they would slow down a bit more.*

**11.00 – 11.15**

## **Invitation to make a life line**

Invite participants to reflect on impactful events in their lives that have shaped them into who they are today.

Then ask them to gather materials from nature and to use that to make a life line, where each specific life event is visible. Allow 10 minutes for this.

**11.15 – 12.15**

## **Sharing their life's story**

Form groups of 4 or 5 individuals and allow each participant 10 to 15 minutes to share something about their life line and how the most impactful events have shaped them. The remaining participants listen intently and refrain from **asking or saying anything!** They do however say thank you at the end of their story.

This last part is very important to ensure a feeling of safety. State this clearly. Even when emotions arise, we do not comfort. A compassionate presence without words offers more support than a gesture of easing the pain. See it as sacred sharing, the same way you would do with the use of a talking stick.

**12.15-12.30**

## **Exchanging experiences**

The groups exchange how they experienced this assignment.

**12.30 – 12.45**

## **Walking back to the starting location**

**12.45 - 13.45**

## **LUNCH**

## AFTERNOON PROGRAMME – A day of connecting

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**13.45 – 14.00**      **Short (walking) meditation**

**14.00 – 14.45**      **Sharing circle with talking stick**

Form a circle with the entire group (inside or outside) where you invite the participants to exchange more on the morning's assignment. Start by offering an introduction yourself wherein you explain that oftentimes we have more in common than we think. Themes such as (emotional) neglect, solitude, loss, being bullied, illness, divorce of parents and depression occur with a lot of people. Ask for each of these themes: **which one of these occurs in your life line?**

> this brings connection through recognition.

**More questions you could introduce in the circle:**

- Who'd like to share something about recognition?
- Would anybody like to share what this day has brought you?
- Did any specific events alter your view on life?
- Is there a question you'd like to ask?

**15.00 – 16.00**      **Showing appreciation and respect**

- The groups that worked together in the morning come together again.
- Give them the following assignment: Look for a small symbol for each member of your group through which you show your appreciation and respect for how this person has dealt with hurdles in their life.
- Allow for 10 minutes to look for the symbols.
- Then the groups re-assemble and hand out the symbols to each other.

**16.00 – 16.30**      **Expressing gratefulness and concluding**

Come together with the entire group once again in a circle (inside or outside) and ask if anyone would like to share anything. Then ask the two following questions to each individual:

1. What are you grateful for?
2. What truly matters to you in life?

Bring the day to a close with the following shamanic prayer:

Thank you, life  
For this moment in time  
And for this place  
For this 'here and now'  
Where I am home  
I am grateful for this existence  
And all that it brings me  
All the people, all the animals and plants  
That have shaped me  
into the person I now am  
Thank you for the help and support  
That have given me confidence  
And for the challenges  
That have given me strength  
Thank you miraculous cycle  
Of life and death.

*Excerpt: Voor alles dankbaar – Sven Goedbloed en Sara Hermanides*

### Practical notes

- Make sure you know the area you walk in really well. Know that most work forms take place at one spot, which means that ultimately you only walk a few miles in the course of your day. And the walking meditations are also at a slow pace. A route of about 2,5 to 3 km is more than enough.
- I advise you to first do a pilot (free or at a reduced rate) before working with 'real' participants.
- Take all weather conditions into account by wearing appropriate gear, like a rain coat. (thermo underwear during colder months for instance!) Communicate this clearly to the participants. No such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing.
- Action or other outdoor shops have little sitting mats. This is a handy purchase to make for your group.
- Make sure there's water and snacks or ask your participants to bring their own.
- Choose a starting point where there's the possibility to have a coffee or go to the toilet. Especially when people come from far. © innerstepsC H leps.com © innersteps.com