

Session 1: Relationship

To the facilitator, remember on each chance to share, let each person share in a circle or to each speak from the silence. If the group speaks from the silence, keep track of who has spoken and do not let another speak until each have had a turn or chosen to pass. If you're on zoom, you can establish an order with the first sharing and put that order of names in the chat.

Opening Words:

Welcome by Naomi Shihad Nye

The Arabs used to say,
When a stranger appears at your door,
feed him for three days
before asking who he is,
where he's come from,
where he's headed.
That way, he'll have strength enough
to answer.
Or, by then you'll be such good friends
you don't care.

Let's go back to that.
Rice? Pine nuts?
Here, take the red brocade pillow.
My child will serve water
to your horse.

No, I was not busy when you came!
I was not preparing to be busy.
That's the armor everyone put on
at the end of the century
to pretend they had a purpose
in the world.

I refuse to be claimed.
Your plate is waiting.
We will snip fresh mint
into your tea.

Sitting in Stillness

As we prepare to create and enter a sacred space, let us take a minute to sit in silence together.

Reminder:

Remember that we have lived through, are living through, a time unlike any in living memory. As we reconnect with each other we may be awkward. We might feel weird or uncomfortable. We might not. Let us remember we are each having different responses and let us make room for each of us as we are today.

Checking-in:

What is most on your mind today? Share one high and one low from your life right now. The group will listen with care, but without comment.

Embodied Meditation:

Facilitator, please read slowly and take long pauses between sentences

As I read this out loud, please remember this is just an invitation. If anything feels uncomfortable to you or your body doesn't want to, please don't. As you turn your attention to your body, let your attention soften to just notice what is. Beginning with your feet, just notice what your feet are connected to. What parts of your feet touch the ground, or chair, or your own leg? Notice the contact of your body with your chair. What places touch your chair and how do they feel? Notice, don't change, your breathing. Notice if it's deep, or shallow, or any way you could describe the rhythm of air in and out of your body. And then turn your attention to around you -- look around or listen. Let your gaze and ears softly take in the world. What are your eyes or ears drawn to? Notice the details of what you're seeing or hearing. And then slowly turn your head and notice what else you're drawn to. And now, again, notice your breath. How is your breathing now. How is the same? How has it changed? When you're ready, turn your attention back to this group gathered together.

Theme for Reflection and Activity

Activity: Covenant Creation:

Read this suggested covenant out loud

We will share time by each taking a turn answering and not interrupting

We will refrain from giving advice or trying to fix each other's lives

We will speak our own truth

We will respect the confidentiality of others' stories

We respect each other's choice to pass

Giving each person a chance to speak in a circle, asking them if there is anything they'd like to add to or edit in the covenant. Be sure all are okay with the covenant as edited before proceeding.

Readings:

“When we get too caught up in the busyness of the world, we lose connection with one another - and ourselves”

- Jack Kornfield

“A person isn't who they are during the last conversation you had with them - they're who they've been throughout your whole relationship.”

-Rainer Maria Rilke

“I know sometimes you get cranky,
And sometimes your tea gets cold
Before you can drink it. Sometimes
The news is too much. The resistance
Seems too little. That's real. But we are
Here. Imperfect and together and reaching.
You can hold my hand if you want. I washed
It with soap. It's OK. In this kind of time,
Now is better than later. Now, I love you.
Now, I am sorry it hurts. Now, I witness
Your struggle, and mine. Sometimes
One answer is to be a yes in the face of
Every no. I am a yes for you. Now and again
Later, if you need me.”

Now, I love you. Now, I Witness by Rev. Theresa I. Soto

Questions for Reflection:

In responding to the following questions, know that they are your launching ground. Respond to the questions that speak to you personally or, if you'd rather, comment on the readings.

- How do you prefer to be in relationship with people in your life?
- What do you know about who you are in relationship with others?
- Are there individuals you've know, where knowing them and being in relationship with them changed you?

Likes and Wishes:

Please tell us what you liked and what you wish might have been different about this meeting.

Closing Words

May we offer to one another, and to ourselves, the fruits of our lives, that others, in return, may be a source of inspiration to those whose lives they touch.

-Adapted from Howard Thurman