

CREATING SPACE FOR WHOLENESS

13 SESSIONS TO REFLECT ON THE JOURNEY HOME
TO WHO WE ARE MEANT TO BE

FACILITATED BY KAREN HILFMAN AUTHOR OF *THE MENDED MIRROR*

SESSION #12 of 13

A TIME OF REFLECTION

- 1) As you read the quote and story below and consider a step in The Connection Strategy, notice what you notice as you read. Does a word, phrase or concept tug at your attention?
- 2) Does a quote or insight emerge for you in this time of reflecting as together we listen for and commit to choosing pathways that lead to life and love and light rather than death and hatred, that lead us home to who we are meant to be?
- 3) What insights rise up from your experience as we hold space to focus on and empower a vision of wholeness and well-being? What are the lessons we need to be learning? What are the shifts we are embracing or need to embrace?
- 4) What wisdom and creativity is emerging for you? What stories and situations fill you with hope? Are there quotes or stories or experiences that you would add to deepen these reflections?

CONNECTION STRATEGY FOR SELF AND COMMUNITY FROM DISCONNECTED TO CONNECTED

STEP # 12 Tap into the wisdom and creativity of future possibilities.

Disconnect from dependence on logic and past experience as the only valued guides.

*13 Steps to Connect to the Power of
Transformation, Meaning, Purpose and the Authenticity
Within Each of Us to Enhance Our Life Together in Community*

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QUOTE

These days I wonder if my perception of life is different enough from how others see the world that people cannot hear me or take in what I am saying; what I say makes no sense in their worldview and so the concepts don't register. There are times when it feels like I am speaking a foreign language that is not understood. I work hard at trying to share my insights using language that will connect. At this stage in my life I trust that my contribution is worthwhile and that at some point in the conversations of life I may be more fully understood so long as I keep sharing my insights from a variety of perspectives in a variety of moments.

Experiences of not feeling heard or silencing my perspective because it seems so different from others inform the development of my life's work to ensure that we listen to all voices so that we are able to tap into the wisdom that is amongst us. Too often that wisdom is kept silent due to uncertainty and anticipation of being rejected. This reality is based in attitudes that infuse existing systems with lack of respect for alternative ways to see life. I know from experience that ideas like

mine, which come from a perspective different than the predominant way of thinking in our culture, can be left on the sidelines of discussions when we strive to discern future possibilities.

STORY

I am amazed at how strong my commitment is to not allow issues to fester. I am still quite young the first time I really see this commitment within myself. I am in grade six. I am twelve years old.

My class has decided to prepare the play *Cinderella* for the younger grades. No one wants to be the director, so I offer. I share my ideas of a way we might do the play. Everyone agrees and is enthusiastic. I think the rehearsals are going well. People have volunteered to be actors and to take care of technical aspects. The play is coming together.

Then one morning when I get off the school bus, a friend meets me to tell me, “None of the kids in the class will talk to you.”

I ask her, “Why?”

She says, “I’m not allowed to tell you.”

A strong feeling surges through me. I tell her, “You have to tell me. How else can we solve the issue?”

This is my worst nightmare. I am being totally rejected.

She reluctantly says, “Everyone is mad because you get to do everything.”

I’m shocked, but at least I know what I am dealing with.

I go to where everyone has gathered for the early morning rehearsal. I stand at the side of the group and look at them. They stare back at me and then turn away and chat amongst themselves.

I speak over the hubbub and tell them I understand they aren’t speaking to me because I get to do stuff they don’t get to do. I ask them to give me some examples. They are silent for the longest time. I stare at them, waiting.

Then one girl emerges from the group spitting mad and rhymes off a list.

As I listen to the list I acknowledge it is true; I do get to do some things they don’t. I admit some of what they are saying is true.

But I also tell them that some of the tasks I do are things I have no control over. I am aware that I get to do certain things because our teacher, who is also our principal, thinks that my dream of becoming a teacher and principal suits who I am, so he keeps giving me a chance to discover what that role entails. It includes being one of three people who fill in for teachers when they have an appointment and helping to lock up the exterior doors at the end of the day. I am chosen for those jobs.

However, I point out that the rest of the list are jobs that they all did at the beginning of the year but then decided they didn’t want to do anymore. Anytime the teacher asked if someone else was willing to take a task on, I waited to see if anyone else was willing. When no one offered, I put up my hand. I ask if anyone wants to do any of the tasks. They are welcome to any of them. No one wants to.

The final item on the list is that I get to direct the play. I ask if they remember how that happened. They acknowledge that it happened basically the same way all the other jobs ended up being mine. No one else wanted to direct.

Though my next words feel like they are breaking my twelve-year-old heart, I tell them that I am willing to step aside for someone else to direct. They look amongst themselves. No one steps forward. They slouch in acceptance.

I ask them what I can do to make the experience better. They tell me to listen to them more; give them a chance to share their ideas.

I nod, and then ask, “Should I stop sharing my ideas?”

I am told forcefully, “No, your ideas are good; we just want to add in ours.”

On that day, I make two critical discoveries about how to work with groups and create a sense of community.

One of the discoveries is that a leader is actually more effective if they gather the thoughts and insights of the whole group, rather than feeling like everyone expects them to know all the answers and lead the way.

This is a huge learning that has impacted my work through the years. It’s the basis of my commitment to being a Facilitator of Significant Conversations: to intentionally ensure that the wisdom and creativity amongst the group has the opportunity to emerge. When we create safe space for all voices to be heard, the result is that we tap into the wisdom and creativity that are within us and amongst us, which moves us toward future possibilities that are more than any one person can develop alone.

To this day when I direct a play I intentionally invite the insights of the cast. We are usually very close to the opening night before I request that input stop.

The second discovery from this tumultuous day in my twelve-year-old world is the difference it makes when we connect to the power of honesty and kindness that is at our very core and allow those powers to flow through us to reach out to the world. I experience one of my greatest fears that day in grade six; I am being completely rejected by everyone around me. However, something happens that day that surprises me; I do not let the fear consume me but rather, based on what I learned from my Mom through the incident in kindergarten, I choose to deal with the issue rather than let it fester.

Somehow a power deep within me breaks through the fear and speaks through me in a way that is authentic and real. The importance of speaking from my authentic self has been an awareness that I have intentionally tried to use since that day.

So I learn the importance of speaking opening and honestly from an experience when Mom skewed good communication practices and I ended up wrongly being called a liar. I also learn that issues not dealt with can spiral out in unexpected and destructive directions. Life teaches me at a young age that not dealing with an important issue for fear of upsetting someone can cause far greater problems than risking hurting someone’s feelings by being honest.

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SHARING YOUR REFLECTIONS

To add your thoughts to this conversation post them on the *Course* page under each session of *Creating Space for Wholeness* on www.AuthenticConnectionCulture.com or www.TheMendedMirror.com or on Facebook. Or simply be intentional about holding prayerful space knowing we connect heart to heart across the miles and time, and that together we are empowering and strengthening the things to which we give our attention.